

THE CANDIDATE'S DREAM

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When Mason Brother Mason meets,
And each the other warmly greets,
Joy seems an overflowing cup,
When hand meets hands in Brother's Grip,
And one the question asks the other
About the age o' that one's mother.

It matters not from whence he come,
So long's he's acting on the plumb
Position counts for little there,
For all are Level on the Square.
For hours on end they'll talk together
Each crowns one's story wi' anither
Though women in this sphere surpasses,
Men sometimes can out-talk the lasses.

They talk o' Lodges where they've been,
O' things they've heard and things they've seen,
Compare their ain Lodge wi' the rest
Then syne amidst their cheery chaff
There's something said that mak's a' laugh:
Their Mother aye, of course, is best
Someone perchance makes observation
On the subject o' Initiation;

"Then each can here a story tell,
The victim o' which is himsel',
For Masons all, though old and grey,
Aye mind o' that momentous day
A' else he learned may be forgot,
But no' the night he rode the goat!
And wi' the rest I mind the night
I first received Masonic Light.

On this score I've nae hesitation
I mind o' my Initiation
Aye, deeply in my mind I store it
This story happened just before it.
But to my tale-for many years,
Though aye kept back by foolish fears,
Within my heart, a' else displacin'
A wish I had to be a Mason.

I had nae thought o' gain or graft,
But just connection wi' the Craft.
I got a frien' o' mine, Bob Bruce
Ye ken him, honest man and douce
Say I, " Here Bob, your Lodge I'll jine."
Bob brought a form for me to sign.
I was proposed and syne accepted
Bob's candidates were ne'er rejected.

A fortnight then I had to wait
Before they'd me initiate.
But time sped on: it's quick in running
If ye're in dread o' what is coming.
I'd lot o' friends who took delight in
Telling stories me to frighten.
That kind o' friend I thought I'd mair
That which was just my rightfu' share.

The time wore roun', the fatal day
Was but a few short hours away.
The night before it, I well mind it noo,
For I was in an awfu' stew.
My voucher then I went to see,
To find what he could do for me.
Say I, " Here, Bob, as ye ken fine,
The morn's the night I toe the line;

I'm nervous, Bob, I don't deny it."
Says he, " Your looks, man, don't belie it.
Is there oucht I can do for you?"
Says I, " There is: Bob, tell me true -
Just gae's a word o' information,
Advice about my preparation."
He didna speak-- I thought he'd chaff-
He looked at me, then gaed a laugh:

That laugh o' his wi' me remains,
It froze the blood within my veins,
And then he spoke-his words were short
And sharp as any gun's report
" just tak' a bath-that will not hurt
And I'd advise-a good clean shirt.
The morn's night you'll catch it hot,
And then I'll see you ride the goat!"

I left him then, and home I went;
I wondered what the whole thing meant;
His words were ringing in my ears,
They just confirmed a' my worst fears:
"A clean shirt!" " You'll get it hot !"
"Have a bath!" " Ride the goat!"
I went to bed, but couldn't sleep;
My thought from wandering widna' keep.

At last-I must have slept, 'twould seem,
For then I dreamed this awfu' dream.
I stood outside the Lodge-room waitin',
My heart was wildly palpitating';
To rush off home I felt inclin'in'
I was the only one was joinin'.
To get from there I'd gi'en a pension
They must have guessed o' my intention,

For then a man came oot, so burly;
I didna speak he look so surly.
"Just come this way," he says, and he
Into a side room then took me.
"Tak off your clothes-you'll no get hurt
Take them all off except your shirt!"
He stood and watched me-- this was rudeness
My shirt was lengthy-- I thanked goodness.

My arms and legs he tied up next,
A hanky round my eyes he fixed;
A word or two he spoke, and then
I got picked up and carried ben.
They laid me doon upon the floor
I felt I couldn't stand much more.
The sweat broke out in every pore
I heard them shut and bolt the door;

And then I heard--so help me, Sanny!
Slow music, low and weird, uncanny.
That music thrilled me through and through,
I tell you I was in a stew!
The music stopped. Next thing I hears
A voice was shouting in my ears
A voice that was so sharp and curt
It made me tremble in my shirt

"Unbind the man and let him see!"
I felt them ta' a haud o' me.
They took the hanky from my eyes,
And then I saw, to my surprise,
A' round about within my view,
I saw a most unearthly crew,
A' men although they seemed to be
As strange a lot as one could see.

They looked just like a pack o' deils,
Wi' great lang cloaks down to their heels,
An' o'er their heads to hide a' traces,
They had long cowls, which hid their faces,
Wi' holes cut in, through which their e'en.
Like glitt'ring fires could well be seen.
Then one that seemed the leader spoke
It seemed like speakin' through a poke

"Young man," says he, " the secrets o'
Our Mystic Craft you seek to know
Before these secrets we can gie ye,
There's a test to pass-we a' maun see.
Are. you prepared that test to try?"
I just nodded, and then said,
"Aye." I felt myself turn cold, then hot,
When loud he cried, " Bring in the Goat!"

A door was then flung open wide,
While I prepared for Turpin's ride.
Then wi' a rush in cam' the goat,
Wi' horns as lang's a Hieland stot;
It look a picture o' brute force;
It stood as high as ony horse;
It started plunging, kicking, screaming,
While I wi' sweat was fairly teeming;

And then I heard the voice again
This is what I heard him sayin'
"You see that goat! Get up astride it,
And three times round this room you'll ride it.
That is the test "-I turned pale
"Which you must pass, for if you fail
And get thrown off, your work is vain
The Mason's secrets you can't gain!"

They lifted me upon its back
'Twas worse than being on the rack
I tell you that it fairly hurt
You see, I'd only on my shirt!
I flung my arms around its neck;
I pressed my knees-I thought they'd break,
And when the word to start I heard
My fingers twisted in its beard.

It bit, it plunged, it kicked, it screamed,
But I held on like glue it seemed.
Twice round the room I rode the beast
I felt a pride within my breast
"Just one round more," I heard the voice
Within my heart I did rejoice.
The third time I was nearly round
I felt quite proud, but all too soon

Yon beast it was a perfect deevil,
An' up to a' the tricks o' evil;
For when the round was nearly done,
When I the secrets thought I'd won,
It gave a rush and then stopped dead,
And I went flying o'er its head.
I struck the grun' wi' sic a clatter,
I heard a voice say, " What's the matter?"

It was my wife's: I got a fright.
Says she, " You've gane ye'r mile the nicht;
You've roared and shouted in your sleep,
And in your bed you wouldn't keep.
Through the wa' you've nearly knocked me,
Arms round my neck, you've nearly choked me;
You've twined your fingers in my hair
Take you my word, I'm feeling sair."

Then the truth upon me dawned,
And I could a' things understand,
And I could see the substance o't'
Twas in my dreams I'd rode the goat,
And when it pitched me o'er its head,
'Twas then I tumbled out of bed!