***The Selfish Giant…and Jack***

An adaptation and musical rendition

Of the classic story *The Selfish Giant* by Oscar Wilde

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***Synopsis:*** *Once there lived a very selfish giant. His heart was as cold as stone and he had no friends. He closed his garden off to the village children who longed to play among the trees and statues. One night, Jack and his beanstalk, enter the garden looking to steal the giant’s heart away. For seven years Jack works on softening the heart, while the giant visits the Cornish Ogre, who serves as a counsel for the very selfish giant. The giant returns to his castle and chases the children away. He rebuilds his wall, blocking out all hope of love. Jack finds a way in, but is caught by the giant and placed on trial for trespassing. A lively court of ogres and goblins try Jack and find him guilty. He is sentenced to seven years of hard labor in the giant’s garden, where only the snow, frost, and north wind reside. Eventually Jack is able to convert the giant, who knocks down his walls for the children and opens his heart to love. In the end Jack returns to take the giant to paradise.*

*This rendition depicts the giant with a creative use of puppetry and dance, along with animated garden figurines, stone walls, and talking plants.*

**Cast of Characters:**

The Giant

The Cornish Ogre

Jack

Beanstalk

Judge

Goblin Lawyer

Court Jester

Court Joker

The Frost

The Snow

The North Wind

The Hail

The Sleet

The Garden Statues

A Stone Bird

Stone Walls

The Jury

Peach Trees

The Moorish Dwarf

Farmers

Bird

Chess pieces

Old Giant/voice only

**ACT 1/SCENE 1:** Jack, Beanstalk, a Giant and his garden

*Music and lights come up on a beautiful garden. Statues stand posed as wall pieces move into place with music.*

*LIGHT AND MUSIC CUE: lights up on different stages to music cues/spot to follow Stonebird*

*Statue or Stone Bird sits upon stage or wall; moves towards statues with music*

STONE BIRD: This is the garden of a very Selfish Giant. Be careful what you touch…

STATUE 1: And what you do here.

STATUE 2: Especially if you care for the hairs of your very head!

STONE BIRD: You see, the giant doesn’t like to share anything…especially his heart!

STATUE 3: Does he have one?

STONE BIRD: Oh yes… but it is as hard as that stone wall there.

LIGHT CUE: WALL 1

STONES 123: I heard that.

STATUE 3: Was his heart always so?

STONE BIRD: Oh no…it happened over time.

STATUE 2: That’s right…nobody is born selfish, it happens by *choice.*

STONE BIRD: When the giant was young, his father, the great old giant who lived among the clouds, spoke to him one day.

*Shadow* *Puppets controlled by Stones help tell the story of the giant’s past/ Lights will move around room for each part and slowly come up on Upper stage as real giant appears*

*LIGHT CUES:*

OLD GIANT/voice only: My son, I have learned by the very hard way, it does not pay to be selfish. You see, I sought happiness in things. I thought by having a castle full of gold and more food than ten giants could eat, that I should be satisfied…but it wasn’t until I lost the golden harp, who sang such beautiful melodies of love to me, that I came to understand it is better to give than to receive. So I give you all of my castle and belongings; but take care, my Son, and find a way to share it…for then you shall be truly happy.

STONE BIRD: But the young giant only heard the parts he wished to hear of his father’s advice.

*LIGHT CUE: Puppets*

S.GIANT/voice only: At last, I shall have my own castle and my own things. I shall be able to do as I please, for I am very big now! And I shall be so very happy!

STATUE 1 *sarcastic:* Apparently his *big* ears blocked out the part about sharing…

STATUE 2 *sarcastic:* Apparently.

LIGHT AND MUSIC CUE: *Puppets*

STONE 2: The Giant’s castle was set upon a hill just outside the village.

STONE 1: Yes, and all around the castle lay farmland, open meadows, and an old dirt road strewn with hard stones.

STONE 3: Those are my cousins...

STONE 2: Shhh….

STONE 1: To the north, stood the castle of the Moorish Dwarf; its’ two towers peeking over the rolling hills like the sails of a boat.

STONE 3: And to the west was the sea, where the giant would often walk along the shoreline to visit his friend, the Cornish Ogre.

STONE BIRD: One day, the farmer of the land, by name, McGregor, sent a message up the hill to the giant, asking him to kindly watch where he walked, as he had trampled the farmer’s new sown field.

*On separate stage, three short scenarios take place/changes with lighting back and forth from main stage and walls to upper stage. Giant’s legs visible on Upper stage. Stonebird will serve as narrator and move between stages to carry eyes of audience.*

*LIGHT AND MUSIC CUES:*

*Upper Stage: Farmer hands message to a child dressed as a carrier pigeon that carries it up hill to giant’s legs. Child looks up and hands letter up (grabbed out of sight of audience)*

STONE BIRD: But the giant did not respond with concern…rather he sent the farmer a different kind of message.

*Large letter is rolled out for farmer to read/extends across stage with large handwriting on it.*

GIANT’s voice: Dear Farmer McGregor…since you have placed your farmland in between my castle and the path that leads to the shoreline, and the home of my friend, the Cornish Ogre…I have no choice but to trample your fields, for the road is quite out of my way and inconvenient for the day’s journey. You will have to plant your cabbages somewhere else, or be content to raise only half. For the path is mine to take, and anyone who does not understand that is very, very small!

STONE BIRD: He placed the letter in the mouth of a passing bird, and blew it towards the farmer’s home. He delighted in his charming wit that day with a ravenous chuckle.

*Letter is given to carrier pigeon who dances downstage as letter unrolls for farmers to read.*

FARMER 1 reads letter: Of all the nerve!

FARMER 2: What a very, very Selfish Giant!

LIGHT CUE: Fade on Upper Stage; resume Wall lighting/WALL 3

*Farmers exit with paper*

*Upper Stage changes to show Man in boat with waves moving around him. Giant’s legs remain visible.*

*Puppets depict man with waves*

STONE BIRD: Then there was the day the Moorish Dwarf fished upon the sea, only to get himself caught in a storm.

*Storm music to fill gap for Upper stage to change/puppets*

*WALL 3/lighting*

STONE 5: “My, my…quite the storm we be havin’ this fine day!”

STONE 7: Said the waves as they tossed the small boat about.

STONE 6: “What be fine about it?”

STONE 7: Shouted the Moorish Dwarf as he held tight to his craft.

STONE 7: Then he spotted a large figure upon the shore and called to him…

LIGHT CUE: *Upper stage/second scenario set*

DWARF: Neighbor, can you lend me a hand…I’m about to be swallowed by the sea this day!

GIANT: Is it my concern that you put your boat out on such a windy day? Only a fool would do such a thing…which I am not.

DWARF: Come now, I admit it is my mistake, but the sea and I are like brothers, and meet each day without care of the weather. Listen Neighbor, if you help me ashore I shall share my catch with you, and perhaps we can play a game of chess!

GIANT: Very well.

*LIGHT CUE: Upper stage fade/lights up on puppets as staging changes /Chess game is made up of children as chess pieces that move with giant’s large hands*

*Lighting on WALL 2*

STONE BIRD: Said the giant, for a game of chess sounded delightful to him, and he sorely wanted to beat the very short dwarf at something.

STONE 4: So the giant tossed him a rope and brought him safely ashore.

*As rope is tossed, boat and waves are moved off in one step while little chess pieces rolled into place on large chessboard on upper stage*

DWARF: Thank you Giant. I nearly drowned. Now join me for a cup of ale, a baked fish, and a game of chess as a thank you?

Scene 2:

JACK: Name’s Jack…and this is my Beanstalk…

BEANSTALK *running behind Jack:* Howdy!

STATUE 1: What are you running from?

JACK: Giant…gotta go.

*GIANT (Voice only)calling after Jack as he runs: Fee Fi Fo Fum, who's taken my big drum?!*

JACK: It’s a heart!

BEANSTALK: You know giants… they have a thing for rhyming!

*Special effect: fog machine for cloud*

JACK: Stop right there Beanstalk! We’re on the edge of the cloud…one more step and we fall several thousand feet to the very hard ground below!

BEANSTALK: No problem…I’ll just send down a shoot, and you can climb me…

JACK: Ha! We make such a good team!

*Exit off stage with Jack riding on Beanstalk’s back*

*Light change/Statues frozen on smaller stages come to life (blacklight which slowly spread to full light)*

STATUE 1: Great! Now the giant is going to be in a really bad mood. That kid took his heart!

STATUE 2: I’m surprised he could carry it? It must weigh a ton!

STATUE 3: Serves the giant right…he stole us after all!

STATUE 1: That’s right! And he broke my arm in the process. He should pay a…

STONES: Fee!

STATUE 3: He thinks he’s the only one who suffers!

STONES: Oh…fi!

STATUE 1: He doesn’t have a friend to save his soul!

STONES: Foe!

STATUE 3: No wife, no kids, no heart!

STONES: Fum!

STATUE 2: He doesn’t love anyone but himself!

STAUE 1: And that is what makes him so very selfish, girls…without love of others all you got is…

STONES: *Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum*!

LIGHT AND MUSIC CUE: *SONG and DANCE by statues and Stones, Stonebird: Fee, Fi, Foe, Fum*

*Stone 3 suddenly falls down at end of song.*

STONE 3: Oh…my goodness! Look at my mortar…it’s all but gone! I am simply falling apart!

STONE 2: Well you can’t just lie there…you’ll leave a hole in the wall!

STONE 1: And who knows what will crawl through!

STONE 3: Hmmm…actually this is kind of freeing…oh my…I can move! Look at me! Ha…

I feel like a Rolling Stone! Look out world here I come! Whoah….ahhh (falls off wall)

*Stone 1 exits, but will reappear on Wall 2 replacing fake stone.*

STONE BIRD: Oh dear! Not only is the giant going to be angry about his heart, but now he’s got a…

EVERYONE: Hole in the wall!

*LIGHT and MUSIC CUE:*

*Fade to Blackout/Stones, Stonebird, and Statues exit.*

*Set briefly changed to depict Jack’s greenhouse on center/main stage.*

*Jack and Beanstalk enter in blackout*