**THE BALLAD OF MINEPIT SHAW**

by Rudyard Kipling

About the time the taverns shut and men can buy no beer,

Two lads went up to the keeper's hut to steal Lord Pelham's deer.

Night and the liquor was in their heads -- They laughed and talked no bounds,

Till they waked the keepers on their beds and the keepers loosed the hounds.

They had killed a hart; they had killed a hind, ready to carry away,

When they heard a whimper down the wind and they heard a bloodhound bay.

They took and ran across the fern, their crossbows in their hand,

Till they met a man with a green lantern that called and bade 'em stand.

"What are ye doing, of flesh and blood and what's your foolish will,

That you must break into Minepit Wood and wake the Folk of the Hill?"

"Oh, we've broke into Lord Pelham's park and killed Lord Pelham's deer

And if ever you heard a little dog bark you'll know why we come here.

We ask you let us go our way, as fast as we can flee,

For if ever you heard a bloodhound bay, you'll know how pressed we be."

"Oh, lay your crossbows on the bank and drop the knives from your hand

And though the hounds be at your flank I'll save you where you stand!"

They laid their crossbows on the bank; they threw their knives in the wood

And the ground before them opened and sank and saved them where they stood.

"Oh, what's the roaring in our ears that strikes us well-nigh dumb?"

"Oh, that is just how things appears according as they come."

"What are the stars before our eyes that strike us well-nigh blind?"

"Oh, that is just how things arise according as you find."

"And why's our bed so hard to the bones, excepting where it's cold?"

"Oh, that's because it is precious stones, excepting where 'tis gold."

"Think it over as you stand, for I tell you without fail,

If you haven't got into Fairyland, you're not in Lewes Goal."

All night long they thought of it and, come the dawn, they saw

They'd tumbled into a great old pit at the bottom of Minepit Shaw.

And the keeper's hound had followed 'em close and broke her neck in the fall,

So they picked up their knives and their crossbows and buried the dog. That's all.

But whether the man was a poacher too or a Pharisee so bold --

I reckon there's more things told than are true and more thing true than are told!

[refers to fairies and possibly to the Green Lantern]