



The Elves of Night

John B. Herbert
(1852-1927)

John Bunyan Herbert (1852-1927) was born in Cambridge, Ohio. A year later, his family moved to Monmouth, Illinois, where he received his early education. He bought a book on harmony at age 14 and spent his spare time mastering the subject. He attended Monmouth College, and was its first graduate. At his father's insistence, he attended the Hahnemann-Medical College of Chicago and set up practice in Monmouth. He continued to study music, sang in a church choir, and organized a male quartet that appeared at several of the national Prohibition Conventions and many Chautauquas. George Root visited Monmouth and they became good friends. After studying with George Root and Philip Bliss, he closed his medical practice to work with music full time. At one time, Herbert taught at the Southern Development Normal music school in Waco, Texas. There he taught many future composers of Gospel hymns. He died in Monmouth, Illinois. He composed many hymns, glees and part-songs. He also wrote political songs, a harmony method text, a book on how to write accompaniments for songs, and a collection of settings of songs from the plays of Shakespeare. His most popular composition was his 1891 setting of "Away in a manger."

O'er the dewy green,
By the glowworm's light,
Dance the elves of night.
Unheard, unseen by the glowworm's light,
Unheard, unseen, dance the elves of night.
Yet where their midnight pranks have been,
The circled turf will betray tomorrow.

Anon.

The Elves of Night

J. B. Herbert

S
O'er the dew - y green, By the glow - worm's light,

A
O'er the dew - y green, By the glow - worm's light,

T
O'er the dew - y green, By the glow - worm's light,

B
O'er the dew - y green, By the glow - worm's light,

The first system of the musical score is for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). It consists of four staves. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The music begins with a forte (f) dynamic marking. The lyrics are: "O'er the dew - y green, By the glow - worm's light,". The melody is simple and rhythmic, with a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note, then a quarter note, and a final quarter note. There are accents (>) over the final notes of each phrase.

S
Dance the elves of night, Dance the elves of night, night.

A
Dance the elves of night, Dance the elves of night, night.

T
Dance the elves of night, Dance the elves of night, night.

B
Dance the elves of night, Dance the elves of night, night.

The second system of the musical score continues the four-voice setting. It consists of four staves. The lyrics are: "Dance the elves of night, Dance the elves of night, night." The music features a first ending (1.) and a second ending (2.) for the Soprano part. The key signature and time signature remain the same as in the first system. The melody is consistent with the first system, with accents (>) over the final notes of each phrase.

The Elves of Night

S *p* Un - heard, un - seen by the glow - worm's light, *cresc.* Un -

A *p* Un - heard, un - seen by the glow - worm's light, *cresc.* Un -

T *p* Un - heard, un - seen by the glow - worm's light, *cresc.* Un -

B *p* Un - heard, un - seen by the glow - worm's light, *cresc.* Un -

14 S heard, un - seen, dance the elves of night.

A heard, un - seen, dance the elves of night.

T heard, un - seen, dance the elves of night.

B heard, un - seen, dance the elves of night.

S *f* O'er the dew - y green, By the glow - worm's light,

A *f* O'er the dew - y green, By the glow - worm's light,

T *f* O'er the dew - y green, By the glow - worm's light,

B *f* O'er the dew - y green, By the glow - worm's light,

The Elves of Night

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S Dance the elves of night, Dance the elves of night, night.

A Dance the elves of night, Dance the elves of night, night.

T Dance the elves of night, Dance the elves of night, night.

B Dance the elves of night, Dance the elves of night, night.

S Yet where their mid - night pranks have been, Yet where their mid - night pranks have been, The

A Yet where their mid - night pranks have been, Yet where their mid - night pranks have been, The

T Yet where their mid - night pranks have been, Yet where their mid - night pranks have been, The

B Yet where their mid - night pranks have been, Yet where their mid - night pranks have been, The

31

S cir - cled turf will be - tray to - mor - row,

A cir - cled turf will be - tray to - mor - row,

T cir - cled turf will be - tray to - mor - row,

B cir - cled turf will be - tray to - mor - row,

The Elves of Night

35 *dim.* *dim.*

S will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row,

A will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row,

T will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row,

B will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row,

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S will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row,

A will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row,

T will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row,

B will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row,

43 *f* *dim.*

S will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row,

A will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row,

T will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row,

B will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row,

The Elves of Night

47 *dim.*

S will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row, to -

A will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row, to -

T will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row, to -

B will be - tray to - mor - row, will be - tray to - mor - row, to -

51 *p* *pp*

S mor - row, to - mor - row, to - mor - row.

A mor - row, to - mor - row, to - mor - row.

T mor - row, to - mor - row, to - mor - row.

B mor - row, to - mor - row, to - mor - row.

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David Anderson
SHORCHOR Music
1706 NE 177th St.
Shoreline, WA 98155 USA

