



**Susan M. Steadman**

Big Dog Publishing

Copyright © 2022, Susan M. Steadman

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**

**WHOSE PLAY IS IT ANYWAY?** is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, and all of the countries covered by the Universal Copyright Convention and countries with which the United States has bilateral copyright relations including Canada, Mexico, Australia, and all nations of the United Kingdom.

**Copying or reproducing all or any part of this book in any manner is strictly forbidden by law.** No part of this book may be stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means including mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording, or videotaping without written permission from the publisher.

**A royalty is due for every performance of this play whether admission is charged or not.** A “performance” is any presentation in which an audience of any size is admitted.

**The name of the author must appear on all programs, printing, and advertising for the play and must also contain the following notice: “Produced by special arrangement with Big Dog/Norman Maine Publishing LLC, Rapid City, SD.”**

All rights including professional, amateur, radio broadcasting, television, motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved by Big Dog/Norman Maine Publishing LLC, [www.BigDogPlays.com](http://www.BigDogPlays.com), to whom all inquiries should be addressed.

**BIG DOG PUBLISHING**

**P.O. Box 1401**

**Rapid City, SD 57709**

## WHOSE PLAY IS IT ANYWAY?

**INTERACTIVE COMEDY FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES.** Rapunzel, Cinderella, and the wolf from “The Three Little Pigs” keep interrupting a theatre troupe’s performance of “Jack and the Beanstalk.” Even the Pied Piper conducts a sing-a-long with the audience in the middle of the play. All the performers think they are the most important character, so whose play is it, anyway? In this interactive show, audience members are invited onstage to play the roles of Jack’s cow and the Giant’s goose. The audience helps the narrator count, awakens Jack from a sound slumber, assists Cinderella in finding her broom, names Jack’s cow, and locates Jack’s beanstalk. Audiences of all ages will adore this hilarious comedy. Easy to stage and perfect for touring.

**Performance Time:** Approximately 30-45 minutes.



Illustration by Arthur Rackham from the 1918 edition of *English Fairy Tales*. The giant cried, "Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive, or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!"

## ABOUT THE STORY

The story of "Jack and the Beanstalk" is derived from a folktale that existed prior to the first printed fairy tale version in 1734, "The Story of Jack Spriggins and the Enchanted Bean," included in the book *Round About Our Coal-Fire*. Many versions of the story exist in which the giant is sometimes referred to as Bluderbore or Gogmagog but is often unnamed. In the original tale, the Giant was a victim of Jack, who hid in the Giant's house, robbed him, and then killed him. In numerous later versions, the Giant appears as a villain who terrorizes and/or steals from villagers, including Jack's father.

## CHARACTERS

(2 M, 4 F, 3 flexible)

(Minimum cast: 2 M, 1 F, 2 flexible)

**NARRATOR/VILLAGER:** The narrator of “Jack in the Beanstalk”; purchases Jack’s cow with magic beans; flexible.

**JACK:** Star of “Jack in the Beanstalk”; can’t count and has terrible table manners; male.

**MOTHER:** Jack’s mother, who doesn’t believe in magic; female.

**MILLY:** Dilly’s wife, a giant in her own right; female.

**DILLY:** Hungry giant in “Jack and the Beanstalk” who can’t count; male.

**WOLF:** Wolf from “The Three Little Pigs”; wants to play Milly’s pet wolf in “Jack and the Beanstalk”; flexible.

**RAPUNZEL:** Keeps interrupting the performance of “Jack and the Beanstalk”; insists no one can have enough hairbrushes; wears a wig of long and obviously fake hair; female.

**PIED PIPER:** Plays a flute (or another instrument) and leads the cast and audience in a song-a-long; flexible.

**CINDERELLA:** Actor playing Cinderella in an upcoming play who keeps interrupting the performance of “Jack and the Beanstalk”; wears an apron and a kerchief over her hair; female.

**NOTE:** For flexible roles, change the script accordingly. Performers may play any character regardless of age, gender, size, or ethnicity.

## Options For Doubling

The play may be produced with as few as five performers.

**MOTHER/MILLY** (female)

**JACK** (male)

**DILLY** (male)

**NARRATOR** (flexible)

**WOLF/RAPUNZEL/PIED PIPER/CINDERELLA** (flexible)

(NOTE: Wolf, Rapunzel, Pied Piper, and Cinderella may be played by the same performer, any gender. Character changes may be executed quickly and humorously by donning a costume piece in front of the audience.)

## Costumes

Simple costume pieces will aid in quick changes and keep the audience's focus on the actors. Costume racks or hooks attached to flats can provide color and utility to the set. More elaborate costumes may be used, if desired.

Silly hat, for Villager

2 Tall hats, for Milly and Dilly

Skirts, for female characters

Kerchief/scarf, for Cinderella

Apron, for Cinderella

Tail and/or ears, for Wolf

Fake mustache (opt.), for Dilly

Fake hair, for Rapunzel

Crown or armor

## Setting

Bare stage, once upon a time.

## Set

The stage is bare, except for moveable blocks and places to hang or store costume pieces. The cupboard, stove, door, window, beanstalk, etc. are "space objects," which take on shape by the way the actors use them. Blocks may be placed on either side of the stage so that the actors don't exit completely.

This play may be performed in nearly any location, which makes it ideal for touring or for a situation in which a fully equipped stage may not be practical. However, a more elaborate set may be used, if desired.

## PRODUCTION NOTES

Actors without previous improvisation and/or participatory theatre experience will need to gain confidence during the rehearsal period. It is a good idea to provide actors with worst-case scenario experience, such as dealing with an audience member who volunteers and then balks at following through onstage. For information on space objects, theatre games, and warm-up exercises, see Viola Spolin's *Improvisation for Theatre: A Handbook of Teaching and Directing Techniques* (Northwestern University Press, 1963) or explore the following websites:

<https://spolingamesonline.org>

<https://www.improvnotebook.com>

## PRE-SHOW ACTIVITY

As the audience enters, performers sing, dance, juggle and/or play theatre games like jumping rope or playing catch with space objects. The actors may also participate in improvised scenes in character as they set up the stage, hang up costume pieces, or perform warm-up exercises.



## PROPS

The play lends itself to the use of “space object” props. The only mandatory physical props are the Pied Piper’s instrument and blocks for each performer.

Beans

Oversized bowl

Oversized spoon

Golden eggs

Bag for eggs

Plastic axe

Broom

Storybook

Flute (or another instrument), for Pied Piper

Blocks

## SOUND EFFECTS

Recorded music in place of live music for the Pied Piper, opt.  
Knock on the castle door (offstage)

**"YOU CAN NEVER  
HAVE ENOUGH HAIRBRUSHES."**

**—RAPUNZEL**

## WHOSE PLAY IS IT ANYWAY?

(AT RISE: All Actors enter. Note: If desired, the director may assign the following lines to different actors, particularly if the roles are doubled. Costume pieces are suggestions only.)

NARRATOR: (To audience.) Thanks for inviting us to your [insert theatre, school, camp, etc.].

JACK: (To audience.) I've always liked stories, especially fairy tales. (To audience member.) How about you? (To audience member.) And you? (To audience member.) And you?

RAPUNZEL: (To audience.) I enjoy acting them out.

PIED PIPER: (To audience.) The best thing about performing is getting a chance to walk in someone else's shoes...

WOLF: (To audience.) ...or paws...

MOTHER: (To audience, tying on an apron.) ...or tie on someone else's apron.

DILLY: (To audience, trying on a hat.) With just a switch of a hat...

MILLY: (To audience, indicating skirt.) ...or a skirt...

CINDERELLA: (To audience, tying a scarf.) ...or a scarf, maybe...

JACK: (To audience, trying on a crown or a piece of armor.) ...I can go from a hero...

DILLY: (To audience, puts on an oversized fake mustache.) ...to a villain...

WOLF: (To audience.) ...or maybe someone who's just misunderstood.

NARRATOR: (To Actors.) Are we ready to start?

MOTHER: It depends. (To audience.) Are you ready to help us?

RAPUNZEL: (To audience.) Because, believe me, we need a lot of help.

MILLY/PIED PIPER: Not that much.

CINDERELLA: Well, some.

NARRATOR: *(Indicating audience.)* If they're ready...

JACK: And we're ready...

ACTORS: Let's start the show!

*(Actors exit. Narrator brings a block onstage.)*

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* How do stories usually begin?

*(Waits for audience to say, "Once upon a time.")* Yes! That's it!  
Once upon a time!

*(Rapunzel rushes on.)*

RAPUNZEL: Wait! Wait! That's how my story begins, remember? Once upon a time, a girl named Rapunzel was locked in a tower by a witch.

NARRATOR: Yes, yes. We know. But this isn't your story.

This is the tale of "Jack and the Beanstalk."

RAPUNZEL: But maybe I could help Jack—

*(Narrator gestures for Rapunzel to exit. Rapunzel exits, grumbling to herself. Note: If desired, Rapunzel may sit in the audience.)*

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* Once upon a time, long, long ago

in another place far, far away, there was a boy named Jack.

*(Carrying a block, Jack enters. He goes CS, bows, and smiles.)*

Now, Jack lived with his mother in a small cottage. They were very, very poor, and their crops were not growing well. Jack was way too young to get a job. He was even too poor to go to school, so he didn't have much experience with the outside world. But Jack was what you might call a dreamer.

*(Jack sits on the block.)*

JACK: *(To audience.)* When I grow up, I'm going to go out

West and have a ranch with lots and lots of cattle. I'll be

rich. Then I can take care of my mom instead of her taking care of me. And I can go to school and learn to read. *(To audience member.)* Do you like to read? *(To audience member.)* Do you know how to read? *(To audience member.)* Do you like to have someone read to you? When I can read, I'll read you a story.

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* One day, Jack's mother called Jack over. She had sad news.

*(Mother enters.)*

MOTHER: *(Calls.)* Jack! *(No response. Jack is daydreaming. Louder.)* Jack! *(Jack snaps out of it and approaches Mother.)* I have sad news. We have nothing to eat. Look! *(Opens the "cupboard door.")* The cupboard is bare.

JACK: There's nothing in there, Mother.

MOTHER: Yes, Jack, that's what "bare" means. *(Pulls Jack close.)* Pay attention! You must go to town to sell our cow for three gold coins.

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* Now, the cow's name was— *(Thinks.)* What was the cow's name? *(To audience.)* What's a good name for a cow? *(Chooses one of the suggestions from the audience.)* Excellent! Jack didn't want to sell [insert cow's name].

JACK: But, Mother, I don't want to sell [insert cow's name].

MOTHER: We have no food to feed [insert cow's name]. We have no food to feed ourselves. Take [insert cow's name] to the market. Jack, how many gold coins will you get in return, remember? *(Jack holds up two fingers. Narrator rushes over to Jack, pushes up a third finger, and returns to his position.)* Go now, Jack. I'm so weak and worn out. I need to rest. *(Exits, taking Jack's block with her.)*

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* So Jack went to get [insert cow's name]. *(At CS, looking for the cow. Realizes.)* Oh! We need a cow. Who would like to come up onstage and play the role of the cow? *(Selects audience member.)* All right. *(To audience*

*member playing the Cow.*) Thank you. Now, whenever you hear the word “cow,” you need to “moo.” Can you do that? “Cow.” *(Audience member playing the Cow says, “Moo.”)* Perfect! *(To audience.)* On the way to the market, Jack met an odd-looking villager. *(Dons a silly hat to play the Villager. As Villager. To Jack.)* Well, Son, that’s a mighty fine cow you have there.

*(Audience Member playing Cow says, “Moo.”)*

JACK: *(To Villager, introducing.)* This is [insert cow’s name]. I’m taking her to market. I have to sell her, and I’m supposed to get three...three...somethings for her, my mother said.

*(Jack holds up four fingers. Narrator corrects him by pushing one finger down.)*

NARRATOR: *(As Villager.)* How about three squirmy worms? It just so happens I can give you not one, not two, but three squirmy worms for this cow of yours!

*(Audience Member playing Cow says, “Moo.”)*

JACK: *(Excited.)* Ooooooh! Squirmy worms! *(Realizes. Sadly.)* No, sir, I’m quite sure my mother didn’t say anything about squirmy worms.

NARRATOR: *(As Villager.)* Three... *(Thinks.)* ...three somethings. I know! Three pairs of dirty socks! It just so happens that I can give you not one, not two, but three pairs of very smelly socks for this cow of yours!

*(Audience Member playing Cow says, “Moo.”)*

JACK: Smelly socks? No, that doesn’t sound right. I don’t think my mom would –

NARRATOR: *(As Villager.)* Wait, wait, wait! I also have three brand-new, never-used hairbrushes. It just so happens I can give you not one, not two, but three hairbrushes for this cow of yours!

*(Audience Member playing Cow says, "Moo." Rapunzel enters.)*

RAPUNZEL: Jack, take the hairbrushes. You can never have enough hairbrushes! Why, I go through four or five of them a week.

JACK: *(To Narrator.)* Hey, she's not supposed to—

*(Narrator whistles or blows a whistle and gestures for Rapunzel to exit.)*

RAPUNZEL: I was just trying to help. *(Exits, grumbling to herself.)*

NARRATOR: *(As Villager. To Jack.)* As I was saying before I was interrupted...I have three brand-new, never-used hairbrushes that I can give you for your cow—

*(Audience Member playing Cow says, "Moo.")*

JACK: Hairbrushes? I don't think that's what my mother wants.

NARRATOR: *(As Villager.)* Come closer...I don't want anyone to overhear. Because you're such a special lad and you have such a special cow... *(Audience Member playing Cow says, "Moo.")* I'm going to give you the most precious thing I own—or should I say *things*—because there are three of them. *(Dramatic pause.)* Three magic beans!

JACK: Beans?

NARRATOR: *(As Villager.)* Three magic beans!

JACK: Magic?

NARRATOR: *(As Villager.)* Three...magic...beans! They will lead you to great riches.



JACK: Huh?

NARRATOR: *(As Villager.)* Plant these beans, and when they grow so high you can't see the top, climb the beanstalk and find your fortune.

JACK: I don't understand.

NARRATOR: *(As Villager.)* Well, you've heard about the rich giant who lives in the clouds?

JACK: Oh, sure, everyone has. My mom says that's just a story.

NARRATOR: *(As Villager.)* Oh, but so many stories are based on the truth. Climb the magic beanstalk, and you will find your fortune!

JACK: My fortune? It's a deal!

*(Narrator hands the magic beans to Jack. Narrator escorts the Audience Member playing the Cow back to his/her seat into the audience and encourages the audience to applaud. Narrator removes the silly hat and returns to the block.)*

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* So Jack returned home.

JACK: *(Sighs.)* I miss [insert cow's name] already.

*(Mother enters.)*

MOTHER: Jack! It took so long, I was worried about you. Do you have what I told you to get for [insert cow's name]?

JACK: Well, I got three. *(Holds up five fingers. Narrator starts to approach to correct Jack, but Jack gestures for the Narrator to halt. Jack holds up three fingers. Jack takes the beans out of his pocket.)*  
Look!

*(Jack hands the three beans to his Mother.)*

MOTHER: *(Looking at beans.)* These aren't gold coins.

JACK: They're better than gold coins. They're magic beans!

MOTHER: Oh, Jack, there's no such thing as magic.

JACK: But, but—

*(Mother opens the "window" and tosses the beans out.)*

MOTHER: Now, go to bed. There will be no dinner again tonight.

*(Mother exits. Jack lies down on the floor.)*

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* In the morning, a very hungry Jack awakened and— *(Jack doesn't move. Louder.)* Jack awakened and— *(Jack doesn't move. To audience.)* I think Jack needs some encouragement. Can you crow like a rooster? Let's hear you. *(Audience crows. Jack remains asleep.)* He's still not waking up. Can you crow a little bit louder?

*(Audience crows louder. Jack awakens. Jack crosses to the "window" and looks outside.)*

JACK: What's that tall green thing outside my window?

NARRATOR: That's a beanstalk, Jack.

JACK: One of the magic beans must have sprung up overnight like magic. *(To audience.)* Do you think these beans are magical? *(To audience member.)* You do? *(To audience member.)* You do, too? *(To audience member.)* And you? *(Gets an idea. To audience.)* Maybe if I climb up the beanstalk, it will lead to great riches just like that villager said, or at least to food! If there is a rich giant in the sky and I can climb all the way up to him, maybe he will be very generous and give me something to eat.

*(Jack climbs out the "window." He starts to climb the "beanstalk" slowly, taking very large steps.)*

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* Let's count how many steps it takes Jack to climb the beanstalk. Everyone, join in. One...two...three...four...five—

JACK: *("Climbing.")* I'm getting tired.

NARRATOR: Keep going, Jack. Six...seven...eight... *(Jack shoots the Narrator an annoyed look like "Wrap it up already!")* ...nine...ten!

JACK: *(Out of breath, looking around.)* Finally! I don't know where— *(Sees "house.")* Oh, wait. *(Points.)* Down the road, there's a really big house.

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* So Jack set off for the Giant's castle. *(Jack circles the stage.)* Jack was in a hurry to get to the castle. *(Jack speeds up a bit.)* Then Jack remembered his poor, sad mother and their poor, bare cupboard, and he went faster.

JACK: *(Annoyed.)* You're kidding, right?

*(Narrator just looks at Jack and shakes his head.)*

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* Then he remembered how they had to sell poor old [insert cow's name] and he went even faster! *(Jack shoots the Narrator an annoyed look.)* When he arrived at the giant-sized door, he tried to open it.

JACK: This giant-sized doorknob is too big and heavy for me to open. *(Knocks timidly on the "castle door.")*

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* No one came. *(Jack knocks harder.)* Time went by. *(Jack tries pushing the "door" open with his hands, shoulders, hips, etc. but to no avail.)* No one came. More time went by. *(Jack lies on his back and kicks the "door" with his heels.)* Fortunately, for Jack's feet, Milly, the Giant's wife—

MILLY: *(Offstage, shouts.)* And a giant in her own right!

NARRATOR: *(To audience, sighs.)* ...and a giant in her own right, opened the door.

*(Milly enters, wearing a high hat that makes her look really tall.)*

JACK: *(To Milly.)* Oh, my goodness! You *are* tall.

MILLY: Aren't you the cutest, most darling, itsy-bitsy, pint-sized, teensy —

NARRATOR: *(Annoyed.)* Enough already.

MILLY: *(Ignoring Narrator. To Jack.)* ...weensy, little thing. My name is Milly. It's very lonely up here in this castle. It's so nice to have a visitor.

JACK: I'm Jack, and I haven't had any food in two days, ma'am. May I please have something to eat?

MILLY: Of course, of course. And how polite you are! How about a nice bowl of mac and cheese? I'm afraid my husband has gobbled up all the meat in the house. *(Scooping food into a bowl.)* Oh, I've always wanted a little boy of my own. Unfortunately... *(Handing Jack a large spoon and a large bowl.)* ...we only have giant-sized dishware.

JACK: That's okay.

*(Struggling with the oversized spoon and bowl, Jack begins to eat. Eating with his mouth open, Jack makes loud munching noises.)*

NARRATOR: *(To audience.)* Jack didn't have very good table manners.

MILLY: You don't have very table good manners, Jack, but I don't mind. My husband, Dilly, is also a bit of a slob.

*(Wolf enters, drawing attention to himself.)*

WOLF: *(To audience.)* Now, Milly, the Giant's wife —

MILLY: And a giant in her own right!

WOLF: *(To audience, sighs.)* And a giant in her own right, had a pet wolf.

NARRATOR: Hey, wait a second! There's no pet wolf in —

WOLF: *(To audience, confidentially.)* I used to be a big shot. Sure, I scared those three little pigs —

NARRATOR: *(Shouts.)* Wolf, get off the stage!

WOLF: Just hold on a minute! *(To audience.)* And Little Red Riding Hood... *(Proudly.)* ...did I ever do a number on her! Yeah, I was a force to be reckoned with! I'm not scared of anything or anyone! Wanna feel my muscles? *(Poses.)* Wanna see my teeth? *(Bears teeth.)*

*(Wolf goes into the audience and interacts with audience members, showing off his big muscles and teeth. Annoyed, the Narrator snaps his fingers and/or gestures for the Wolf to exit.)*

DILLY: *(Offstage, loudly.)* Fee-fie-fo-fum!

WOLF: *(Scared.)* Yikes! It's Dilly, the giant!

*(Wolf adlibs to Audience Members, "Hide me!" "Hide me, please!" "Can I crouch down behind you?" etc.)*

**[END OF FREEVIEW]**