

Study Guide prepared by  
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Barter Playwright-in-Residence

## ***Jack and the Beanstalk***

Adapted by Katy Brown from the story by the Brothers Grimm

\*Especially for Grades K-6

**By the Barter Players, Barter Theatre – Spring 2014**

(NOTE: Standards listed below include those for reading the story *Jack and the Beanstalk*, seeing a performance of the play, and completing the study guide.)

### **Virginia SOLs**

**English** – K.1, K.5, K.8, K.9, K.12, 1.1, 1.5, 1.8, 1.9, 1.13, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.12, 3.4, 3.5, 3.9, 3.11, 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.5, 5.7, 5.9, 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 6.7, 6.9

**Theatre Arts** – 6.5, 6.7, 6.8, 6.10, 6.18,

### **Tennessee/North Carolina Common Core State Standards**

**English/Language Arts - Reading Literacy:** K.1, K.3, K.5, K.7, K.9, 1.1, 1.2, 1.7, 1.9, 1.10, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.10, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.9, 3.10, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.9, 4.10, 5.1, 5.3, 5.4, 5.9, 5.10, 6.2, 6.4, 6.7, 6.9

**English Language Arts – Writing:** K.1, K.5, K.7, K.8, 1.1, 1.3, 1.5, 1.8, 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.8, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.7, 6.8, 6.9

### **Tennessee Fine Arts Curriculum Standards**

**Theatre** – K.1, K.3, K.4, K.5, K.6, 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7, 5.1, 5.3, 5.6, 5.7, 6.1, 6.3, 6.6, 6.7

### **North Carolina Essential Standards**

**Theatre Arts** – K.A.1, K.AE.1, 1.A.1, 1.AE.1, 1.CU.2, 2.C.2, 2.A.1, 2.AE.1, 3.C.1, 3.C.2, 3.A.1, 3.CU.1, 3.CU.2, 4.C.1, 4.A.1, 4.AE.1, 5.C.1, 5.A.1, 5.AE.1, 5.CU.2, 6.C.1, 6.C.2, 6.A.1, 6.AE.1

## **Setting**

Various locations in the village where Jack lives as well as the kingdom of the Giant





## A Brief History

Barter Theatre was founded during the Great Depression by Robert Porterfield, an enterprising young actor. He and his fellow actors found themselves out of work and hungry in New York City. Porterfield contrasted that to the abundance of food, but lack of live theatre, around his home region in Southwest Virginia. He returned to Washington County with an extraordinary proposition: bartering produce from the farms and gardens of the area to gain admission to see a play.

Barter Theatre opened its doors on June 10, 1933 proclaiming, “With vegetables you cannot sell, you can buy a good laugh.” The price of admission was 40 cents or the equivalent in produce, the concept of trading “ham for Hamlet” caught on quickly. At the end of the first season, the Barter Company cleared \$4.35 in cash, two barrels of jelly and enjoyed a collective weight gain of over 300 pounds.

Playwrights including Noel Coward, Tennessee Williams and Thornton Wilder accepted Virginia ham as payment for royalties. An exception was George Bernard Shaw, a vegetarian, who bartered the rights to his plays for spinach.

Today, Barter Theatre has a reputation as a theatre where many actors performed before going on to achieve fame and fortune. The most recognized of these alumni include Gregory Peck, Patricia Neal, Ernest Borgnine, Hume Cronyn, Ned Beatty, Gary Collins, Larry Linville and Frances Fisher. The list also included James Burrows, creator of *Cheers*, Barry Corbin, and the late Jim Varney.

Robert Porterfield passed away in 1971. His successor, Rex Partington, had been at Barter in the 1950s as an actor and in the 1970s as stage manager. Rex returned as chief administrator from 1972 until his retirement in 1992. In March 2006, he passed away.

Richard Rose was named the Producing Artistic Director in October 1992. During his tenure, attendance grew from 42,000 to more than 163,000 annual patrons. Significant capital improvements were also made, including renovation of the main stage (now Gilliam Stage) in 1995 and the 2006 addition of The Barter Café at Stage II (now the Smith Theatre). Rose retired in December of 2019 and Katy Brown, who had been at Barter since 1998 as the Director of the Barter Players and as an Associate Artistic Director, was named the fourth Producing Artistic Director – and is the first woman to hold the position.

Barter represents two distinct venues of live theatre: Barter Theatre’s Gilliam Stage, and Barter’s Smith Theatre. Gilliam Stage, with over 500 seats, features traditional theatre in a luxurious setting. Barter’s Smith Theatre offers seating for 167 around a thrust stage in an intimate setting and is perfect for more adventurous productions. Barter Theatre is also home to The Barter Players, a talented ensemble of actors who produce plays for young audiences throughout the year.

History is always in the making at Barter Theatre, building on legends of the past; Barter looks forward to the challenge of growth in the future.

## Characters

*Jack* – a boy who hears music in the rain

*Mama* – Jack's mother

*Farmer Gray* – a neighbor

*Bessie* – Jack's cow

*Alan* – Jack's teammate

*Steve* – Jack's teammate

*Jimmy* – Jack's teammate

*Willy* – Jack's teammate

*Mr. Smith* – Willy's father

*Marcus* – a traveling showman

*Dewey* – his assistant

*Goose* – lays golden eggs

*Golden Harp* – plays beautiful music

*Giant* – an enormous, tone-deaf man



## Vocabulary Words

extraordinary

potential

shame

proud

commodity

sprout

slingshot

fallow

colossal

foolish

razzle-dazzle

rescue

nonsense

despair

harp

drought

beanstalk

fraud

survival

tragic

assistant

wither

guarantee

prosperous

miracle

investment

pitch

**Define the words above and use them in a sentence.**

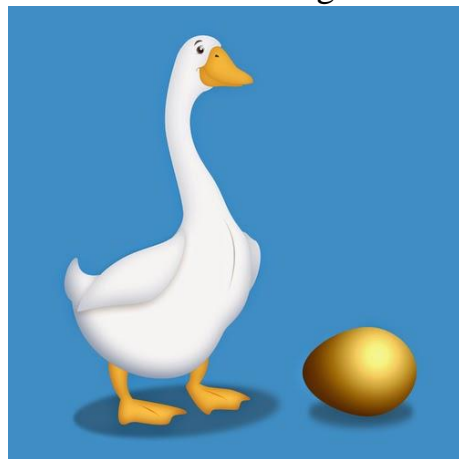
## Synopsis

Jack is different from the other children. They like to play baseball and climb trees; but Jack hates sports and is afraid of heights. Jack would rather listen for the magical music only he can hear when it rains. Then one day the rain stops, and with it the music. A drought descends on the land and everyone wonders how they will survive. Farmer Gray comes to visit and tells Jack's mother that two men in town are selling "rain seeds" that will solve all their problems. Jack's mother sends Jack to town with orders to sell Bessie their singing cow (and Jack's best friend) in order to procure money for the rain seeds. Marcus and Dewey, the two salesmen, are in fact showbiz



veterans desperate for a new act. When they meet the talented Bessie, they persuade Jack to trade her for their three remaining seeds. When Jack returns home, however, his mother is furious with him, for she realizes the magical "rain seeds" are nothing more

than common garden beans. Devastated, Jack plants the beans in his garden and waters them with the tears of despair. Suddenly a giant beanstalk appears and from the top of it he can hear distant music. Determined to find its source, Jack overcomes his fear of heights and climbs to the top, where he finds himself in the kingdom of a Giant! There he meets a talking Goose who lays golden eggs. Goose explains to Jack that the music he hears is coming from the Golden Harp. The Harp's music is responsible for the rain. In the past, the Harp would fly on the Goose's back from place to place, but ever since the Giant kidnapped the Harp and clipped the Goose's wings, they've been trapped in the castle – hence, no rain. Goose takes Jack to meet the Golden Harp. The Harp recognizes him as the boy who would sing with her in the rain.



Suddenly the Giant approaches. Harp begs Jack to rescue her Goose and he does so, taking her back down the beanstalk. The Goose lays enough golden eggs to make Jack and his mother rich.

## Synopsis (cont.)

Jack buys back Bessie from Marcus and Dewey, who in turn give the golden eggs to the angry townsfolk who feel jilted. The townsfolk rush to Farmer Gray's to buy food with the gold – but Farmer Gray has none to sell; he, too, is a victim of the drought. The mob then turns on Jack – if they can't buy food then they'll eat Bessie – and the Goose! Jack holds them off by promising an end to the drought. He climbs the beanstalk once more and steals the Harp from the Giant. Enraged, the Giant chases him down the beanstalk, but Jack manages to cut it down before the Giant can descend. The Giant and the beanstalk crash to the ground. The Harp explains that the poor, tone-deaf Giant



kidnapped her so that she could teach him to sing. Marcus and Dewey, upon hearing the crash, rush to the scene. Just then, the Giant stirs – he is not dead after all, and better yet, the thunk to his head has solved his pitch problem! The Giant can sing! Marcus and Dewey sign him on as their next act. The Harp, happy that everything has been resolved, begins to sing and the rain falls once more. The drought is over! Prosperity returns to the village and everyone recognizes Jack as a true hero.

*“I can do this,  
I can do this,  
I can do this!”*

## Biography of the Authors

Jacob (January 4, 1785) and Wilhelm (Feb 24, 1786) Grimm were born in Hanau, Germany. After studying law, the Brothers turned their focus to their



region's folklore, with an emphasis on recording oral storytelling. Jacob's and Wilhelm's work culminated in the book *Kinder-und Hausmärchen (Children's and Household Tales)*, the first volume of which was published in 1812. A second volume followed in 1815. The collection would later come to be known as *Grimms' Fairy Tales*, with famous stories that include *Snow White*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Golden Goose*, *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Cinderella*. Despite the emphasis on oral traditions, the stories were in

fact an amalgamation of oral and previously printed fairy tales, as well as information shared by friends, family members and acquaintances, with non-German influences. Wilhelm Grimm died on December 16, 1859, in Berlin, Germany. Jacob Grimm died in Berlin on September 20, 1863.

## Biography of the Playwright

**Katy Brown** is proud to have served audiences at Barter Theatre since 1998 as a director, choreographer, acting coach, dramaturge, actor, casting director, and administrator. Katy has directed over ninety professional productions, including *The 39 Steps*, *Violet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *A Thousand Cranes*, *The Foreigner* and world premieres such as *The Quiltmaker*; *Doubting Thomas* and *Don't Cry for Me, Margaret Mitchell*. She also directed Barter's production of *Mice and Men* that toured the United States in the fall of 2009. From 2000 thru 2019, Katy served as the artistic director of The Barter Players. In 2019, she became the Producing Artistic Director of Barter Theatre.



# WORD SEARCH

Find the following words below:

(Words can go in any direction. Words can share letters as they cross over each other)

beanstalk, drought, Jack, Bessie, axe, rain seeds, singing cow,  
Dewey, slingshot, show business, razzle-dazzle, Giant, Golden Harp,  
rainfall, Brothers Grimm, baseball, fairy tale, Goose

Y	R	A	Z	Z	L	E	D	A	Z	Z	L	E	F	C
H	T	B	R	O	T	H	E	R	S	G	R	I	M	M
B	E	A	N	S	T	A	L	K	O	B	S	Y	W	W
S	J	S	A	M	I	B	D	U	E	U	A	C	S	O
H	D	G	L	M	L	F	A	S	O	R	G	S	W	C
R	O	E	D	I	H	E	S	S	G	X	E	H	G	G
D	E	W	E	Y	N	I	L	R	E	N	M	O	T	N
N	Z	X	S	S	E	G	E	A	I	B	L	H	W	I
P	F	P	O	E	N	M	S	S	T	D	A	R	H	G
G	T	E	O	R	R	I	U	H	E	Y	O	L	J	N
B	I	Y	G	A	G	B	A	N	O	I	R	M	L	I
C	Q	A	F	C	W	J	H	R	F	T	Z	I	S	S
K	Z	P	N	O	O	A	L	L	A	F	N	I	A	R
Y	A	L	H	T	R	C	S	P	T	R	Q	H	M	F
Z	B	S	G	P	Z	K	C	K	R	K	E	X	A	B

**Color the picture!**





## True and False

Write **T** if the statement is **True** and **F** if the statement is **False**.

1. \_\_\_ *Jack and the Beanstalk* is a story written by Hans Christian Anderson.
2. \_\_\_ Jack would rather play baseball than anything else.
3. \_\_\_ When the rain stops falling, the crops wither and die.
4. \_\_\_ Jack meets a goose that lays silver eggs.
5. \_\_\_ Jack hears music in the rain.
6. \_\_\_ Farmer Gray tries to sell Jack some magic beans.
7. \_\_\_ Jack is afraid of heights.
8. \_\_\_ Jack's best friend is a cow named Bessie.
9. \_\_\_ The Golden Harp is tone deaf.
10. \_\_\_ Jack climbs the beanstalk only once.
11. \_\_\_ The Giant kidnapped the Harp and clipped the Goose's wings.
12. \_\_\_ Bessie is tone deaf.
13. \_\_\_ Marcus and Dewey are former bank robbers on the run.
14. \_\_\_ Jack's mother uses an axe to cut down the beanstalk.
15. \_\_\_ The Giant learns to sing by the end of the play.



# Questions/Activities

1. Read the story *Jack in the Beanstalk* in class. How does it compare to the production you saw? What were Jack's motives for stealing the Golden Harp in the story? What were his motives for stealing the Golden Harp in the play? **Discuss.**

2. In this play, the axe is very important to Jack because it once belonged to his father. **Define the word "heirloom."** Does your family have any heirlooms? If so, which one is your favorite and why? **Write a story** about your favorite heirloom explaining its significance to your family. **Present it to your class.**



**Draw a picture of what you think the Giant's castle might look like. Do giants really exist? How tall would a person have to be to be considered a giant?**



3. In this play, a drought has swept the land and two characters, Marcus and Dewey, claim to have magic rain seeds that will bring the rain. Using the internet, research the actual conditions under which rain is formed. Then research the reasons that drought might occur. Are some places more prone to drought or rain than others? Where are they and why? How much rainfall does your state average each year? **Present your findings to the class.**



4. Jack went up the beanstalk a second time to fetch the Golden Harp. Using the internet, research the history of the harp and **make an oral presentation to your class.** Be sure to include the different types of harps, how they are played, and what they are made of. Is the harp still played today?

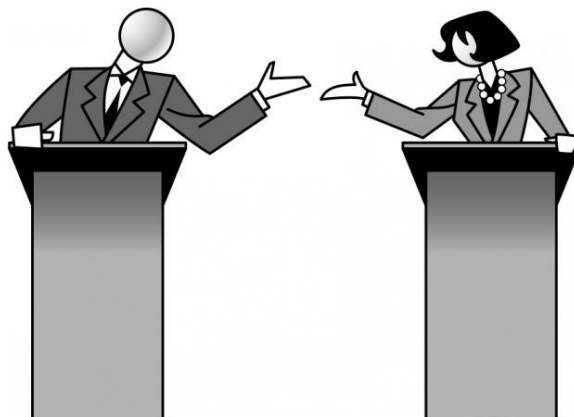
## ACTIVITY

**Follow the link below for instructions on how to make your own cardboard harp!**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6Iug6cMAq8>

5. Define the vocabulary words found on the bottom of Pg. 3 then write sentences using them. Remember: anyone reading your sentence should be able to understand the word from the context in which it is used.

6. In this play, the Giant stole the Golden Harp. Later, Jack stole the Garden Harp from the Giant. Is stealing ever justified? Divide the class in two: assign one half of the class a paper defending the idea that “stealing can be justifiable.” Assign the other half of the class a paper defending the idiom “thou shalt not steal.” Pick one representative from each group and let them debate the topic.



7. The Brothers Grimm were born in Germany. **Research the people of Germany and their culture.** What foods do they eat? What is their climate? The population of the country? What sort of government does it have? **Present your findings to the class.**

8. What makes a story a fairy tale? Is using a fairy tale a good way to teach a lesson about how one should act toward others? What is your favorite fairy tale? Why is it your favorite? If you were going to write a fairy tale, what would it be about? Where would you set it? Who would be the hero?

**WRITE YOUR OWN FAIRY TALE!**  
**Read it to your class**

9. Read these other stories by the Brothers Grimm: *Hansel and Gretel*, *Rapunzel*, and *The Bremen Town Musicians*. Now compare them to *Jack and the Beanstalk*. **What themes do these stories have in common?** How are they different? What are these stories trying to tell us? **Discuss.**



10. This play, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, is adapted from a well known children's story. Pick another favorite childhood story: *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, etc. **Divide the class into groups and assign each group a scene from the story. Have each group adapt their scene into the scene for a play.** Try to avoid using a narrator. Instead, tell the story through action and dialogue (conversation between two or more people). **Design the appropriate costumes, props and set needed.** Now have each group present their scene in chronological order. Is the story told? How different is your play from the fairy tale? How difficult is it to take a piece of literature and turn it into a play?

11. **Write a letter to your favorite actors from this production.** Tell them what you liked about the play, their performance, etc. Mail your letters to:

The Barter Players  
c/o Barter Theatre  
P.O. Box 867  
Abingdon, VA 24212-0867  
ATTN: Jack and the Beanstalk

## Suggested Further Reading/Links

Other stories by the Brothers Grimm:

*The Frog King*  
*Cinderella*  
*The Robber Bridegroom*  
*Rapunzel*  
*Hansel and Gretel*

To find out more about the Brothers Grimm, check out these links:

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/grimm/>  
<http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm.html>