

JACK AGAINST THE OGRE

A One-Act Comedy Play

by
Whitney Ryan Garrity



Brooklyn Publishers, LLC

Toll-Free 888-473-8521

Fax 319-368-8011

Web www.brookpub.com

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by

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AT RISE: The Lights fade up to reveal a backdrop suggesting a landscape of rolling hills, fertile fields, valleys, mountains and, perhaps, a stream. The colors are bright and primary. A framed structure with 2 door panels is centered in front of the backdrop. "Jack Against the Ogre" is projected on the panels. A stylized well is in position DSR. The projection on the panel dissolves, as the R panel opens and the NEIGHBORS (GUSTAVE, DAGMAR, OLAF, TRILBY and SONYA) enter. The last NEIGHBOR closes the panel door. The projection now reads "Once Upon a Time ..." The NEIGHBORS arrange themselves around the well. Each NEIGHBOR is dressed as a specific member of the village. THEY chat and gossip animatedly until THEY suddenly become aware of the audience and, embarrassed, take their places, forming a sort of Greek Chorus at CS. The NEIGHBORS address the audience.

GUSTAVE: Once upon a time ...

NEIGHBORS: A long time ago ...

DAGMAR: In a Kingdom ...

NEIGHBORS: Far, far away,

 There was a village

 Terrorized by an ogre.

GUSTAVE: The Ogre was big ...

NEIGHBORS: *Very* big!

GUSTAVE: And mean ...

NEIGHBORS: *Very* mean!

GUSTAVE: And dumb ...

NEIGHBORS: Oh, was he dumb!

OLAF: But, no one could stop him

 From coming down

 From his ...

NEIGHBORS: Kingdom in the sky ...

TRILBY: And stealing

 From the humble villagers ...

NEIGHBORS: No one.

GUSTAVE: Now, there lived ...

DAGMAR: (*Overlapping*) There lived in this village, a lad ...

OLAF: (*Overlapping*) A lad by the name of ...

NEIGHBORS: (*Beaming*) Jack!

(The projection dissolves as JACK bounds through the L panel door. HE pulls a cow by a rope with much effort. The "cow" is actually a wooden structure, painted to resemble the animal. It is mounted on wheels for easy mobility.)

TRILBY: Jack spent much of his time ...

SONYA: Much of his time was spent playing with his best friend ...

NEIGHBORS: (*Amused*) A cow!

JACK: Come on, Milky-white. Race you to the meadow! (*JACK drags off MILKY-WHITE, with a great deal of effort, nevertheless cheerfully.*)

GUSTAVE: Jack was quite an ...

NEIGHBORS: *Unusual* boy.

DAGMAR: And quite an ...

NEIGHBORS: Embarrassment ...

OLAF: To Jack's Mother.

TRILBY: Even so ...

NEIGHBORS: Jack was a good boy!

(JACK'S MOTHER appears suddenly from the open L panel. SHE closes the panel and moves purposefully to CS. A projection now displays a façade depicting the front of JACK's house. JACK'S MOTHER addresses the NEIGHBORS.)

JACK'S MOTHER: A good boy? A good boy?! Oh, that's easy for *you* to say! He's not *your* cross to bear! He's not the thorn in *your* side! *(Moving DS to address the audience)* Oh, was there ever a woman as cursed as I? First, to lose my husband – a stupid man, I'll grant you that – but, I loved him very much.

NEIGHBORS: *(Unconvinced)* Very much.

JACK'S MOTHER: Then to be left penniless! With no source of income, no hope for the future!

NEIGHBORS: *(Shrugging in mock sympathy)* None.

JACK'S MOTHER: And *then*, to be saddled with that boy ...

NEIGHBORS: *(Beaming)* Jack!

JACK'S MOTHER: Always with his head in the clouds, that's my boy, Jack. A boy with dreams in his heart, but no brains in his head. A boy who always sees the good in things and never sees things as they truly are. A boy who spends entirely too much of his time in the meadow, playing with his best friend ...

NEIGHBORS: *(Amused)* A cow!

JACK'S MOTHER: Oh, my friends, my friends! What a long, sad tale of woe I have for all of you today. It all started when that dreadful ogre ...

(The NEIGHBORS ad-lib obviously fake excuses and make hasty exits. JACK'S MOTHER turns to the audience.)

Oh, was there ever a woman as cursed as I?

(JACK enters cheerfully from R, pulling MILKY-WHITE on with him.)

JACK: Good morning, Mother. I was up early so I could spend some time with Milky-White in the meadow. She's my best friend!

JACK'S MOTHER: Yes, Jack. I'm all too aware of that. As a matter of fact, it is Milky-White about which I wish to speak with you, son.

JACK: Yes, Mother?

JACK'S MOTHER: As you know, we are very poor ...

JACK: Yes, Mother ... very poor.

JACK'S MOTHER: And we have no money ...

JACK: Yes, Mother ... I mean, no, Mother ... I mean, *none* Mother! *(Brightly)* Say, I have an idea! What if I were to go out in search of work? Surely there must be *something* I could do to earn a little money for us.

JACK'S MOTHER: *(Scornfully)* You? Work? Why, the very idea! Who would hire *you*? And to do what? *(Laughs)* You with a job! That's a good one! Why, Jack ... you're just as dim-witted as your father.

JACK: *(Quietly)* So you've told me.

JACK'S MOTHER: Oh, if only your father hadn't been so foolish! If only he'd taken a moment to think of me ... of *us*, I mean ... before he took it upon himself to ...

JACK: *(Overlapping, proudly)* I believe he *was* thinking of us, Mother. It was *us* he was fighting for.

JACK'S MOTHER: But, against an ogre? A big, strong, powerful ogre? What could he have been thinking? How could he even dream that he could best the Ogre in battle?

JACK: But, Mother! The Ogre stole from us. He took what little we had for his own selfish pleasure. That wasn't right and father knew it!

JACK'S MOTHER: Oh, what's right? What's wrong? What does it matter now, his being right? What did your father gain from being right? Nothing! And we've lost everything in the world ... everything, that is, except ...

JACK: Except ...?

JACK'S MOTHER: Well, it appears that the only possession we have now that is of any value at all is ... Milky-White!

JACK: (*Proudly*) My best friend!

JACK'S MOTHER: (*Annoyed*) Would you *please* stop calling her that?! She's a cow, Jack. She's just a silly old cow! And before she gets any *older*, you must take her to market.

JACK: To market? Oh, Milky-White prefers the meadow. The market has so many people milling about ... and hardly any grass. Milky-White loves grass! Sometimes, when we go to the meadow –

JACK'S MOTHER: Not to play with her, Jack! You must take to market and *sell* her!

JACK: Sell her? Sell my best fr—

(*JACK'S MOTHER glowers at him and JACK catches himself.*)

My cow? No, Mother! There must be another way to get money. There must be!

JACK'S MOTHER: (*Sarcastically*) Well, of course, we could always just stand here and wait for it to fall from the skies!

JACK: (*Looking up*) Really? (*Eagerly*) I'll get a bucket to catch the ---!

JACK'S MOTHER: Jack! You must take Milky-White to market and sell her today ... now! Perhaps we still have time to command a good price for her. Let's say ten pounds ...

JACK: (*Dejected*) Yes, Mother ... ten pounds.

JACK'S MOTHER: And not a penny less!

JACK: Yes, Mother ... but, do I have to?

JACK'S MOTHER: Yes, you have to! Now, go quickly. The market place is quite a ways off and I want you home by dark.

JACK: Yes, Mother. (*JACK starts off slowly, miserably, with MILKY-WHITE. HE turns back to his mother.*) Don't you want to say good-bye to Milky-White?

JACK'S MOTHER: Go!

(*JACK'S MOTHER exits into the house façade. A Spotlight illuminates JACK as the Lights dim around him.*)

JACK: (*Kneeling beside MILKY-WHITE*) Oh, Milky-White. What will I do without you? I know you're just a cow, but still ... you *are* my best friend. You're my *only* friend! You never say that I'm dumb or dim-witted. You never say that I'm just a foolish dreamer. You never say ... well, you never say *anything* actually! But I guess that's part of your charm. I sure wish there was a way to keep you. But Mother says I need to take you to market, so that's just what I'm going to do. I have to show her that I'm smart enough to carry out this task. She doesn't think I'm very smart, Milky-White. She doesn't believe that I'll ever amount to anything. But, I am smart and I will be somebody someday! (*Rising to his feet*) Somebody great and important ... I hope. Maybe I'll lead men into battle ... (*Charging*) Forward ho! (*Stops and brandishes an imaginary sword*) Or single-handedly slay a dragon! (*Swinging the "sword"*) Swiiiiiiiiish ... Swooooooooooosh!! (*Stops*) Or even conquer a kingdom! (*Sighs and returns to MILKY-WHITE*) Oh, Milky-White. I have so many dreams. So many plans for the future. This can't be all that life has in store for me ... it just can't be!

(*The Lights are restored. The well has been removed, giving the impression that JACK and MILKY-WHITE have traveled a distance. The projection now fills in the backdrop. JACK looks around.*)

It's not much farther, Milky-White. I can see the marketplace from here. Now, remember what Mother said: "Ten pounds and not a penny more." (*Moves as if bumped by MILKY-WHITE*) What? (*Leaning*

toward the Cow) Oh, yes! “Not a penny less!” What would I do without you, Milky-White? (*Poignantly*) Guess I’ll find out soon enough, won’t I?

(*JACK starts off with MILKY-WHITE. MAURIO appears suddenly and blocks JACK’s path.*)

MAURIO: Ho, there, Jack! And where might you be off to with this fine cow?

JACK: Well, I ... say! How did you come to know my name?

MAURIO: Perhaps I didn’t come to know your name. Perhaps I knew your name before I had come. Or perhaps it is simply that Jacks grow as plentiful in this Kingdom as blackberries. Therefore, if I call *everyone* I run into along the path by the name of Jack, sooner or later, I’m bound to be correct, no?

JACK: (*Nodding, confused*) No ... I mean, yes ... I mean, that’s very clever ... I think. (*Patting MILKY-WHITE*) If you’re so smart, perhaps *you* can tell *me* where I’m off to with this fine cow.

MAURIO: Well, I let me see ... I would say that you—

JACK: (*Prompting*) And my mother—

MAURIO: Are—?

JACK: Very poor—

MAURIO: So, you need to—?

JACK: Bring Milky-White—

MAURIO: To—?

JACK: Market—

MAURIO: Where you will—?

JACK: Sell her. Golly! You are clever. Who are you?

MAURIO: You are in the presence of Maurio the Gypsy. My card ... (*Searches his pockets without success*) I seem to have run out of cards. You will have make do with the one in your ear!

JACK: The one in my ...?

(*MAURIO “magically” produces a business card from behind JACK’s ear.*)

Wow! Milky-White, did you see that? (*Moves as if bumped by the Cow*) What? (*Listening*) Oh, yes.

You’re right. (*To MAURIO*) We best be off to market. It was nice to meet you, Mister Maurio the Gypsy.

Thank you for the card. (*JACK starts off again, with MILKY-WHITE.*)

MAURIO: Say, my good lad. Perhaps you might be interested in ... (*Turns away dramatically*) No, no! A bad idea! Yuck! P-tooey! Forget I mentioned it.

JACK: (*Shrugs*) Okay.

(*JACK starts off again. MAURIO moves quickly to block his path.*)

MAURIO: Don’t you want to hear it?

JACK: Hear what?

MAURIO: My idea!

JACK: Oh ... I forgot you mentioned it!

(*MAURIO dangles a small pouch in front of JACK.*)

MAURIO: Wouldn’t you like to know what’s in the pouch?

JACK: That depends.

MAURIO: On what?

JACK: On what’s in the pouch.

MAURIO: (*Drawing JACK in slyly*) Beans, my boy!

JACK: Beans?

MAURIO: Beans! And I would be willing to ... *(Turning away dramatically again)* No, no! A bad idea!

Yuck! P-tooeey! Forget I mentioned it.

JACK: *(Shrugging)* Okay.

MAURIO: Very, well. You force my hand. I would be willing to trade these beans for your cow!

JACK: Beans for a cow? What kind of fool do you take me for? Who would trade away a perfectly fine cow for a handful of common beans? Not me, that's who! Why, my mother would ...

MAURIO: Have a cow? No offense, Milky-White! *(To JACK)* No, you're right, my boy. Only a fool would make such a trade. Unless, of course, the beans weren't common at all. Suppose they were most *uncommon?!?*

JACK: What do you mean?

MAURIO: Magic!

JACK: Magic? The beans?

MAURIO: The beans, which means ...

MAURIO and JACK: Magic beans!

JACK: How are they magic?

MAURIO: *(Caught off guard)* How? Oh, well ... in the usual magical way.

JACK: I mean, what do they do?

MAURIO: Do? Oh, this and that. Mostly this, actually. But, occasionally, from time to time, a little of that.

JACK: *(To MILKY-WHITE; impressed)* Did you hear that, Milky-White? Mostly this, but occasionally, from time to time, a little of that! *(Listens, then admits:)* I don't know either. *(To MAURIO)* I'm sorry, Mister Maurio the Gypsy. I cannot trade my cow for beans. I promised my mother that I would bring her to market and fetch no more than ten pounds ... *(Moves as if bumped by MILKY-WHITE)* Less ... no less than ten pounds!

MAURIO: Ten pounds? For *one* cow? You'll be lucky to get *three!* And I can offer you *five* beans! I dare say that these beans – being magical and all – are worth at least *two* pounds apiece. That would add up to ...

(JACK begins counting on his fingers.)

Carry the one!

JACK: Ten pounds!

MAURIO: And not a penny less! But, if you don't wish to trade, then you don't wish to trade. I shall leave you to your errand.

JACK: *(Shrugs)* Okay.

MAURIO: You drive a hard bargain, lad. I shall even throw in the pouch! *(MAURIO tosses the pouch to JACK and grabs MILKY-WHITE's rope in one, swift motion.)* There, now we've traded. Now, run along home, Jack. Show your mother what a clever son you are to trick me out of my magic beans!

JACK: Yes, sir. Magic beans ... won't Mother be surprised? *(JACK starts off, then HE turns back sadly.)* Good-bye, Milky-White. I hope wherever he takes you, there'll be lots of grass. *(To MAURIO)* She loves grass.

(JACK wanders off, dejectedly. MAURIO laughs to himself.)

MAURIO: What fun! Such an easy mark! Hardly even a challenge at all! The boy was no match for my cunning, my trickery—

MARIA: *(Off)* Maurio ...?!

MAURIO: *(Flinching)* My wife!

(MAURIO's wife, MARIA, enters angrily.)

MARIA: There you are! I send you out for one simple little task and you're gone half the day! Do you have the beans? I need them for a special recipe. I'm casting a spell on our next-door neighbor, Esmeralda. Teach her to borrow my good crystal punch bowl and not return it! Well, don't just stand there—waiting to get a word in—hand over the beans!

MAURIO: (*Nervously*) I ... I don't have them!

MARIA: Where are they? And what are you doing with this horrible creature? Don't tell me one of those nasty little trolls turned your Cousin Guido into a cow ... *again*? When will he learn not to fool with those little monsters?

MAURIO: No, no. It's nothing like that. The cow is ours. I tricked a simple-minded boy named Jack into giving me the cow in exchange for the beans! (*Laughs*) I told them they were magic ...! (*Laughing harder*) And he believed me! Isn't that a hoot? (*MAURIO stops laughing abruptly, due to MARIA's stony stare,*) You're not laughing.

MARIA: (*Forcing MAURIO backwards, toward R*) You foolish man! Of course the beans were magic! Why do you think I wanted you to pick them in the first place? Do I strike you as the kind of wife who would send her husband out in search of *ordinary* beans? Do I strike you as the sort of gypsy who would attempt to cast a spell using *ordinary* beans? Do I strike you *now*, or wait 'til we get home?! How could you be so dumb as to trade away my beans ...?

(*JACK rushes in from L, followed by a very angry JACK'S MOTHER. The projection dissolves and is replaced by the house façade. The two scenes unfold simultaneously.*)

JACK'S MOTHER: (*Overlapping MARIA*) Beans, Jack?

JACK: (*Meekly*) Surprised?

MARIA: You traded away magic beans for a cow?

JACK'S MOTHER: (*Overlapping*) Beans for a cow?!

MARIA: And what shall we do with a silly, funny-looking cow?

MAURIO: (*Petting MILKY-WHITE*) Don't worry, Milky-White. She'll warm up to you.

JACK'S MOTHER: Oh, Jack ... where was your head?

MARIA: (*To MAURIO*) What were you thinking?

JACK'S MOTHER: You've exchanged your cow ... your best friend ... for some beans! Did it even occur to you that it might be a trick?

MARIA: You allowed some boy to trick you out of *my* magic beans!

JACK'S MOTHER: Why would you do such a thing, son?

JACK: I did it for you, Mother. I thought that if they really were magic, it would make you happy. I just wanted to see you happy again.

JACK'S MOTHER: (*Angrily*) Happy? How could this possibly make me happy, Jack?!

MARIA: (*As SHE exits*) We're going to find that Jack *and* my beans! (*Re-enters and grabs MAURIO*) Well, come on!

(*MARIA pulls MAURIO off with her. MAURIO pulls off MILKY-WHITE.*)

JACK'S MOTHER: Now, we have nothing! No money, no food, no cow ... (*Pouring the beans into her hand*) Nothing!

JACK: We have the beans.

JACK'S MOTHER: Which are useless!

(*JACK'S MOTHER pantomimes tossing the beans over her shoulder. SHE is about to toss the pouch as well, but thinks better of it and pockets it in her apron instead.*)

JACK: Mother! Maybe the beans weren't really magic, but they *were* beans! Which means we could have eaten them. *Now*, we have nothing!

JACK'S MOTHER: Oh, and is that *my* fault, now?! How dare you speak to me like that! You should be ashamed of yourself, Jack. You're a foolish boy and that's all you'll ever be. Now, off to bed! We'll talk about what's to be done about this in the morning.

JACK: Yes, Mother. (*Starts off, turn back to her; poignantly*) I really did think they might be magic. (*Exits*)

JACK'S MOTHER: (*Pacing furiously*) Magic beans! I have raised a boy who believes in magic beans ... and talks to cows! (*Stops pacing*) Oh, was there ever a woman as cursed as I?!

(*JACK'S MOTHER exits. The NEIGHBORS wander on from different directions. THEY address the audience.*)

GUSTAVE: No money ...

DAGMAR: No food ...

OLAF: No cow ...

NEIGHBORS: Nothing!

TRILBY: What's a boy to do?

(*The NEIGHBORS wander off as the projection dissolves and the Lights fade. JACK is discovered in a Spotlight. HE creeps on stage warily, carrying a handkerchief tied to a stick. JACK addresses the audience.*)

JACK: Ssh! I mustn't wake my mother. She would be very upset if she knew I was planning to run away ... at least, I *hope* she would be upset! Don't worry, I'm not running away forever. I'll be back as soon as I find a way to help my mother. I got us into this mess and I'm the one who's gonna get us out! Magic beans! Where *was* my head? How could I have let that Mister Maurio the Gypsy trick me like that? I guess Mother was right after all. I *am* foolish! And no matter how many dreams and schemes fill my head, I'll never amount to so much as a hill of—

(*The Lights fade up and JACK discovers a new projection: a large, leafy beanstalk climbing upward.*)

... beans! Look at that! A giant beanstalk! That means ... that means they *were* magic! They really were magic! (*Elated*) I was right, I was right all along! (*Peering up into the "sky"*) Wow! Look how high up it goes! Straight up to the skies ... wait, a minute! The skies?! The Ogre! The Ogre lives in his kingdom in the sky. I'll wager this beanstalk will take me right to him! And ... maybe ... right to my destiny!

(*The Lights fade as JACK prepares to ascend the beanstalk. A Light reveals GUSTAVE.*)

GUSTAVE: And so, Jack climbed and climbed and climbed; making his way all the way up to the top of the beanstalk. But he had no idea what – or who – he would find when he got there!

(*GUSTAVE wanders off as the Lights fade up. The projection depicts a large, double-door cupboard. A table is positioned at SR, 2 or 3 chairs are set around it. An over-sized easy chair is set at SL. LETTIE enters from SR, with a stack of plates. SHE hums as SHE sets the table.*)

LETTIE: (*Calling*) Hurry and finish your chores, girls. The Ogre will be home before we know it!

MELODY and HANNAH: (*Off*) Yes, Mother!

(*JACK enters from SL, looking around curiously.*)

JACK: Hello? Anybody home ...? (*Spots LETTIE*) Oh, hello. The door was open, so I ... big door, by the way! (*Taking the room in*) Big place!

LETTIE: (*Rushing to JACK*) Yes, and coming here was a big mistake, young man! Have you any idea where you are? This is the Ogre's castle!

JACK: (*Moving to the table and setting down his bundle; pleased*) Oh, so I did find it!

LETTIE: Yes! And now, if you know what's good for you, you'll run along home before the Ogre finds you here! He's sure to mistake you for his dinner!

JACK: Speaking of food ... you know, I've been climbing up a gigantic beanstalk all day and I— (*Frightened*) Mistake me for his dinner? You mean, he eats ...?!

(*LETTIE nods her head.*)

Oh! You're just trying to scare me!

(*LETTIE shakes her head.*)

Well, it worked anyway!

LETTIE: How in the world did you get up to the Ogre's kingdom in the sky, lad?

JACK: I told you, I climbed up a huge beanstalk! It grew overnight in my backyard, from some magic beans. (*Proudly*) My beans! I traded them for my— (*Sadly*) Well, that's not important right now. I knew the beanstalk would lead me right to the Ogre and it did and ... well, here I am!

LETTIE: Why would anyone go to all that trouble to see the Ogre? He's ... well, he's not very nice.

JACK: Trust me, ma'am, I know that! That's why I've come. You see, I plan to—

(*MELODY and HANNAH enter from SR. MELODY wears a golden gown, a panel in her skirt depicts a harp. HANNAH wears a bright red gown, festooned with feathers. A golden basket hangs about her waist.*)

MELODY: Mother, who are you talking to ...? (*Spots JACK*) Oh!

HANNAH: Did the Ogre have his dinner delivered tonight?

LETTIE: No, no. Of course not, dear. Girls, this is ... oh, dear! (*To JACK*) Who are you?

JACK: The name's Jack, ma'am.

LETTIE: Hello, Jack. I'm Lettie and these are my daughters, Melody and Hannah.

(*MELODY and HANNAH curtsy.*)

And now, Jack, I think it's best that you be ...

(*JACK looks at MELODY and HANNAH and turns to LETTIE, confidentially.*)

JACK: Meaning no disrespect, ma'am ... but did you happen to notice that one of your daughters is a harp and the other one is a hen?

LETTIE: I'm quite aware of that, son. You see, they're enchanted!

JACK: (*Smitten*) They sure are!

LETTIE: No, I mean that the Ogre has had a spell cast upon them! One day, last year, the Ogre happened upon our cottage, as he was stealing treasures from the frightened villagers. When the Ogre looked upon Melody, he decided that he must have her for his wife.

HANNAH: (*Taking MELODY's hand as speaking as the OGRE*) Marry me and I will give you all that your heart desires.

LETTIE: He said.

MELODY: (*Pulling away her hand*) All that my heart desires is love and you cannot provide me with that.

LETTIE: She said. This, of course, angered the Ogre and he commanded a nasty little troll to turn Melody into a golden harp.

MELODY: Now I must provide for him – music for his entertainment.

LETTIE: Still wanting a bride, the fickle Ogre looked upon Hannah and decided that he would take *her* as his wife.

MELODY: (*Taking HANNAH's hand and speaking as the OGRE*) Marry me and I will give you all that your heart desires.

LETTIE: He said.

HANNAH: (*Pulling away her hand*) All that my heart desires is love and you cannot provide me with that.

LETTIE: She said. This angered the Ogre as well. He commanded the very same troll to turn Hannah into a hen which lays golden eggs.

HANNAH: Now I too must provide for the Ogre.

LETTIE: When the Ogre stole away with my daughters and brought them here, to his kingdom up in the sky, I thought it best to come along too!

JACK: The Ogre has stolen from my family as well! He has also robbed me of a father, leaving me with a mother who is ... (*Thinking a moment*) *Moody!* But good news, ladies! I have come here to best the Ogre in battle, avenge my father's death and recover the villagers' stolen treasures! In the meantime ... I'm awfully hungry!

LETTIE: Come with me to the kitchen and I'll get you something to eat ... and we'll discuss this foolish notion of you fighting the Ogre.

JACK: But—

LETTIE: Come along, lad. (*LETTIE leads JACK off SR.*)

HANNAH: Do you think Jack could really do it, Melody? Best the Ogre, I mean.

MELODY: (*Pondering*) I don't know ...

HANNAH: (*Sighs*) He's awfully cute!

MELODY: Cute does not slay an ogre, Hannah. Brave slays an ogre. Strong slays an ogre. Clever slays an ogre. But ... *he* is awfully cute!

(*MELODY and HANNAH share a girlish giggle.*)

HANNAH: Just suppose that Jack *did* fight the Ogre ... and win ... then the curses upon us would be removed, wouldn't they?

MELODY: Yes, I believe so, Hannah. Then I wouldn't have to be a harp ...

HANNAH: And I wouldn't have to be a hen!

MELODY: Then, perhaps, life for us would be as it was before.

HANNAH: (*Longingly*) Before ...

(*MELODY and HANNAH seat themselves at the table.*)

When we were just foolish girls with foolish fantasies. No eggs ...

MELODY: No tunes ...

MELODY and HANNAH: No Ogre!

(*LETTIE and JACK re-enter. LETTIE carries a slice of pie on a plate.*)

LETTIE: There now. You've had a little something to eat. Now off you go! And take this pie with you.

JACK: (*Starting back off SR*) What was that room we passed back there?

LETTIE: (*Turning JACK back around*) Oh. Well, I suppose that would be the Ogre's Treasure Room. Now then ...

JACK: (*Angrily*) You mean *Stolen* Treasure Room!

LETTIE: (*Feigning cheerfulness*) Yes ... well, we'll chat about that some other time, then. So nice to have met you, Jack. You best be off before the Ogre—

OGRE: (*Off, chanting*) *Fee-fi-fo-fum ...*

MELODY and HANNAH: (*Springing to their feet*) Too late!

LETTIE: Oh, dear! Quick, Jack ... into the cupboard with you!

JACK: Into the ...?!

LETTIE, MELODY and HANNAH: Cupboard!

(LETTIE shoves JACK into the cupboard. HANNAH spots JACK's bundle on the table. SHE hands it off to MELODY. MELODY hands it off to LETTIE. LETTIE tosses the bundle into the cupboard and closes the double doors. LETTIE, MELODY and HANNAH pose innocently, as the OGRE enters from SL. HE has a large heavy sack slung over his back.)

LETTIE: *(Nervously)* Back so soon? And how was the pillaging and plundering today then?

OGRE: *(Sullenly, slumping into the easy chair)* The usual.

LETTIE: Oh, good!

(The OGRE scowls at LETTIE.)

Or bad ... whichever applies!

OGRE: *(Sitting up suddenly)* Fee-fi-fo-fum ... *(Sniffs expectantly)* I smell a boy in my kingdom!

LETTIE: *(With a nervous laugh)* A boy? Oh, my. Did you hear that, girls? He thinks he smells a boy.

(MELODY and HANNAH laugh weakly.)

And how on earth could there be a boy way up here? No, no ... it's not boy that you smell. It's not boy at all. It's ... it's ... *(Spots the pie on the table)* Boysenberry pie! Yes, that's it! *(Holding out the plate)* Try some.

(JACK quickly opens the cupboard door, snatches the pie plate and closes the door again – unnoticed by the OGRE.)

OGRE: Don't want pie!

LETTIE: Just as well!

OGRE: Want, nice tender, plump boy! Haven't had a boy since ... *(Thinking)* Tuesday!

HANNAH: But today *is* Tuesday!

OGRE: *(Rising from his chair)* Today Tuesday? No, I say today ... *(Thinking)* Friday!

MELODY: But—

OGRE: *(Stomps his foot angrily)* I say Friday! *(Commandingly)* What you say?

LETTIE, MELODY and HANNAH: *(Contrite)* Friday!

OGRE: That's more like it! *(Gleefully, to the audience)* It's good to be the Ogre!

LETTIE: Now then, why don't you just sit back in your big, comfy chair while I prepare dinner?

OGRE: *(Surly)* I sit when I want to sit and not before! *(Shrugs)* And I want to sit now. *(Sits)*

LETTIE: Whatever you say. Dinner won't be long ... and it won't be boy! *(Exits quickly)*

OGRE: *(Wearily)* What a day! Sometimes being a big, mean ogre can take its toll. All this looting and terrorizing, terrorizing and looting. Listening to the pleading and crying and begging! *(Suddenly bright)* Good thing that I love my work! *(Peering into his sack)* Let's have a look at today's take. Hmm ... junk, junk and more junk! Seems the villagers get poorer and poorer as I get richer and richer. Maybe I should give back some of their good stuff ... make it worth it for me to go back down and steal from them again! *(The OGRE rises and moves to the table where MELODY and HANNAH have seated themselves.)* Well, what you two just sittin' there for? I say it's time for a little entertainment. Play, harp. And hen, let's have some golden eggs.

MELODY and HANNAH: *(Rising dutifully)* Yes, master.

(The OGRE sits at the table, as MELODY and HANNAH move to CS. MELODY strums the harp panel on her skirt. SHE plays beautifully, but mechanically. HANNAH dances, each graceful turn produces a golden egg from her basket. SHE places the eggs on the table, before the OGRE. At first, both SISTERS perform dutifully,

with no enthusiasm or passion. Each catches a glimpse of JACK as HE peers out from the cupboard to watch them. JACK's presence fills MELODY and HANNAH with hope and joy and their performances reflect these emotions. Before too long, LETTIE enters with a bowl of "stew" for the OGRE. SHE nervously shuts the cupboard on her way to the table. The SISTERS resume their uninspired performances. The OGRE eats quickly and greedily.)

OGRE: (*Pushing away his empty bowl*) Dinner was good, Lettie. Best ever. (*To MELODY and HANNAH*) And you two played and danced better too.

LETTIE, MELODY and HANNAH: Thank you, master.

OGRE: (*Suspiciously*) Why?

LETTIE, MELODY and HANNAH: (*Nervously*) Why?

LETTIE: (*Thinking*) Why ...? (*Tentatively*) Why, for you, master. We live only to serve you.

(*LETTIE curtsies, MELODY and HANNAH follow her lead.*)

MELODY and HANNAH: Yes, yes! Live to serve!

OGRE: (*Appeased*) As it should be. (*Rising and yawning*) Well, I'm tired. Time to turn in for the night. Big day tomorrow, you know. Looting and terrorizing, terrorizing and looting.

LETTIE: Good night, master.

MELODY and HANNAH: Good night.

(*The OGRE exits SR. MELODY and HANNAH exit SL. LETTIE moves to the cupboard, watching for the OGRE. Satisfied that HE is gone, LETTIE quickly opens the doors and JACK emerges.*)

LETTIE: Are you all right, Jack?

JACK: Just fine, ma'am. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have an ogre to fight.

(*JACK starts off SR. LETTIE takes his arm quickly and leads him DSL.*)

LETTIE: Oh, now. Why not let that wait until morning? I'll wager that you would fare a better chance against the Ogre after a good night's rest – in the cupboard.

JACK: Well ...

LETTIE: (*Sitting at the table*) And who knows? Perhaps tomorrow, you'll have given up on this silly notion of yours all together.

JACK: It's not a silly notion! By slaying the Ogre, I can help you and your daughters ... I can help *all* the villagers! And ... maybe ... I could even win my mother's love.

LETTIE: Win her love? Nonsense! She's your mother, Jack. You needn't try to win her love.

JACK: You don't know my mother. (*Sitting on the floor, beside LETTIE*) Do you know what I wish?

(*The Lights begin to dim, LETTIE and JACK are illuminated by a soft Spotlight.*)

LETTIE: What's that, dear?

JACK: I wish ... I wish that you were my mother ... that you were *all* my family.

LETTIE: Such talk! I'm sure that your mother cares about you very much. And she must be plenty worried by now.

JACK: Oh, she doesn't care about me ... not really. Not the way you seem to care about your daughters.

There's something diff'rent here. I mean, even with the Ogre and all, there's still a feeling in your family that I've never felt in mine.

LETTIE: (*Tousling JACK's hair maternally*) Oh, you poor dear boy. Do you know what I wish? I wish that you could stay up here with us. I'd fix up a nice cozy place for you, in the cupboard. And I could take care of you like this forever and ever. Keep you safe from mean old ogres and uncaring mothers ...

JACK: But—

LETTIE: Hush now, child. Rest now, Jack. Rest and dream of a happier life. Just you and me and Melody and Hannah ... one big happy family up here in the skies.

JACK: With all due respect, ma'am ... it's all very well and good to dream, to hope for a better life. I've been doing just that practically all my life. Dreaming, hoping, wanting things to change. Thinking if I just waited long enough, something would happen *to* me. But maybe ... maybe it's *me* that has to happen! What I mean is, there comes a time when you realize that you have to stop dreaming and waiting and start *doing!* Nothing's ever going to be right again for me or you, or anyone in the village if we just sit here dreaming. We've got to do something ... *I've* got to do something! Only ... I don't know just what yet. I'm going to head back home tonight. I need to know that my mother is all right. I don't know why exactly, but I ... I miss her. And who knows? Maybe she'll even help me figure out what to do. But don't you worry, ma'am. Now that I know how to get to the Ogre, I'll be back and I promise to do whatever it takes to help you and your daughters. (*Taking LETTIE's hand*) Ma'am, you've shown me what a family could be like ... *should* be like. I'll never forget that.

LETTIE: Go quickly, Jack. And may the angels watch over you.

(*LETTIE and JACK embrace.*)

OGRE: (*Off*) *Fee-fi-fo-fum* ...

LETTIE: The Ogre is awake! You must hide before you can leave, Jack. I'll tell the girls that you are going ... but you'll be back.

(*LETTIE rushes off SL. JACK looks around frantically for a place to hide. Resigned, HE opens the cupboard door and hides behind it. The Lights fade. The OGRE appears in a Light at SR. HE wears a period night-gown and stocking cap.*)

OGRE: (*Pacing*) Couldn't sleep. Couldn't stop thinking ... everything too right to *be* right!

(*JACK closes the door softly and tiptoes off SL. The OGRE sniffs into the air.*)

Wait a minute ... (*Moving DSR*) Wait a minute! Do I smell ...? (*Sniffs again*) No, just my imagination. (*Pacing again*) But tonight was not my imagination. There was something strange going on with Lettie and the harp and the hen. Something diff'rent. Good meal, good music, good eggs ... bad feeling!

(*The OGRE wanders off as the Lights fade up on the NEIGHBORS, gossiping at the well in front of the house façade.*)

SONYA: Have you heard ...?

DAGMAR: (*Overlapping*) ... heard a word from him since yesterday ...

OLAF: (*Overlapping*) ... yesterday he just up and disappeared ...

TRILBY: (*Overlapping*) ... disappeared without a trace!

SONYA and DAGMAR: What did he do?

GUSTAVE and OLAF: Where did he go?

NEIGHBORS: Does no one know?

(*JACK'S MOTHER emerges from the house, making a show of her despair.*)

JACK'S MOTHER: Oh, Jack! My poor Jack! He's dead, I'm sure of it. I mean, how could he possibly survive out there in that cold, cruel world without his loving, affectionate mother to guide him? (*Angrily*) How dare he just run off like this! Deserting me just like his father. How could he do this to me? Why, when I get my hands on that boy, I'll ... I'll ...

DAGMAR: You'll what?

JACK'S MOTHER: (*Changing her tune*) Hug that dear, little angel to me ... thankful that he has returned to me safe and sound. But he isn't and he hasn't and ... oh, Jack!

JACK: (*Entering*) Say! What's goin' on here?

(*The NEIGHBORS ad-lib joyful sentiments at JACK's return.*)

JACK'S MOTHER: (*Angrily*) Jack?! Where on earth have you been?

(*The NEIGHBORS ad-lib fake excuses and exit hastily.*)

JACK: (*Rushing to his mother, excitedly*) Mother! You won't believe where I've just come from!

JACK'S MOTHER: Probably not, but go ahead and tell me anyway.

JACK: I was right about the beans, Mother. They *were* magic! They grew over night, into some huge beanstalk. So I climbed and climbed and when I finally reached the top, guess what I found!

JACK'S MOTHER: (*Dryly*) No tellin'.

(*MAURIO and MARIA enter, unnoticed by JACK and JACK'S MOTHER. THEY listen intently.*)

JACK: The Ogre's castle! And that's not all. I found the room where he keeps all of the treasures that he stole from the villagers. And there was this family living there too ... Lettie, the mother, a wonderful woman. So warm and ... motherly! And her daughters, Melody and Hannah ... Two of the most beautiful girls that I've ever seen! Of course, one of them is a golden harp and the other is a hen that lays golden eggs!

JACK'S MOTHER: Oh, I see. So this warm and motherly woman has a harp and hen for daughters. (*Feeling JACK's forehead*) Did you bump your head playing in the meadow ... again?

JACK: The girls were under a spell, Mother. You must believe me.

JACK'S MOTHER: I must do nothing of the sort! Oh, Jack! What am I going to do with you? First you trade away our cow for some worthless beans. Then you run off in the middle of the night, leaving me to worry. And now, you come back with this impossible tale of ogres and treasures, golden harps and hens golden eggs, magic spells ...

JACK: But, Mother ...

JACK'S MOTHER: And let's just suppose for a moment that I believe – which I don't – that this fantastic story is true – which it isn't. If there were treasures beyond belief and gold atop this so-called giant beanstalk, then why have you returned to your poor dear mother empty-handed?

JACK: Well, I—

JACK'S MOTHER: As empty-handed as you are empty-headed.

JACK: But, Mother! If I can find a way to destroy the Ogre, then the spell on the two daughters will be broken. Plus, I can return all of the stolen treasures to the villagers.

JACK'S MOTHER: Oh? And just how do you propose to do all of that?

JACK: I ... I don't know. I was sort of hoping that you would help me ...

JACK'S MOTHER: You'll get no help from me with this foolish fancy of yours, Jack!

JACK: It's not a foolish fancy! I can show you the beanstalk, it's just beyond the—

JACK'S MOTHER: Enough! I have no time for your games, son. You left a day's worth of chores to be done. Now, into the house with you. And speak no more to me of ogres or harps or chickens!

JACK: Hen, Mother. It was a hen.

JACK'S MOTHER: Into the house!

(*JACK and JACK'S MOTHER exit into the house. MAURIO and MARIA move to CS cautiously.*)

MAURIO: Maria, did you hear?

MARIA: (*Ecstatic*) Treasures beyond belief! Golden harp! Golden eggs!

MAURIO: Good, you heard. We must think of a way to stop the lad from destroying the Ogre.

MARIA: *(With conviction)* Yes, we must! *(After a beat; confused)* Why? What do we care for an Ogre?

MAURIO: If Jack gets rid of the Ogre, the spell will be broken. No more golden harp or golden eggs. Just plain, ordinary girls.

MARIA: Ewww! The girls are useless to us, if they're no longer enchanted. *(With conviction)* We must stop Jack! *(After a beat; confused)* But how?

MAURIO: We must get to the Ogre's castle before Jack does.

MARIA: *(With conviction)* Yes, that's it! We must— *(Suspiciously)* And just how are we supposed to get to the Ogre's castle?

MAURIO: *(Pointing up)* One leaf at a time.

MARIA: *(Following MAURIO's gaze)* One leaf at a ... *(Realizing)* Maurio, no! I am not climbing a beanstalk!

MAURIO: Come on, Maria. Let's go ... *stalking!*

(MAURIO leads MARIA off. JACK enters from the house.)

JACK: How can I keep my mind on the work to be done when I know there's so much work to be done? I've got to rescue Lettie and her daughters from their plight, get the villagers back their belongings and get rid of the Ogre forever! If Mother isn't going to help me ... well, I guess I'll just have to figure out a way on my own. I just hope I can ... and before it's too late!

(JACK rushes off R. JACK'S MOTHER enters from the house.)

JACK'S MOTHER: Jack? Honestly! The way that boy runs from work! *(Running after him)* Jack, where are you go—?

(JACK's voice is heard from high above. JACK'S MOTHER stands frozen.)

JACK: *(Off)* Here I am, Mother! Don't worry, I'll be back soon.

JACK'S MOTHER: Jack, come down off that giant beanstalk this instant or I'll ... I'll ... *(Staggering to DSL)* Giant beanstalk? Oh, my heavens! The boy was telling the truth. That means he was telling the truth about everything then. The treasures, the gold and the ... *(Panicked)* The Ogre! Oh, no! Jack knows that the Ogre is dangerous. He knows what the Ogre did to his father. *(Fumbling in her apron pocket for a handkerchief)* Why would he risk his life to ... why would he ...?

(JACK'S MOTHER produces the pouch from her pocket and her face registers a realization. The dim Lights around JACK'S MOTHER, in a Spotlight.)

He did it all for me, he said. All to make me happy. Oh, Jack! My dear sweet boy! I've treated you so poorly. And now, I may have lost you forever! *(Clutching the pouch, sobbing)* Where was my head?

(The Light fades on JACK'S MOTHER as the OGRE's castle is revealed. The projection displays the cabinet. MELODY and HANNAH are seated at the table. LETTIE is sweeping the floor with a broom. THEY all look rather glum.)

MELODY: I can't believe that Jack is gone!

HANNAH: Along with our one chance of ever being free from the Ogre!

LETTIE: Now, now, girls. Let's not be too hard on Jack. He's a good boy. But after all, he's just a boy. We really couldn't expect him to perform miracles, could we then?

MELODY: If anyone could have helped us, Jack could have.

LETTIE: What makes you say that, dear?

MELODY: I don't know. It's just a ... *(Shyly)* Just a feeling in my heart, that's all.

(MAURIO and MARIA enter from L.)

MARIA: (Pulling leaves out of her hair; annoyed) I can't believe I let you talk me into ... (MARIA suddenly notices LETTIE, MELODY and HANNAH and turns on the charm.) Oh, hello!

MAURIO: (Smiling broadly) Good day, ladies.

LETTIE: (Setting the broom aside) Who are you?

MAURIO: My name is Maurio the Gypsy. This is my wife, Maria.

MARIA: Charmed.

LETTIE: What business have you here? It is very dangerous for you here. I think it's best that the two of you leave ... right away!

MAURIO: I'm sorry that you feel that way. But, of course, we shall take our leave. Jack will be very disappointed, won't he, Maria?

MARIA: Who?

(MAURIO nudges MARIA and SHE catches on.)

Oh! Yes ... Jack! (Solemnly) Very disappointed!

MELODY: You know Jack?

MAURIO: Of course. Jack has sent us here to help you out. Isn't that right, Maria?

MARIA: Oh, yes. Help you out ... (Aside, to MAURIO) Of a few treasures!

MELODY: (To LETTIE and HANNAH) See? I told you Jack wouldn't let us down!

HANNAH: And just *how* are you going to help us?

MAURIO: (Off guard) How? Oh, well ... it's very simple, really ... (Pushing MARIA forward) Tell 'em, Maria!

MARIA: (Flustered) Me?! Oh ... well ... I was going to ... that is to say that *we* were going to ... I mean, first we'd ... and then, we'd ... and of course, we might even have to ... and that should do it.

LETTIE, MELODY and HANNAH: (Nodding knowingly) Oh! (Confused) Huh?

MAURIO: Er ... um ... Jack said that you should come with us.

MARIA: Yes, with us!

MAURIO: Down the beanstalk ...

MARIA: Down, down, down!

MAURIO: To the village, where you'll be safe.

MARIA: Yes ... safe? (Greedily) Is there a safe?

(MAURIO elbows MARIA.)

LETTIE: But what about the Ogre?

MAURIO and MARIA: (Looking around, terrified) The Ogre? Where?!

MAURIO: (Calming down) Oh, you mean what are we going to do *about* the Ogre? Well ... why, just what you'd expect. (Pushing MARIA forward again) Tell 'em, Maria.

MARIA: (Flustered) Me?! Oh, well ... we could ... and then again, we could always ... and if worse came to worst, we just might have to ... and that should do it!

LETTIE, MELODY and HANNAH: (Nodding knowingly) Oh! (Confused) Huh?

MAURIO: We really don't have much time. We must find a room to hide in.

HANNAH: Why?

MAURIO: So ... so we can work out our plan.

MARIA: (Aside, to MAURIO) Which needs work!

MAURIO: (Elbowing MARIA) If only there was a room where we could ... (As if struck by a thought) Wait a minute! Jack spoke of a room, didn't he, Maria?

MARIA: (Off guard) Oh! Yes ... Jack! (Solemnly) Very disappointed!

MAURIO: (*Nudging MARIA*) Jack spoke of a room filled with treasures.

LETTIE: Oh, you must mean the Treasure Room.

MARIA: What a good name for it!

LETTIE: But I don't think it's such a good idea to—

MAURIO: Hurry! You must show us to this ... this ... what did you call it again?

LETTIE, MELODY and HANNAH: Treasure room.

MAURIO: (*To MARIA*) That is kind of catchy, isn't it? (*To the OTHERS*) Come, we haven't a moment to lose!

HANNAH: Wait! Shouldn't someone stay here? As a look out or something. Just in case the Ogre ...

MAURIO and MARIA: (*Looking around, terrified*) The Ogre? Where?!

MAURIO: (*Calming down*) Oh, you mean someone should look out *for* the Ogre!

MELODY: I'll do it. The moment that I hear the Ogre approaching, I'll ... I'll ... sing something!

(*EVERYONE gives MELODY a look.*)

I'm a harp, what else would I do?

MAURIO: Good point! (*To the OTHERS*) Let's go, to the Treasure Room!

(*LETTIE and HANNAH lead off MAURIO and MARIA, SR.*)

MELODY: I knew you wouldn't let us down, Jack. I just knew it! Now, if I only knew what you were planning.

JACK: (*Off*) Hello ...?

MELODY: (*Elated*) Jack!

JACK: (*Entering from SL*) I've come back to rescue you and your family, Melody.

MELODY: Yes, I know.

JACK: Right now, what we need to do is— (*Taken aback*) You know? But how could you ...? Never mind.

What's important now is that I figure out a way to rid the kingdom of this terrible Ogre ... thereby dispelling this curse, so you and Hannah can be girls again.

MELODY: (*Throwing her arms around JACK excitedly*) Oh, Jack! Wouldn't that be wonderful?

JACK: (*Smitten*) Yeah ...

MELODY: To be a girl again!

JACK: (*Still dazed*) Yeah ...

MELODY: (*Breaking away*) And yet ...

JACK: (*Snapping to*) Yeah?

(*MELODY moves coyly to the table.*)

MELODY: Whenever I'm around you, Jack ... I don't feel like I'm just a harp at all. I feel very ... girlish! Do you know what I mean?

JACK: (*Nodding his head "yes"*) No.

MELODY: Come here, Jack.

(*JACK joins MELODY at the table. SHE takes his hand.*)

Now ... don't you feel something too?

JACK: You mean do I feel girlish?

MELODY: No, no. That's not what I mean at all. Oh, Jack. How can I make you understand how I feel, when I don't really understand it myself. I've ... I've never felt this way before.

JACK: Me either. When I'm around you, Melody, I feel like I could do just about anything! I feel smart and brave ... and kind of dizzy. But I don't feel girlish.

MELODY: (*Slightly annoyed*) Jack, would you just forget about "girlish"?

JACK: (*Shrugging*) Okay.

MELODY: From time to time, Mother will talk about my father. In her eyes, I see the same feeling that I'm feeling now. A feeling that I just can't put into words. Unless ...

JACK: (*Gazing at her*) Unless?

(*THEY kiss and then break away coyly.*)

MELODY: Oh, Jack. I'm so glad that you came back.

JACK: Me too!

MELODY: I never doubted that you would return and find a way to make things right. So when Maurio and Maria said that ...

JACK: Mister Maurio the Gypsy? Is he here?

MELODY: Yes, with his wife, Maria. Didn't you send them up here to help?

JACK: No. How did they say they were going to help you?

MELODY: Well, let me see ... they said they would ... or maybe they were going to ... or they might even have to— (*Concerned*) Oh, dear!

JACK: They're up to something. Where are they?

MELODY: Mother and Hannah took them to the Treasure Room.

JACK: The Treasure Room? What could they possibly want in the Treasure Room?

JACK and MELODY: The treasure!

(*MAURIO and MARIA rush on from SR, each carries a sack.*)

MARIA: We heard voices!

MAURIO: Where is ...?

MAURIO and MARIA: (*Panicked*) Jack?!

JACK: I'm right here. The question is, what are you two doing here?

MAURIO: Oh, well. That's easy ... (*Pushing MARIA forward*) Tell 'em, Maria.

MARIA: (*Moving behind MAURIO and pushing him forward*) Oh, no you don't! This time, *you* tell 'em!

MAURIO: Well, you see ...

JACK: What's in the sacks?

MAURIO and MARIA: What sacks? Oh ... these sacks? (*Shrugging*) Nothing!

MELODY: I'll just bet they've stolen the stolen treasures! Where is my mother and my sister?

MARIA: We haven't seen them, have we, Maurio?

MAURIO: No!

LETTIE and HANNAH: (*Off*) Help!!

MAURIO: And they're definitely not tied up in the Treasure Room!

MARIA: You idiot! Let's go!

MAURIO: Right ... go!

OGRE: *Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum ...!*

(*MAURIO and MARIA drop their sacks and clutch each other in fright.*)

MAURIO and MARIA: The Ogre!

(*JACK and MELODY each grab a sack and rush off SR.*)

MARIA: (*Pointing off SR*) The treasures!

MAURIO: (*Pointing off SL*) The Ogre!

(*MAURIO and MARIA clutch each other again.*)

MAURIO and MARIA: The cupboard! (*MAURIO and MARIA climb into the cupboard hurriedly.*)

OGRE: (*Entering from L*) *Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum ... (Sniffs into the air) I smell a boy in my kingdom! (Sniffs again) And something else ... (Sniffs distastefully) Gypsies! Gypsies in my castle ... (Following his nose to the cupboard) In my cupboard!*

(The OGRE opens the R door of the cupboard, focusing his attention there. MAURIO and MARIA climb out of the L door. MAURIO and MARIA sneak behind the OGRE, just as HE is closing the R door. HE opens the L door and peers inside. MAURIO and MARIA climb into the R door. The OGRE closes the L door. HE sniffs into the air and shrugs. The OGRE exits SL. MAURIO and MARIO each open a door and wave "good-bye" to the OGRE. MAURIO and MARIA are just about to climb out of the cupboard, when their attention is directed to SR. THEY quickly close themselves into the cupboard. LETTIE and HANNAH rush in from SR. LETTIE looks off SR, HANNAH looks off SL. THEY run off SL. MAURIO and MARIA emerge from the cupboard. THEY look off SR and quickly hide behind the open doors. JACK and MELODY enter from SR, with the two sacks. THEY set the sacks down wearily and BOTH peer into the cupboard. MAURIO and MARIA hurriedly snatch the sacks and return to their places behind the doors. JACK and MELODY turn back simultaneously and notice that the sacks are gone. THEY exchange a shrug and rush off SR. MAURIO and MARIA come out from behind the doors. THEY toss the sacks into the cupboard and close the doors. THEY shake hands triumphantly. MAURIO exits SR, MARIA exits SL. After a beat, the OGRE enters from SL. HE sniffs around the cupboard, opens it and finds the sacks. The OGRE scratches his head in confusion. HE removes the sacks, closes the doors, and carries the sacks off SR. HANNAH enters from SL, pursued by MARIA. MARIA chases HANNAH off SR. MELODY enters from SL. SHE looks around, making a circle, and exits SL. LETTIE rushes in from SR, pursued by MAURIO. THEY exits SL. JACK enters from SR. HE looks around making a circle, and exits SL. The OGRE enters from SR, without the sacks. HE sniffs at the cupboard and opens it. The OGRE steps inside the cupboard and closes the doors. LETTIE enters cautiously from SL, facing that direction. JACK enters from SR, facing that direction. THEY back into each other at CS. THEY run off their respective sides fearfully. The OGRE opens the cupboard and peers out curiously. HE closes himself into the cupboard again. MELODY rushes on from SR, as HANNAH rushes on from SL. THEY meet at CS and exchange a hug. MAURIO and MARIA sneak on quickly from opposite sides, unnoticed by MELODY and HANNAH. MAURIO and MARIA hide on each side of the cupboard, ready to pounce. As MELODY and HANNAH break from the embrace, the OGRE suddenly emerges from the cupboard –hitting MAURIO and MARIA with the doors. The OGRE chases a frightened MELODY and HANNAH off SL. MAURIO and MARIA appear from behind the doors, looking dazed. THEY climb into the cupboard and shut the doors. JACK and LETTIE sneak on from SR, with the sacks. THEY open the cupboard and quickly toss the sacks inside, then close the cupboard again. JACK and LETTIE sneak off SR again. MAURIO and MARIA open the cupboard wearily, holding the sacks. Dizzily, THEY drop the sacks out of the cupboard. HANNAH and MELODY rush in from SL, grab the sacks and slam the doors closed on MAURIO and MARIA. MELODY and HANNAH exit SR, with the sacks. The OGRE rushes in from SL, in pursuit of MELODY and HANNAH. HE runs past the cupboard, then stops abruptly. The OGRE climbs into the cupboard, closing the doors behind HIM. MELODY and HANNAH run on from SR, with the sacks, and exit SL. MAURIO and MARIA emerge quickly from the cupboard, followed by the angry OGRE. HE chases them off SL. JACK and LETTIE enter from SR. THEY open the cupboard and notice the sacks are gone. THEY rush off SL. Almost immediately, JACK and LETTIE rush back on from SL. THEY are followed by MELODY and HANNAH, with the sacks, MAURIO and MARIA, and the OGRE. EVERYONE rushes off SR, except JACK, who hides behind the open left door of the cupboard. LETTIE, MELODY, HANNAH, MAURIO and MARIA run on from SR and exit SL. As the OGRE chases them from SR, HE stops at the open cupboard. JACK sticks out his hand, pointing to the open cupboard. The OGRE gives the audience a shrug and climbs inside the cupboard. JACK closes the door behind him and rushes the other side of the cupboard. JACK hides behind the R door. LETTIE, MELODY and HANNAH rush on from SL and exit SR. MAURIO and MARIA rush on from SL, in pursuit. THEY stop at the cupboard. JACK points inside again. MAURIO and MARIA exchange a shrug and climb inside the cupboard. JACK slams the door shut quickly. HE

grabs LETTIE's broom and runs it through the door handles, securing the cupboard. JACK stands triumphantly in front of the cupboard.)

JACK: Ta-da!

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