

# The Maldon morality play

2

## The inheritance

Version: 5.9.03

*All the players are 'off'  
Announcer arrives*

### Cast

In order of appearance

Announcer . . . . .

King Timothy . . . . . King of the water

Queen Susan . . . . . Queen of the earth

Dawn . . . . . Their daughter

Gerland . . . . . A knight with no brains

Scriddle . . . . . A wealthy man with no scruples

Nimble Jack . . . . . A minstrel with no money  
*Nimble Jack is played by a female*

Asisbottle . . . . . A man of science with no purpose

Noak . . . . . A yeoman

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ANNOUNCER

*To audience*

And now's the highlight of the day  
We have for you a little play  
We've worked hard so please attend  
There'll be a short test at the end

Please come round and gather near  
So our brilliant words you'll hear  
If you're good and have a laugh  
I'll let you have my autograph

The quicker we can start our tale  
The sooner we can get our ale  
So off we go - Let's begin  
Pray be silent for the King

KING TIMOTHY

*King arrives  
To audience*

Before you stands king Timothy  
My power extends across the sea  
Where waves and seagulls swoop and glide  
And currents circle with the tide

To sail your ships on my domain  
You must pay homage to my reign  
I tax you harsh in lives of sailors  
Lost from clipper ships and whalers

The price of fish you all must pay  
As another man is washed away  
If you mock a king without an army  
Then you haven't heard of my Tsunami.

3

*Queen arrives  
To audience*

QUEEN SUSAN

Greetings - I am Suzanne the queen  
Earth mother goddess I have been  
No need to worship - just hold dear  
My power to renew each year

To plough my earth and sow my fields  
Is all you need for harvest yields

5 For simple labour will your crops collect

If you treat my land with care  
Then it will serve you every year  
But if you should abuse my trust  
Then you and yours will turn to dust

DAWN

I am Dawn a daughter of this pair  
A fertile woman with outlook fair  
I'd like to live to age 10 million  
But I must be married to a human

The need I have is so simple  
Children are just fundamental  
Or barren I will spin away  
And mankind will soon decay

As from today we all will see  
Who will hold Earth's destiny  
The time has come to decide  
Who will take me as a bride

*Dawn arrives  
To audience*

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*Dawn fades into the background  
To audience*

ANNOUNCER

Now our play it gathers pace  
I'll introduce another face  
A character to win the maid  
Is by an ugly actor played

Gerland get your lines said right  
Else we'll be here half the night  
Swiftly tell us who you are  
So we can quickly reach the bar

*Knight arrives  
To knight*

KNIGHT

2... I am a knight  
I know how to fight  
I claim my right  
To have my delight  
I'll begin tonight  
If that's all right  
So bring on the tart  
And I'll make a start.

*To King and Queen  
'Sarf' Essex accent  
(Doesn't pronounce Ts)*

ANNOUNCER

I see you've got your lines off to a Tee

*Spoken*

QUEEN

2... How very uncouth  
An unsuitable youth  
I think it'd be best  
If he went on a quest

*To king*

KING

2... You hear what she says  
You've got 90 days  
So hitch up your waggon  
And look for a dragon

*To knight*

5

QUEEN

*To king*

3... But dragons don't really exist  
They're just a load of scotch mist  
Invented to make us afraid  
Of a serpent making a raid

2... So you parade  
For a crusade  
And your grenades  
Need upgrades  
Or baddies 'll invade  
And we'll all be slayed  
And the arms trade  
Won't be paid

KING

*To queen*

It's only money I don't begrudge it  
To defend my kingdom I need a budget  
Gerland Here's your instruction  
Look for some weapons of mass destruction

*To knight*

*Gerland exits  
To audience*

ANNOUNCER

Here comes Scriddle, rich and mean  
He's like a cat that's got the cream  
Always will the poor he curse  
And never help them from his purse

SCRIDDLE

*To announcer*

Shut your mouth you silly buffoon  
You've more hot air than a balloon  
Unless you stop your rancid banter  
I'll have you up for wilful slander

6

It's time we got down to brass tacks  
Don't prevaricate, face the facts  
To pay for defence against attacks  
You'll need to raise the income tax

*To king*

Your daughter should be dressed in gold  
With gemstone earrings to behold  
And fashion gown with fancy shoes  
You know it's silly to refuse

*To queen*

ANNOUNCER

*To audience*

Can I believe that I'm alone  
I can't stand Scriddle or his tone  
He's got a mortgage on the throne  
Soon the whole wide world he'll own

SCRIDDLE

*To king*

If you want a fiscal policy  
Then you should rely on me  
A financial wizard to oversee  
The workings of your treasury

If we're to help the starving poor  
Then we'll have to tax them more  
I don't levy much commission  
So then, let's have your permission

DAWN

On gold and jewels I'm quite keen  
But I think he's rather mean  
I don't care how rich he is  
It's just he's rather tedious

7

KING

My advice to you is honey  
To marry for love and not for money  
That's a very well known maxim  
But if he's rich - try and love him

SCRIDDLE

*To king*

It's in the interests of the nation  
To start now. No hesitation  
If you'll let me with Dawn elope  
Here's some fivers in an envelope

KING

I think at last you've won us over  
From now on we'll be in clover

*To Scriddle*

DAWN

He certainly seems to promise finery  
And I really like his jewellery

QUEEN

*Jumping on the jewellery band waggon - To Scriddle*

**Here! Hang on my girl. You should think of me.  
Haven't you heard of "Buy one get one free."**

ANNOUNCER

So it looks like Scriddle mean and greedy  
Will be taking yet more from the needy  
Surely there's another suitor  
Who can bring a better future?

NIMBLE JACK

Hello Things are not all black  
Before you stands Nimble Jack  
I'll help you at your hour of need  
To stop this wicked tale of greed

*To audience*

8

Scriddle you have no soul or heart  
The rest of us are inspired by art  
And do not live by gold alone  
So get you hands off that throne

*To Scriddle*

SCRIDDLE

*To Jack*

Jack you haven't got a sou  
You cannot eat an IOU  
It's money makes the world go round  
No matter how much your flute you sound

ANNOUNCER

*To audience*

Nimble Jack is a mincing minstrel  
And shame to say a hapless wastrel  
Any cash he earns is quickly spent  
Or forever to some 'friend' is lent

NIMBLE JACK

*To audience*

I can sing and I can play  
I entertain both night and day  
By the performance of my arts  
I'll lift the burden from your hearts

All music plays upon the soul  
Whether requiem or rock and roll  
There is no magic half as strong  
As a loving verse put in song

When fog hangs round the door like a cat  
And dark grey fur seeps into your heart  
Then's the time to play your instrument  
To bring to bloom some brighter sentiment

But in our darker music we find  
 The sad and weepy corners of the mind  
 It unlocks our feelings loose inside  
 While publicly those tears we hide

*Nimble Jack dances a jig  
 Sings to Dawn. (Tune: The Beehive)*

*I'd love to play a tune for two  
 And dance the whole night through  
 The music sets my feet on fire  
 And I must sing to you  
 So let Cupid's arrows do their worst  
 And set our hearts a-tingle  
 Kick out those legs, present your lips  
 And let our sweet sweat mingle*

## ANNOUNCER

All of us knew that Scriddle would fail  
 That's the way of a fairy tale  
 So now we'll thank you for your time  
 I'm just sorry for the awful...

## ASISBOTTLE

Rhyme?

*Interrupting*

5... Hold on there Pantaloon - We're not done  
 In fact the real action's not yet begun  
 I am a suitor of this modern age of science  
 Asisbottle is my name. One of the intellectual giants

## ANNOUNCER

If this goes on much longer then I fear  
 I'll die from dehydration - lack of beer  
 You look like a waddling quack to me  
 The only science you know is gastronomy

*To audience*

*To Asbot*

## ASISBOTTLE

Handed to me on a plate. Of course I knew  
 If it wasn't for tectonics I'd be in a stew  
 But if I may continue without interference  
 I'll explain to these people my appearance *To audience*

Since the Greeks taught geometry  
 Science has expanded exponentially  
 Many diseases we can now diagnose  
 And tell how viruses kill their hosts

From Archeology to Zymotechnical  
 It affects our lives like rising sea level  
 With the flood of knowledge there's no high ground  
 So board the science ark or be drowned

You won't be bothered by Bush in America  
 If melting ice caps you think is hysteria  
 We must get to grips with CO2  
 On spaceship Earth we're *all* the crew

*Asisbottle does comedy inventor and mad scientist routine.  
 eg Underwater umbrella. Everlasting soap  
 Interrupted by knight returning from questing*

## ASISBOTTLE

Well if it isn't testosterone Tommy  
 Did you kill any dragons on your journey?  
 Come on tell us of glorious events  
 But don't give us false intelligence

KNIGHT

I went on a quest  
 To find the pest  
 Lurking in its nest  
 But as you guessed  
 I made no arrest  
 Do you suggest  
 I didn't do my best?

I did lots of killing  
 For the kings shilling.

ASISBOTTLE

Now then my Basildon Bombardier  
 Fighting a mirage is a very old idea  
 Stirring up trouble where none existed  
 Seems the reason why you enlisted

KNIGHT

Ha! There's many troubles quite horrific  
 On this earth caused by men scientific  
 From Anthrax bombs to Uranium waste  
 Its callous when you get nature defaced

Don't you mock the dragons I've slayed  
 Many worse things science has made  
 Like school boys eager to see what occurs  
 You hatch out a scheme to be Earth saboteurs

*Threatens Asbot with his sword...*

Since basic ethics you've ignored  
 I'll have to kill you with my sword

ASISBOTTLE

Oh dear that's not what I call fun  
 I'll have to shoot you with my gun

*Pulls out a pistol and shoots knight*

QUEEN

*To Asisbottle*

5... Would you like to meet my daughter Dawn  
 She's fair and fertile and our only one  
 So precious that we cannot let her go  
 To marry any hopeful Romeo

KING

*To Asisbottle*

I'm not sure that science pays  
 I'm pinching every penny these days  
 It's easy to talk of saving the Earth  
 But I've got to think about my net worth

ANNOUNCER

*To audience*

I'm getting tired of announcing this crap  
 If I had my way it'd be in the scrap  
 Let's have a line up then we can choose  
 On who'll be the winner and those that will lose

YEOMAN

Please sir may I be a suitor?

5 I'm not a shooter, computer, fluter or polluter  
 I'm a stout yeoman I live on the land  
 And all of my income I earn by my hand

Since Romans vacated this sacred soil  
 Farmsteaders worked and lived by their toil  
 Saving a bit to guard against famine  
 And building up bonds to chieftains and thane

**13**

Then through the dark ages, black death and plague  
 We kept you in food nearly every day  
 I can fish with my purse - not like Scriddle  
 Seed I can drill or sow with my fiddle

The yeomen of England know how to fight  
 For kingdom and land that's theirs by right  
 But also they fight for the right to be free  
 Peace, choice, and liberty

QUEEN *To King*

6... Our daughter is the future of our planet blue  
 Now comes decision time So what should we do?  
 It's frightening when there is no respect. And  
 nature's carefully woven basket will be wrecked

Greed and gold is not the answer  
 Nor the poems of the dancer  
 And of course - no more fighting  
 Unfettered science is awful frightening

KING *To the Queen*

That leaves the yeoman. Can he stand  
 Four square, the owner of his land  
 Does he feel for nature's needs  
 Or rape the fields on which he feeds

QUEEN *To Dawn*

Can you trust this turnip head  
 Parochial and inter-bred  
 And at heart he's just a peasant  
 Slow dull and ignorant

DAWN  
 Deep in his heart he knows to live  
 On only what the land will give

**14**

His instinct is to protect and serve  
 And nature's limits to observe

DAWN *To Yeoman who answers*

Do you know the cost of defence - I Do  
 Do you know the uses of science - I Do  
 Do you know the value of finance - I Do  
 Do you enjoy the chance to dance - I Do

DAWN and YEOMAN *Tune : The Beehive*

Y: *Sung duet*  
 You are the only one for me

I've known it all my life  
 So let us pledge our marriage vows  
 And you shall be my wife

D: If you're an honest working man  
 Who'll cherish and caress me  
 Then I will keep your family home  
 That we can live in safely.

Y: For all our lives we must be  
 on this globe entwined  
 Now legally and formally  
 Our destiny we bind

D: It's not the law or society  
 Or anything that we've signed  
 But generations yet to come  
 The future of mankind.

Y: You are the only one for me  
 And that will be forever  
 From today our lives will be  
 So firmly bound together

D: Our children and their children too  
 will multiply and flourish  
 We'll teach them how to care for the world  
 And each other cherish.

Y: We'll walk together on one path  
 Our footsteps stride by stride  
 With our own hands we can build a  
 Place for man and bride

D: And with our hearts we beat a tune  
 as parents have before us  
 And with our voices we will sing  
 an ever-loving chorus

D+Y: And with our heads we'll sit a while  
 And plan the world's salvation  
 And with our bodies we will  
 Make another generation

*coda**Players go off...*

*SCRIDDLE offers NIMBLE JACK a contract*  
*ASISBOTTLE shows a GERLAND the gun.*

ANNOUNCER

The moral of our little play  
 Is not to live just for today  
 If the children's trust we spend  
 There'll be none left in the end

There were no monsters in our play  
 Except a dragon on the way  
 But if you were frightened by our tale  
 Then we think we've earned our ale.

If you can see that we've worked hard  
 We'll take cash or credit card  
 Also welcome - please join me  
 Is a big hand for the company!

**- End -****Notes for players**

This play has been designed to make it easy for virtually anybody to perform. It is written in the vernacular style which was originally staged by amateurs. Acting skill and characterisation vanish off the bottom of the short list after

(a) being seen

and (b) being heard.

The characters are meant to represent 'ordinary people played by ordinary people'. For example the queen is 'everybody's mum' as a character and when she steps down from the stage she's just a normal mum. So there is no need to put on acting airs or pantomime performances. For example Scriddle can look slightly unloved but there's no call for the full Shylock. You don't have to indicate to the audience who you are because everyone gets a proper introduction.

Nimble Jack is a male character played by a girl for reasons of balance.

It can be a bit disconcerting when the audience go all quiet. You're probably not used to it, especially in the busy locations where a play like this is performed. Cherish the magic moment! It's when they are chatting and fidgeting that you need to worry. The announcer will help you get started with the audience and from then on all you need is to keep them interested in what you're saying and doing - mainly by being the most obviously important thing in the room with important things to say.

Most of the lines have four stresses as for example:

The **moral of** our **lit**tle **play**

Fixing these stresses in your mind at an early stage of learning your lines will be very helpful. However once you've got that settled, forget 'de **dum!** de **dum!** de **dum!** de **dum!**' and think more about intonation and word splitting and slurring. (Lines with different numbers of stresses are marked eg 5...)

Yeoman's puns. Purse: A type of fishing net. Drill: A device for inserting seeds into the soil. Fiddle: A device for broadcast sowing seeds.

John Noak, John A'oak and similar were 'fill in the blank' names used in times past.



**The Beehive - Traditional**

The musical score for "The Beehive" is presented in three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody in the treble staff consists of quarter and eighth notes, while the bass staff provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes and chords. The piece concludes with a final measure in the treble staff.