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Australian Script Centre



# Jack and the Burrow Beans

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by Chris Thompson

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EXTRACT

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*Once upon a time... a simple boy called Jack swapped his cow for a handful of magic beans which grew into a giant beanstalk that took Jack up into the clouds where he met a scary giant who owned a singing harp and a goose that laid golden eggs. Before the giant could eat Jack up, he stole away with all the riches. The giant chased Jack down the beanstalk, but with a chip, chip, chop he cut it down and the giant fell thump, bump through to the centre of the Earth. Jack and his mother should have lived happily ever after.*

*Except that...they squandered the fortune, and the goose stopped laying golden eggs, and the giant's wife got locked out of the castle, and the kettle's on the boil, and the castle key is in the giant's pocket, and Jack gets some more magic beans, only this time he plants them upside down...this time, what went up, must go down and the burrow beans take them underground... where the giant went...where Jack's dad disappeared...but what's that glub glub sound??*

**What happened AFTER Jack's Beanstalk adventure???**

## CHARACTERS

Jack: a Simple Boy

Betty B. Stalk: Jack's Mother

Gordo Gantuan: The Giant (*a puppet and voice*)

Gerty Gantuan: The Giant's Wife

Barry Beanseller: A Scurrilous Furveyor of Bean Products (*can double as Ollie*)

The Greedy Grub: A Subterranean Collector (*can double as Milky and as Leurice*)

Milky: A Cow Renowned for her Wise Contemplations On Life

Goldie: A Goose that lays Golden Eggs (*a puppet*)

Ollie & Leurice: Two Repossesses from the Guillible Flat Bank

## SCENE BREAKDOWN

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*JACK & THE BURROW BEANS was commissioned by James Buick at the Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre, and produced by Next Big Thing as a summer holiday show in January, 1996. It was first performed at the Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre by Michael James (Jack), Margot Fenley (Betty), Silvana Maimone (Gerty), Lliam Amor (Barry & Ollie), Louise Truhovich (Milky, Greedy Grub & Leurice), Micaela Talbot (Goldie & Stage Manager) and Chris Thompson (Gordo); directed by Chris Thompson and designed by Lliam Amor.*

# *Jack & the Burrow Beans*

*written by Chris Thompson*

## *Scene One:*

### *TELLING THE TALE of JACK & THE BEANSTALK*

*One by one, JACK, BETTY and MILKY enter and tell the tale of Jack & the Beanstalk. They talk about their characters, but they are not yet their characters.*

JACK: Once, there was a tale of a lad named Jack. A simple boy who lived outside a small village named Gullible Flat.

BETTY: Jack lived with his mother, Betty, in a rickety old rundown, ramshackle shack. They were poor as a penny and down on their luck.

MILKY: They were poor as a penny, and skint as a stick. All they had to their name was dirt and peeling paint and a cow named Mmmmmilky.

BETTY: Jack's father was long gone.

JACK &  
MILKY: Oohh.

BETTY: One day he started to dig a goldmine behind their ramshackle shack. He dug and he dug and he dug but all he ever found was dirt...

MILKY: ...and broken bottles...

JACK: ...and rusty cans....

BETTY: ...and old dog bones buried in the ground.

JACK: He dug and he dug and he dug until he was so far away that he didn't come home for tea, and Jack and his mother never saw him again.

BETTY: Milky was Jack's only friend, and when things got too glum for words, Jack would take Milky for a walk to the fork in the road and think about life.

MILKY: Cows are renowned for their wise contemplations on life.

BETTY: Now one day, Betty, told Jack that they would have to sell something before Winter came or they would surely freeze and starve and wither away to nothing.

JACK: Jack and his mother tried to think about what they could sell.

*They both think.*

JACK: But all they had to their name was dirt and peeling paint and no-one in their right mind would buy a penneth worth of those.

BETTY: So Betty chose they only other thing they owned that was worth a fig.

*JACK and MILKY look at each other in horror.*

JACK &  
MILKY: Mmmmilky.!?!

BETTY: She sent Jack and Milky off towards the Gullible Flat Market Place.

*BARRY BEANSELLER enters and continues the tale.*

BARRY: Jack never made it to the market place. When he got to the fork in the road, there was a strange man sitting in Jack's favourite spot. The man told Jack he was Barry Beanseller, the most successful purveyor of bean products in the whole district.

MILKY: Barry Beanseller looked at Mmmilky.

BARRY: Barry Beanseller knew a good thing when he saw it. He held out a handful of beans, right under Jack's nose, and offered them in exchange for the cow.

MILKY: Really. A handful of beans in exchange for a cow. You'd have to be a bit simple.

BARRY: But Jack was nothing more than a simple boy. And besides, Barry Beanseller told him that these were magic beans.

JACK: Magic Beans.

BARRY: What boy wouldn't give up his favourite cow for a handful of magic beans?

MILKY: Jack gave Mmmilky to the Beanseller.

JACK: He was happy as a ham all the way home.

BETTY: He was happy as a ham until he got home and showed his mother what he'd gotten in exchange for Milky. Magic beans, indeed! His mother cuffed him and castigated him and cast the beans out.

JACK: But Jack still believed that the beans were magic, so he wasn't at all surprised when he woke the next morning to see a giant beanstalk growing straight up through the clouds.

BETTY: And the beanstalk called to Jack, and he followed the call up the beanstalk and into a place beyond the clouds.

*GERTY GANTUAN appears in the giant place.*

GERTY: That place was a giant place. The home of Gordo and Gerty Gantuan. Gordo was a giant.

*GORDO'S voice can be heard.*

GORDO: Fe Fi Fo Fum.

JACK: And when he spoke, no-one was at all sure of the meaning of his words. Except for his wife, Gerty.

GORDO: *(OFF)* Fe Fi Fo Fum.

*GERTY comes down from the giant place.*

GERTY: Which, of course, meant that Gordo had caught a whiff of a small boy and was planning to munch and crunch his bones in a boy and bean sandwich.

JACK: This was not what Jack had in mind at all. He was far more intent on returning to his mother with a few souvenirs that would make them rich beyond their wildest dreams.

GERTY: Now it just so happened that Gordo had a singing harp with a voice like ringing crystal, and Goldie, a goose whose eggs were solid gold, locked away with a key he kept on his giant key ring, in his back pocket.

JACK: Now Jack had the luck of a simple boy. And Gerty took quite a fancy to him.

GERTY: She waited until the giant was asleep...

*GORDO starts to snore.*

GERTY: ...and let Jack in through a very small secret door.

JACK: With never a thought for the right or wrong of it, Jack slipped away with Goldie and the singing harp.

GERTY: But the harp was not about to be stolen. It sang at the top of its voice...

HARP: *(offstage in operatic style)* Help! Oh help, oh help, oh help!

GERTY : ...and woke Gordo whose temper was at its worst when he hadn't had all of his sleep.

GORDO:       *(off)* Fe Fi Fo Fum.

JACK:         Jack ran for his life, but the giant's strides were as long as a paddock. He only just made it to the top of the beanstalk.

BETTY:        Jack's mother was only just starting to worry about where he'd got to, when Jack dropped ploop out of the blue.

JACK:         Before his mother could even say beans...

*BETTY starts to say 'beans':*

JACK:         Jack had dashed to the woodshed and returned with the axe. With a chip chip chop Jack cut through the beanstalk and Gordo the Giant came plummeting out of the air...

*GORDO can be heard falling from a great height.*

JACK:         ...and thumped and thudded and crashed his way through the earth to places far below and far away.

*GORDO can be heard hitting the ground and falling right through to the centre of the Earth.*

GERTY:        And that should have been the end of the tale. *(She exits)*

BARRY:        Jack's ill gotten gains made them rich as puddings. *(he exits)*

MILKY:        They should have been living high on the hog for ever and a day. *(she exits)*

BETTY:        But that's not what happened. *(she starts to exit)*

JACK:         There's more to this tale.

JACK &  
BETTY:        And here's how it goes. *(They exit)*

*Scene Two:*  
**THE BIG GOOSE EGG**

*On stage is the magnificent mansion. There is a letterbox and a garden bed. JACK's cricket bat and frisbee have been left lying in the back yard. From underground there is a sound.*

GRUB:           Glub glub.

*The GREEDY GRUB's hand reaches up and steals the cricket bat and frisbee, just as JACK enters, whistling and bouncing a tennis ball.*

JACK:           That's funny. I thought I left my cricket bat here. Oh well.

*JACK puts his tennis ball down.*

BETTY:          Jack. Jack, where have you got to?

JACK:           I'm down at the letterbox.

BETTY:          Did we get any mail?

JACK:           Yes, look it's another letter from the bank.

BETTY:          Oh how thoughtful of them. *(She pulls out a stack of unopened letters)* I'll save it 'til later.

*JACK looks around for GOLDIE.*

JACK:           Goldie? Goldie?

GOLDIE:         *(Off)* Honk, honk.

*GOLDIE suddenly flies out of the garden into JACK's arms.*

JACK:           Goldie. How are you going, girl?

GOLDIE:         Honk, honk.

BETTY:          Has she laid any eggs?

JACK:           Just this. Another brown egg with a black yolk. What's the matter, Goldie? You haven't laid a golden egg in ages.

GOLDIE:         Honk, honk.

JACK:           At this rate, we'll be poor as a penny again in no time at all.

BETTY:          It could be sooner than that. We used our last golden egg as a deposit on the swimming pool. We might have to sell the singing harp.