

## A MID-WINTER NIGHTS DREAM by Martin Shaw

let's go out tonight.

Put your wallet away, your money's no good here. I'm paying. Let's meet at mine at 7.30. Don't worry about cabs, or trains, or even planes, a carriage will be outside at 7 o'clock sharp, lanterns swinging merrily, and the sound of laughter and champagne corks being popped. Old friends are calling your name from the window. Someone wonderful is looking after the kids and the animals, so you can get back as late as you want. You are dressed so fine, people wouldn't be able to tell quite which century you are from. You're the most beautiful thing anyone has ever seen.

The fire is glowing with coals, and the room is low lit and merry. That smiling man that took your coat looks a lot like Mircea Eliade, but don't make a fuss about it, he gets a little shy sometimes. And the musicians have come. Settled on a magic carpet by the fire; we have Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan sitting in with Van Morrison and a group of lute playing Troubadours sent exclusively for tonight by Eleanor of Aquitaine. She's coming late, with Rudolf Steiner and a bottle of very good brandy. He's got his dancing shoes on. Roberta Flack is cozied up on the sofa and riffing her words beautifully over the whole ensemble.

My cottage has many doors. Over this evening, which lasts several days, we will wander through many, you and I. One is large and ornate and opens up to dusky Shiraz where we will wander with Sufis and children and animals, led by Hafez, throwing keys into the dungeons to free all those rowdy prisoners. Later we will drink Margaritas on the roof leading toasts with the Baal Shem Tov.

We will behold many things this night; from the forests of Sherwood to a midnight wander through the Louvre with Modigliani and Frida Kahlo (that took quite a lot for me to arrange), we will thrill to the erotic swish of the black sea against Pans ship as he makes us way to England to nurse a lost little otter through a terrible night, this Piper at the Gates of Dawn. A mid-winter night's dream. We will wander in such glory and sweetness we will become a little more human again. Just a little.

And at some point we will wander back into my cottage. Tolkien, Bachelard and Virginia Woolf are playing cards, and some have curled under blankets and are just gently snoozing in their happy acres of dream. There is no need to leave just yet. And you can come back anytime you want.

Let this night be with you always. Don't ever give up on love.

No Fear No Meanness No Envy