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Jack and the Giant Beanstalk



Comedy
by
Linda Daugherty

**“A spirited sparkle has been added to this timeless story.
Side-splitting humor appeals to the entire family.”**

—*Kilgore News Herald*

**A Dallas Theatre League Nominee for
*Outstanding New Play.***

Jack and the Giant Beanstalk

Comedy. By Linda Daugherty. Cast: 4m., 5w., 2 m. or w., 7 or more children. May be doubled to 4m., 4w., 1m. or w., 6 children. There is much more to this play than Jack and a beanstalk. Of course, there's the proverbial giant; but there is also the giant's overworked, over-wrought wife, an aria-singing harp, a golden-egg-laying chicken with performance anxiety, and a blue-eyed stranger who looks surprisingly like Jack's long-lost father. Naturally, there's the village at the foot of the beanstalk and the giant's home in the sky, but there is also, 10 years earlier, a sailing ship caught in a storm off the coast of Pago Pago ("or was it Bora Bora") with its blue-eyed master pulled mysteriously from the wreckage by a giant hand. Certainly, there's Jack's distressed mother and the peddler who sells Jack the magic beans, but there is also the peddler's story of having bought the beans from a blue-eyed stranger; the Ladies Plum and Pomegranate, who provide the comic relief in Jack's village; and Jack's pals, including a rough and ready tomboy named Adelaid. Without a doubt, there's the giant's "fe, fi, fo, fum," but there is also his wife's rhyming collection of "bigness" puns. With all the familiar ingredients in the mix, plus so much more, and with fresh and witty dialogue, this play will be a rediscovered delight for actors and audiences alike. A Dallas Theatre League Nominee for Outstanding New Play. "A spirited sparkle has been added to this timeless story. Side-splitting humor appeals to the entire family." (*Kilgore News Herald*) Area staging. Approximate running time: 65 minutes. Code: J41.

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Jack and the Giant Beanstalk

By

LINDA DAUGHERTY



Dramatic Publishing

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(JACK AND THE GIANT BEANSTALK)

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This play is dedicated to
ROBYN FLATT
who planted a tiny seed
and grew
the DALLAS CHILDREN'S THEATER.

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Jack and the Giant Beanstalk premiered at the Dallas Children's Theater, Dallas, Texas (Robyn Flatt, Executive Artistic Director), on June 7, 1996, directed by Nancy Schaeffer. It toured nationally to 45 cities in the theater's 1997-1998 season.

Original Cast

Jack Karl Schaeffer
 Jack's Mother Linda Daugherty*
 Chicken/Stranger/Sailor J.C. Mullins*
 Giant's Wife/Lady Plum Rosemary Kolbo
 Harp Jhea Fulgaro
 Ned/Sailor Kevin Piwowarski
 Lady Pomegranate Amy Seale Moore
 Jack, the Father Jeffrey L. Watson
 Townsman Erik Vasquez

GREEN CAST

Adelaid . . Linn Daugherty
 Rose . . . Shannon Wilson
 Ruth . . . Brittany Harper
 Tom . . . Philip Schaeffer
 Sam . . . Richard Rangel
 Evan . . . Montgomery Sutton
 Will . . . Anthony Schaeffer

BLUE CAST

Adelaid . . Heather Atkins
 Rose . . . Megan O'Reilly
 Ruth . . . Molly Stroud
 Tom . . . Josh Stroud
 Sam . . . Edward Hambleton
 Evan . . . Nicholas Taylor
 Will . . . Jeff Fijolek

Original Production Staff

Scenic/Properties Designer Zak Herring
 Costume Designer Garry D. Lennon
 Assistant to the Director Evan Daugherty
 Lighting Designer Linda Blase
 Composer/Sound Designer B. Wolf
 Stage Manager Terrell Roykouff*
 Fight Choreographer Karl Schaeffer

* Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union for professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

Jack and the Giant Beanstalk

A Play in Two Acts

For 4m., 5w., 2m. or w., 7+ children

(may double to 4m., 4w., 1m. or w., 6 children)

CHARACTERS:

JACK

JACK'S MOTHER

JACK, THE FATHER

LADY POMEGRANATE

LADY PLUM

PEDDLER (m or w)

GIANT'S WIFE

CHICKEN (m or w)

HARP LADY

SAILOR #1 / TOWNSMAN / FOOT OF GIANT

(if needed)

SAILOR #2 / VOICE OF GIANT (if not recorded) /

FOOT OF GIANT (if needed)

CHILDREN:

YOUNG STEWARD (boy or girl)

NED (boy)

YOUNGSTER #1 (boy or girl)

YOUNGSTER #2 (boy or girl)

YOUNGSTER #3 (boy or girl)

YOUNGSTER #4 (boy or girl)

ADELAID (YOUNGSTER #5) (girl)

ADDITIONAL POSSIBLE DOUBLING:

LADY PLUM / GIANT'S WIFE

PEDDLER / CHICKEN
YOUNG STEWARD / YOUNGSTER #1

CHILDREN may double or additional children may be added.

TECHNICAL NOTES:

In the Dallas Children's Theater production, the GIANT's feet were moving set pieces. Inside each foot was a stagehand (or SAILOR #1 and SAILOR #2) who lifted and moved it by hand. The GIANT's feet appeared on a tall platform where the GIANT lived. The very tops of the boots were masked by a curtain. The feet could be accomplished more simply using a hanging, painted, fabric drop which could be released from above and fall when the beanstalk is cut down.

Also in the Dallas Children's Theater production a large, three-dimensional hand was created and extended from offstage into the stage area. The fingers were hinged to bend and manipulated by JACK THE FATHER to simulate being grabbed. The hand could be more simply done as a flat, rigid cutout or by using a large piece of foam rubber manipulated by the actor.

Also in the Dallas Children's Theater production, the giant piece of toast was six feet square and cut from a large sheet of thick foam rubber, making it light and easy to manipulate by JACK when the GIANT sneezed. The CHICKEN's NEST was attached to a rolling platform and was moved by the feet of the actor playing CHICKEN. The money sack may drop from above or, more simply, may be thrown from offstage.

<p>SHEET MUSIC for Harp's song "Ode to an Overgrown Ogre" Copyright ©1996 by B. Wolf (music and lyrics) and Linda Daugherty (lyrics), follows end of play. <i>Used with permission.</i></p>

[Jack, with Old Milky White and a crown,
heads

26 JACK AND THE GIANT BEANSTALK Act I

PEDDLER (*cont'd*). Morning...*sir*.

JACK (*flattered to be called "sir"*). Morning...morning!

PEDDLER. You're off to market, are you? Risin' early to catch 'em nappin', I see. Well, there's a clever young man what catches the first worm.

JACK. I'm off to market, that's true enough.

PEDDLER. And the rope what you've got in your hand? Could that mean you've livestock to trade?

JACK. Indeed I have.

PEDDLER (*pointing off*). Would it be that fine bovine yonder, young *sir*?

JACK. Bovine? (*JACK looks at PEDDLER, not understanding.*)

PEDDLER. Cow? The fine *cow*?

JACK. Oh, cow, yes. *Fine* cow? Well, I hope they think so at market, friend, but Milky White's a little stingy with her milk these days.

PEDDLER. You don't say. Well, I wouldn't want a cow to feed a dozen. There's only me.

JACK. She's grown thin. Not so young as she once was.

PEDDLER. What a boon to me. Less need for feed. The perfect cow for me. Ah, well...

JACK. You're interested in Milky White? I was to trade her at market but what have you to offer?

PEDDLER. To trade? Oh, I've traded many things in my time. (*Rattling them off.*) Pots, pans, socks, slippers, coats, goats, boots, buttons, barrels, bananas, soap, scents, sundries, lace, ladles, licorice, outerwear, underwear—

JACK. But, friend, what have you to trade for my cow?

PEDDLER. Ah, times are hard. Takes ten times the coin to fill the stomach. I've little now to trade, young *sir*.

JACK. But what is it you're trading *today*, I wonder.

PEDDLER. I've only one wondrous thing to trade...worth far more, I fear, than your worthy cow.

JACK (*growing impatient*). But can you not tell me what precious thing you have to trade?!

PEDDLER. What I have to trade was carried halfway 'round the world, 'cross the south seas, it was. By an *adventurer*. Met him on the far north coast, I did. Bought him a spot of stew and a set of regular clothes and shoes, for he had nothing on his feet a'tall. And in trade he gave me half his prize and hid the rest deep in his pockets. Did I make a good trade? I think so...for as he told his story and I stared into his blue, blue eyes—eyes as blue as the sea—I knew I'd traded a *little*...for a *treasure*!

JACK (*skeptical*). A treasure?! This adventurer traded half his treasure for clothes and shoes and a bowl of stew?

PEDDLER. Well, he was a proud man about to sail for home to his wife and young son, he said, though I must say he looked a scoundrel—what with all that silver hair and beard unshaven—

JACK. Silver hair you say...blue eyes? And he had a son?

PEDDLER. So he said. Ah, what stories he told! Oh, I'm a sympathetic creature—a gullible one, some would say—but I believed him then and I believe him now—the story of his treasure.

JACK. I beg you, show me this treasure!

PEDDLER. I will, sir, but when you see it, I fear you'll want to trade it from me. (*PEDDLER opens bag, giving JACK a quick look inside.*)

JACK (*angrily*). Why, it's only beans!

PEDDLER. Only beans? Only beans? *Only beans?* Why, these wondrous beans were brought from an island on a most difficult journey. From the island of Tahiti...or was it Bora Bora?

JACK. From an island? Go on!

PEDDLER. Perhaps it was Pago Pago...

JACK. I beg you, tell the story!

PEDDLER. These magical beans...they were grown on an island, he said, floating in the south seas...where the palm trees touch the sky. Where a coconut is bigger than the both of us. An island of volcanoes and violent monsoons where it rains for forty days and forty nights. Where there's never winter and the people wear clothes of grass, if they wear clothes a'tall. From such a land where an acorn grows as big as your fist, that's where he said these beans come from. "Plant them and your worries are over," said the adventurer. "Plant them and you'll be rich," said the silver-haired man. "Plant these beans and all you wish for will come true," said the man with the blue, blue eyes.

JACK. Here! I've a crown!

PEDDLER (*pretending to ignore him*). Oh... If only I had a plot of land to plant these beans!

JACK. I'll throw in the cow, too!

PEDDLER. Well... (*Feigning defeat*.) You've won, sir, you've won. I'm no match for youth. For the crown and the cow, the beans are yours!

(JACK gives PEDDLER the crown and puts beans in his pocket.)

PEDDLER (*cont'd*). Give me that rope, young sir, to catch that cow. She'll pull the cart and save my poor back.

JACK. It's yours, friend, and thank you! Thank you!
(*JACK exits.*)

PEDDLER. And I thank you, young sir. It was a good story that clever adventurer told me. I believed the poor devil. He seemed to believe it himself. Too much sun, no doubt. Ah, well, good actors aren't all on the stage. My kind heart cost me a suit of clothes and a pair of shoes but now I've been repaid tenfold! What a trade I've made! A cow *and* a crown! A crown! All the delicious, sugar cakes I can eat! (*Laughing.*) Beans! Beans!! Beans!!! (*Calling offstage.*) Oh, Milky White!

(*Laughing, PEDDLER exits pushing his cart as lights fade.*)

Scene iii

SETTING: *GIANT's house in clouds. Beanstalk.*

AT RISE: *CHICKEN is sitting on nest, squawking happily, relaxing and preening feathers. GIANT'S WIFE enters with bucket of feed. JACK is hiding nearby.*

CHICKEN. Pluck, pluck, pluck, pluck, pluck.
GIANT'S WIFE.

No, no, this won't do.

It's time to see an egg from you.

JACK (*hiding*). I've got to find the dungeon.

GIANT'S WIFE.

Near the dungeon, he's resting,
having a nap.

JACK. The giant is sleeping near the dungeon? Now what am I to do?! Wait...wait...

GIANT'S WIFE.

He won't wake up happy
if there's no golden egg in his lap.

JACK. Golden egg? Well, that's worth waiting for.

GIANT'S WIFE. Chick, chick, chicken? It's time!

CHICKEN. No, no, not again. Please, no! I got to have a day off. I'm a chicken. I'm not a machine. Please. This is flesh and feathers here. I need a vacation. Ask him if I can have a vacation!

GIANT'S WIFE. You ask him.

CHICKEN. I can't. I'm chicken! Why, why was I born a chicken? I could have been a dog, a cat, a monkey—free in the jungle, swinging from branch to branch. Free! Free!

GIANT'S WIFE. You're a chicken. Now lay an egg.

CHICKEN. So, what if I just refuse? Put my chicken feet down.

GIANT'S WIFE.

You'd make a nice dumpling stew
and a feather pillow, too.

(CHICKEN folds wings defiantly.)

GIANT'S WIFE *(cont'd)*. Chicken fricassee?! Chicken à la king?! *Chicken pot pie?! Does that inspire you?!*

CHICKEN. All right! All right! This takes so much concentration. The layman can't understand. Lay an egg, lay an egg. It sounds so easy. I'd love to lie down and lay an egg. Or lay down and lie an egg—whatever! I'm not lying! It's not easy.

(GIANT yawning and grumbling sound.)

GIANT'S WIFE. He's awake for heaven's sake and he's not happy! *(GIANT'S WIFE rushes off.)*

CHICKEN. I can do it. I can do it! Think shiny! Think metal! Think *chicken pot pie!!!*

(Sound of slot machine paying off.)

CHICKEN *(cont'd)*. I did it! I did it! Another twenty-four hours safe from the stewpot!

(JACK comes out of hiding.)

JACK *(awed)*. You did it. You laid a golden egg!

CHICKEN. Who are you? Don't touch that egg!

JACK (*touching egg*). It's gold.

CHICKEN. Of course, it's gold. What'd you expect—an omelet?

(*JACK picks up egg.*)

CHICKEN (*cont'd*). Put that egg down! I got to deliver this egg to a cranky giant, and I don't want to ruffle his feathers.

JACK (*overcome*). This golden egg would take care of my mother for the rest of her days.

CHICKEN. Look, boy, don't get me squawking! Put the egg back! Fowl play! Fowl play!

JACK. You can lay another. Please, chicken. It's for my *mother*. She's had a hard life. Her husband—gone. Me to raise alone with nothing, nothing. It's for my mother, chicken. My mother...

CHICKEN (*moved*). Stop, stop pluck plucking the strings of my heart. I had a mother, too, you know! When I was a little egg, she kept me warm. Then I hatched and my mom provided for me. Three worms a day and all the grubs I could eat. Pluck, pluck. I'm going out on a limb here. Take the egg, take the egg!...for your mother.

(*GIANT grumbles.*)

CHICKEN (*cont'd*). He's coming!

JACK. I am grateful, chicken. I won't forget. I'll be back tonight to find my father and I'll free you from the giant, too.

CHICKEN. Don't worry about me, kid. I'll wing it. Now fly the coop—to your mother.

JACK. Thank you, chicken.

(JACK exits. Sounds of GIANT grumbling in a very bad mood.)

CHICKEN. Out of the frying pan into the fire!

GIANT'S VOICE. Fi, fi, fo, fum!

CHICKEN. Quiet! I'm trying to concentrate! You want an egg, don't you? Pluck, pluck. Think shiny! Pluck, pluck! Think metal! Pluck, pluck! *Think chicken flambé!*

(Sound of slot machine paying off.)

CHICKEN *(cont'd)*. I did it! Twins!!!

(Lights fade)