

SCENE 1.

The Village of Merrydale.

Full set. Pretty village setting. JACK and PRINCESS DEMELZA are discovered with the CHORUS, dancing and singing an up tempo NUMBER. At the end of the number JACK and the PRINCESS are C.

- JACK. Hello everybody! I'm Jack Trot - just a working lad in the dairy business. A simple, insignificant nobody!
- CHORUS. (**commiserating**) Aaah -
- JACK. But that's enough about me, because today, (**indicating PRINCESS**) on this lovely morning, we are honoured by the presence of royalty!
- CHORUS. Hooray!
- PRINCESS. Jack!
- JACK. Elevated, exalted, taken to a whole new level of glory by -
- PRINCESS. Stop it, Jack –
- JACK. Her esteemed royal loveliness, Princess Demelza!
- (**JACK bows deeply. CHORUS laugh, bowing and curtsyng.**)
- PRINCESS. Shut up, Jack!
- JACK. Dancing with the common folk!
- PRINCESS. I'm leaving –
- JACK. But we love you dancing with us.
- PRINCESS. No - you're just saying that.
- CHORUS . We do!
- JACK. We really do!
- PRINCESS. Well, stop all this royal business –
- JACK. We've stopped. It's finished.
- PRINCESS. Promise?
- JACK. Promise. Not another word.
- PRINCESS. Good.
- TRUMPET. (**off**) Make way for his Royal Highness –

JACK. I didn't say that!

CHORUS. It's Trumpet, the Royal Herald.

TRUMPET. (**entering, carrying royal staff**) His Royal Wonderfulness, King the Brave! (**Bows low.**) Bertram

(**KING enters.**)

JACK. (**to PRINCESS**) What does the King want with us?

PRINCESS. I don't know.

TRUMPET. Pray silence for His Majesty!

KING. Good people of Merrydale - (**To PRINCESS**) what are you doing here?

PRINCESS. Dancing.

KING. Dancing!

TRUMPET. Silence for His Majesty, King Bertram! (**Brings staff down on foot.**) **KING'S**

KING. Ow! Trumpet! You hit my foot!

TRUMPET. Did I?

KING. Yes, you did.

TRUMPET. Sorry.

KING. I've got a sore bit now. Budge over; I'll go the other side. (**Goes to other side of TRUMPET.**)

TRUMPET. And I'll put it in the other hand.

KING. Good idea.

PRINCESS. Daddy –

JACK. Daddy?!

(**JACK and CHORUS laugh.**)

KING. Don't call me Daddy –

TRUMPET. Silence for His Majesty! (**Brings staff down on to KING'S other foot.**)

KING. Ow! You did it again!

TRUMPET. Did I?

KING. Yes, you did.

TRUMPET. Sorry.

KING. **(taking staff)** Give that thing to me. You're not to be trusted. And Demelza, don't call me Daddy, like that. Not in front of the common people.

ALL. The common people!

KING. Silence!

TRUMPET. Silence!

KING. Yes, thank you, Tumpet. Now, where was I? Oh, yes. Good people of Merrydale, I am here today –

JACK. We can see that –

KING. Will you shut up! **(Brings staff down on his own foot.)** Ow! **(To TRUMPET.)** Now see what you made me do!

TRUMPET. Me!?

KING. Yes you! Bringing this silly thing out with you! See how you like it! **(Brings staff smartly down on TRUMPET'S foot.)** There!

TRUMPET. Ow!

PRINCESS. But that's not fair Daddy -

KING. Don't call me Daddy, I'm the King! **(Angrily brings staff down again on TRUMPET'S foot.)**

TRUMPET. Owoooo!

KING. Oh, sorry, Trumpet. **(Returning staff to TRUMPET.)** But don't bring that thing out with you again.

TRUMPET. **(whimpering)** No, Your Majesty.

KING. Now look everybody, I'm here today to give you some good news.

(ALL cheer.)

And some bad news.

(ALL moan.)

The good news is that we have finally paid all the Giant tax!

(ALL cheer.)

The bad news is that in an unprecedented gesture of badwill, the Giant has decided to double the tax –

ALL. Double it!?

(General consternation.)

KING. And will be sending his wicked henchman, Slimeball, to oversee payment!

(More consternation. PYRO. SLIMEBALL leaps on. All KING hides behind TRUMPET.) **scream.**

SLIME. You said it Daddy!

PRINCESS. Don't call him Daddy!

KING. No, no that's quite alright – Mister, er - Slimeball?

SLIME. That's me, but don't you worry, Granddad, the Giant's a reasonable man. He'll give you time.

KING. Really?

SLIME. You've got half an hour.

ALL. HALF AN HOUR!!!

SLIME. Thirty minutes. And if the money isn't handed over on time –

KING. Yes?

SLIME. The Giant's going to marry the Princess.

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TRUMPET. 'Root and branch!' That's a good one, Your Majesty!

KING. (a beat) Don't try and come the comedian with me, Trumpet.

TRUMPET. No, Your Majesty. Beg pardon, Your Majesty.

KING. Your job is to find out what's happening and report back to me.

TRUMPET. Yes, Your –

KING. (sees PRINCESS off) Quiet! She's coming. Now remember. You're almost invisible in that disguise. So, stick to her like glue. (Starts to exit.)

TRUMPET. (pursuing the KING) But Your Majesty –

KING. Like, glue, TRUMPET. Like glue. (Exits.)

(TRUMPET sticks his arms out rigidly and freezes as a tree.)

PRINCESS. (entering) Daddy? That's funny. I thought Daddy was here. I'm sure I heard his voice.

JACK. (poking his head on) Demelza!

PRINCESS. Jack! What are you doing here?

JACK. I followed you.

(Surreptitiously, TRUMPET starts to cross the stage.)

PRINCESS. Why?

JACK. Oh. You know. I just wanted to talk to you.

PRINCESS. I hope my father didn't see you.

JACK. Oh, no. I was very careful.

(JACK leans against one of the boughs of the "tree".)

PRINCESS. He's got even more protective of me than he used to be.

JACK. I know. It's very annoying.

PRINCESS. Really? Does it worry you?

JACK. Well, of course it does!

PRINCESS. Why's that then?

JACK. You know why.

PRINCESS. (crossing to centre) I just think I'd rather like to hear you say it.

(At some point JACK follows. TRUMPET tracks their position.)

JACK. Well –

PRINCESS. Yes?

JACK. I - like talking to you, that's all.

PRINCESS. Oh.

JACK. I mean - I really, really like talking to you. Finding out who you are. Getting to know you, I suppose.

PRINCESS. Do you know what, Jack Trot?

JACK. What?

PRINCESS. I like getting to know you too.

(NUMBER. (Suggest “Getting to Know You”) Lots of movement and dancing, all of which TRUMPET follows assiduously, gradually getting more and more involved, copying the dance steps and eventually being twirled out of control by JACK and the PRINCESS, who exit.

TRUMPET is left hopelessly giddy. The KING re-enters.)

KING. Where is she? You've lost sight of her completely!

TRUMPET. Your Majesty, I was – I mean she was, well we all got dancing –

KING. DANCING!

TRUMPET. With that Jack Trot –

KING. WHAT! And you joined in? Bouncing around like a demented mulberry bush! You incompetent loon. Well, you can jolly well find her again and keep her in sight, or I'll have you chopped down, logged and pulped into paper!

(KING exits chasing a terrified TRUMPET.)

Outside Dame Trot's Cottage. House piece, with double window centre.

(SIMON revealed.)

SIMON. Oh, dear. It just doesn't seem the same without Daisy. I went to her little cow shed, but I couldn't even bear to look at it.... I just hope Jack got a good price for her at market. He's been ever such a long time.

JACK. **(shouting off)** Mum! Mum! I'm back!

SIMON. That's him, now! Mrs T! Mrs T! He's back! He's back!

DAME. **(running on)** I know. I heard his voice. Where is he?

JACK. **(entering)** Mum, I'm home – and I've got brilliant news!

DAME. You have?

JACK. You'll never guess!

DAME. Try me.

JACK. Well -

DAME. What?

JACK. Sit down.

DAME. I've just got up.

JACK. I don't want to give you too much of a shock.

DAME. I want to be shocked! Shock me, Jack. Shock me!

JACK. Alright then, grab hold of this!

(Proffers bag of gold/beans. DAME takes it and immediately almost drops it.)

DAME. Blimey, I'm shocked. What's in there?

JACK. Gold!

DAME. Gold?

SIMON. Gold!

DAME. It weighs a ton!

JACK. I know Mum. We're rich!

BOTH. Rich!

DAME. Oh Jack! We've never had so much money in all our lives!

(NUMBER, celebrating money. Maybe the bag is thrown about a bit during the number, but its contents are never inspected. At the end of the number the DAME has the bag. She starts to open it.)

I can't wait any longer. I just want to feast my eyes on all those lovely, jingly jangly, shiny – BEANS?!

JACK &
SIMON. What?

DAME. It's full of beans!

JACK. **(grabbing bag)** It can't be!

DAME. It is.

JACK. But –

DAME. Oh, Jack how could you?

JACK. But Mum –

DAME. You sold our Daisy for a bag of beans!

JACK. I didn't, Mum. I promise you!

DAME. Get out of my sight!

JACK. What?

DAME. Up to bed and no supper.

SIMON. But, Mrs T –

DAME. And you too.

SIMON. Me?

DAME. Not another word. Upstairs. The both of you.

JACK. Look, Mum, I'm really sorry –

DAME. Alright, if you won't go, I'll go. A bag of beans, Jack! Whatever's going to happen to us in the morning? Our Daisy, sold for a bag of beans! **(Throws bag on the ground.)** There. That's what I think of that. I just can't believe it!

(She leaves. JACK and SIMON look at each other.)

JACK. Honestly, Simon. I don't understand.

SIMON. I think she's a bit cross.

JACK. But I saw the gold... I just - oh, well. Come on then. Maybe something will turn up in the morning.

(Dejectedly, they both go out.

NB. The action can run on continuously. Alternatively, if you need a few moments to set anything up for the Beanstalk sequence, you may find it useful to treat Edena's speech as a little mini-scene and fly the tabs in briefly.

PYRO. EDENA enters.)

EDENA. That's true indeed, Jack, very true,
I'm planning on surprising you.
(indicating smoke) I hope that didn't make you cough,
I didn't mean to let one off.
I'll make old Slimeball rue the day,
He thought to come down here and play!
Prize winning veg is just my thing;
I'll give those beans some special zing,
And send them up into the skies,
Before we see the new sun rise!

**(Waves wand - fly out tabs if you have flown them in.
BEANSTALK GROWING SEQUENCE.**

**This could be a BALLET, or a NUMBER led by EDENA, with
the CHORUS as garden sprites, or fairies.**

**Alternatively, it could be staged very effectively as a UV
SEQUENCE.**

**At the end of the sequence, JACK enters yawning from the
cottage. He sees the beanstalk.)**

JACK. Wow...! Mum! Simon! Come and have a look at this!

**(SIMON and DAME enter from the cottage, they are both in ludicrous night
attire.)**

SIMON. Gosh!

DAME. Blimey. Those were some beans. You wouldn't want to eat beans like those.

JACK. Look how high it goes. Right up to the clouds.

(The KING enters.)

KING. Just as I thought! I've caught you red-handed. The Princess has disappeared and it's quite obvious to me that you lot must have kidnapped her!

JACK. But that's ridiculous.

KING. Don't contradict me, I'm the King!

EDENA. **(entering)** In that case I will - and I'm a fairy.

Though truth to tell, things have got hairy.

KING. Hairy? Hairy? How do you mean, hairy?

EDENA. I mean confusing and all contrary.

KING. All contrary? But first you said hairy,
This isn't contrary, it's all airy-fairy!

DAME. Then let's not argue outside the Dairy.

SIMON. (**helpfully**) I once knew a girl whose name was Mary.

KING. Oh, shut up!

EDENA. Let me speak plain and tell you true.

KING. That's all I'm asking you to do.

JACK. But where's Demelza, is she okay?

EDENA. It's true she has been taken away.

KING. Oh, no!

EDENA. Oh, yes.

SIMON. Oh, crumbs.

DAME. Oh, dear.

EDENA. Transported to the Giant, I fear.
But eco fairies make things grow... (**Gestures to the Beanstalk.**)

(**A beat.**)

KING. And your point is?

EDENA. You're all so slow!

JACK. I could climb there!

KING. What?

DAME. Oh no, Jack, not the beanstalk thing!

JACK. Why not? It's almost as if it's been put there on purpose.

KING. He's right. Up you go, lad and we'll say no more about the rent.

DAME. (**To KING**) He's my only son!

JACK. I'm sorry Mum – I've got no choice. I have to rescue Demelza!

DAME. But the giant is such a nasty man!

EDENA. Then I shall help Jack all I can,

(EDENA gestures with her wand. A little Fairy enters with a sword.)

This special sword has magic power,
To call on in a needy hour.

DAME. Oh, Jack!

JACK. Yes, Mum.

DAME. Must you go now?

JACK. I must.

KING. He must!

DAME. Alright then, ciao.

EDENA. So, climb to win a battle rare,
And claim for wife a maiden fair!

KING. I say!

EDENA. What is it you want to say?

KING. Not much.

JACK. **(starting to climb)** Then off I go without delay!

(MUSIC swells. CHORUS run on. NUMBER.

CURTAIN.)