

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK
For three (to five) children to perform
Adapted by Marian Scadden

CHARACTERS:

JACK
MOTHER/ GIANT'S WIFE
GIANT/BEAN SELLER

Note: Performers with more than one part should have simple costume changes to indicate the different characters.

Setting: On stage left is a chair and table to indicate the Giant's home. The table has a tablecloth on it. Jack's home is on stage right. Note: doorways, windows, beanstalks and other items may be pantomimed.

At Rise: Mother enters from right with a broom; she begins sweeping.

MOTHER: What are we going to do for food? We'll starve if we don't buy something to eat. I know! (calls) Jack, come here.

JACK: (enters from right, eating a piece of bread) Yes, Mother.

MOTHER: I want you to sell our cow.

JACK: Why?

MOTHER: We need the money to buy food.

JACK: (holds up bread) We have bread.

MOTHER: That's the last piece.

JACK: Really? (runs off stage then runs back on) You're right.

MOTHER: I know. Now go sell the cow. (exits right)

JACK: (pantomimes opening a door) Here cow, cow, cow! There you are. Come along, I've got to sell you. (pantomimes pulling the cow). Cow for sale! Cow for sale!

BEAN SELLER: (enters from right; has beans tied up in a handkerchief or bandana; calling to Jack) Boy, boy! I want to buy your cow.

JACK: Good. She's worth—

BEAN SELLER: (interrupting) I'll give you some magic beans for her. Plant them tonight and magic will happen.

JACK: Neat. It's a deal. (he gives her the cow for the beans; Bean seller exits) Mother will be so proud of me. (crosses right) Mother, I'm home, and wait until you see what I sold our cow for.

MOTHER: (enters from right) You sold her so fast. I'm proud of you.

JACK: I knew you would be.

MOTHER: (holds out hand) Where's the money?

JACK: (puts handkerchief in her hand) No money. I got magic beans!

MOTHER: Magic beans? Magic beans!

JACK: Yes, I just have to plant them. May I have them back?

MOTHER: No, I'm throwing them out the window. (throws them to center stage) Now we're going to starve! (cries and exits right)

JACK: I hope I didn't do something wrong. Mother? (exits; pause; reenters as though just waking up) Mother was so mad yesterday. I wonder where those beans are. (crosses to center; looks up) Wow, a giant beanstalk. Those beans *were* magic. I'm going to climb this thing. (pantomimes climbing) This is a long way up. (looks to stage left) A giant castle. Amazing! (pantomimes getting off the beanstalk; walks to stage left; pantomimes knocking on a door) Hello? Anybody home?

GIANT'S WIFE: (enters from left; pantomimes opening the door) Yes?

JACK: (surprised) You're so tall!

GIANT'S WIFE: And you're very *small*.

JACK: I'm average height where I'm from.

GIANT'S WIFE: And I'm average height around here.

GIANT: (offstage; Loudly) Fe fi fo fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive or be he dead, I'll crush his bones to make my bread.

JACK: (scared) What was that?

GIANT'S WIFE: My husband.

JACK: Will he really use my bones to make bread?

GIANT'S WIFE: He doesn't know how to make bread.

JACK: Good.

GIANT'S WIFE: But he *will* eat you.

JACK: Oh, no. Please help me.

GIANT'S WIFE: Don't worry, I will. I don't like it when he eats children; adults, yes. Children, no. Now hide under the table. (Jack does)

GIANT: (enters) Do I smell a human in here?

GIANT'S WIFE: No, dear. I'm cooking stew for dinner. Maybe the neighbors are barbecuing again.

GIANT: That must be it. Will you bring my bag of coins, please?

GIANT'S WIFE: Sure. (starts to exit)

GIANT: And the hen that lays the golden egg?

GIANT'S WIFE: Okay. (starts to exit)

GIANT: And the harp that plays by itself.

GIANT'S WIFE: (angry) I only have two hands.

GIANT: Sorry. I'll get the harp.

(Giants exit and bring in the items and set them on the table. Items can be real or pantomimed)

GIANT'S WIFE: I'm going to get dinner ready. Clear the table when you're done.

GIANT: Okay. (opens bag of coins and counts them) One, two, three, four, five...(yawns) There are a lot of coins in this bag. I'll count them later. Hen, lay. (picks up gold egg) What a nice egg. (yawns) I'm so tired. Harp, play me a song. (leans back in chair and falls asleep)

(Jack sneaks out from under the table. He slowly and quietly picks up the objects and tiptoes to center stage. He climbs down the beanstalk.)

GIANT: Harp? Why aren't you playing? (opens eyes) Gone! (sees Jack) A thief!

JACK: (exits right while calling) Mother, bring the axe!

(Giant runs to the beanstalk and starts climbing down; Jack and Mother enter)

MOTHER: (looking up as if seeing the Giant high above her) Oh, no!

JACK: (pretending to chop down the beanstalk) Don't worry, Mother! I've got this!

GIANT: (pretending to fall) Aaaa! (lays on floor)

MOTHER: Who is that giant?

JACK: He lived at the top of the beanstalk. And look, (exits; reenters with coins, hen and harp) he had Father's things.

MOTHER: Oh, Jack. You've made me proud. Now clean up the mess you made. (she takes the items from Jack and exits)

END

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