Jack and Jill and the Giants from 'Up North'

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"Swinwold Hamlet is being terrorised by rogue giants. With the village spirit broken it falls on risk averse Jack to take care of the situation. But when his cautious attitude brands him a coward and turns the love of his life, Jill, against him Jack must summon up all his dexterity to rid the giant, whilst staying true to his peace loving morality."

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The Underdog Crew CIC is a not-for-profit community interest organisation, providing a safe and nurturing creative space for marginalised and at-risk young adults to find inspiration, motivation and a place to belong. Harnessing the power of professional film and creative pursuits to instil positivity, wellbeing and empowerment.

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ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

CURTAIN RISES to the TOWN SQUARE - DARK

A SPOTLIGHT shines down on a YOUNG MAN, hunching in the centre of the stage. He whittles a figurine with a knife and tosses shards DOWN THE VILLAGE WELL.

NARRATOR
This is Jack. A modest fellow from the edge of nowhere. Not averse to adventure but yet to experience the possibility. But, dear audience this is about to change.

THE LIGHTS COME UP, showing a VILLAGE BACKGROUND

Jack tosses a piece of wood down the well.

JACK
(in his head)
I wish... I wish...

He tosses another piece of wood down the well. He glances across to THE SWORDMAKER'S MARKET STALL, where THE SWORDMAKER, a manly man, bangs a sword with a huge hammer- forging it. He chats freely to a beautiful young woman, JILL.

She laughs to his jokes and flicks her hair to him.

JACK (CONT'D)
(INTERNAL MONOLOGUE - mocking)
OOH, look at my big brown eyes.
(CAVEMENLIKE)
Me Swordmaker... me big poop brain. One plus one equal potato.
(sighs and reverts to inner monologue)
If only I was six foot tall. Relevant. Noticeable. And not just the son of a lowly *donkey trader*. Look at him. Stupid chizeled jaw. The way his *bleugh* muscles ripple with every hit. Showoff... and the way the sun bounces off his glistening chest. And his diamond white teeth. DOH!... I think I'm falling for him myself. Snap out of it Jack.

Jack walks to the front of the stage.

JACK (CONT'D)
(to the audience)
That's Jill. The love of my life. Except she doesn't want me. Doesn't even notice me anymore. Friends since birth. First kiss behind the applecart. I know everything about her. Love everything about her.
(a deep sigh)
And now... i'm invisible.

He motions to the audience for sympathy.

JACK (CONT'D)
I can do the strong mysterious type.

He poses awkwardly...

JACK (CONT'D)
And muscles.

He flexes his arms and puffs out his chest. He strains hard.

A LOUD, SQUEAKY, FART echoes around the hall.

Jack looks at the audience.

JACK (CONT'D)
I am so sorry. That will not happen again. But, So what... Anyone can hit something. It's hardly a skill.

The MUSCLEMAN raises his sword to the heavens and performs the most amazing twirling display to Jill.

JACK (CONT'D)
Show off.

We HEAR RUNNING FROM **OFF** *AND MINOR CHAOS.*

A TOWN CRYER rushes onto the stage. **<Baldrick'esque>**

He pulls down a scroll and reads.

TOWN CRYER
(CALM AS A CUCUMBER)
HEAR YE, HEAR YE. I DON'T WANT TO ALARM ANYONE BUT THERE'S GIANTS ON THE HILL. THEY'VE ALREADY EATEN HALF THE SHEEP AND NOW WANT TO EAT THE LOT OF US.
(MORE)

TOWN CRYER (CONT'D)
SO, NO NEED FOR PANIC... BUT I SUGGEST WE TAKE UP ARMS... RIGHT NOW... OR WE'RE ALL GOING TO BE EATEN ALIVE IN THE MOST GRIZZLY OF WAYS. HEAR YE... HEAR YE. IT's DOOMSDAY I TELL YA. I THANK YOU. NOW RUN.

He runs from the stage.

A LOUD BELL BEGINS TO TOLL. THE CHAOS AND PANIC SWELLS

The Muscleman begins grabbing all his swords.

SWORDMAKER
(rallying battlecry)
TO ARMS.

He pauses and looks at both his arms one by one.

SWORDMAKER (CONT'D)
(confused)
Two arms.

FREEZE SCENE

Jack walks across to the Swordmaker, FROZEN IN TIME.

JACK
It means a call to defend or make ready for confrontation. As in, a call to arms to defend against a takeover... You big, knuckle headed, idiot.

Jack reaches into a pot of grease on the Swordmaker's stall and wipes in down the Swordmaker's nose.

Jack returns to his mark.

JACK (CONT'D)
(to the audience)
See. I've got smarts.

He clicks his fingers and time resumes.

A young man, TOBIAS runs on to the stage and to Jack.

TOBIAS
Jack... Jack. Come quick.

We see the Swordmaker confused, wiping his face and looking up to the sky.

Tobias thrusts a bow towards Jack. Jack keeps his hands behind his back.

Jack is frozen to the spot.

TOBIAS (CONT'D)
Jack!
(pause)
JACK!

Jack snaps to attention.

JACK
(showing fear)
Giants? Big, ferocious, teeth like carving knives, fists like wrecking balls giants!
(Apologetically)
I don't really do giants mate.

TOBIAS
(disgusted)
What? Yes you do, Jack. We all do. And your father's donkey's are next on the menu. They've already eaten the cows in lower meadow on their way up. So come quick.

Jack pauses.

TOBIAS (CONT'D)
JACK! There's no time to lose.

Rooted to the spot, Jack plays for time.

JACK
I've gotta.. erm... My chores. I'll be in all sorts of trouble.

TOBIAS
Jack?

THE BELL TOLLS FASTER AND LOUDER

Tobias takes a step closer. His body language, sad. Let down.

TOBIAS (CONT'D)
(saddened)
We need you, Jack.

JACK
I've erm... I've got to take the... get the... I need to sort... to catch the....

Tobias stares at him impatiently, tapping his foot.

TOBIAS
(pointing into his face)
And that... is why she'll never be your true love.

Tobias rushes across to the market stall...

Jack is left alone.

Jack looks across to the Swordmaker, who passes out weapons to a few villagers.

Jill steps in and takes a sword, wielding it to the skies.

JILL
(rallying cry)
READY YOUR BREAKFAST AND EAT HEARTY... FOR TONIGHT, WE DINE IN HELL!

The Swordmaker passes her a shield...

JILL (CONT'D)
TO THE HILL.

TOBIAS
IT'S GIANT WHOOPING TIME!

SWORDMAKER
(cavemanlike)
SPARTA!!!!!

They all rush off stage, leaving Jack alone.

Jack faces the audience and sits on the edge of the stage.

JACK
(to the audience)
Would you?

< The audience reacts >

JACK (CONT'D)
Exactly. Me neither.

He sighs and punches the ground.

JACK (CONT'D)
And now she thinks I'm a coward. But I'm NOT. It's a simple case of logic.

JACK BREAKS INTO A SONG.

JACK (CONT'D)
(singing)
Would you run in a burning building?

He gestures to the audience.

JACK (CONT'D)
Or wrestle a ten foot bear. Or battle a shark in a paddling pool or fight in the village square. Logic is there for a reason and fear is a sensible state... to protect us from danger and follies and fights, to keep us alive on the darkest of nights. So logic and reason's not some kind of treason. It's self protection, right.

Jack stands up and gestures the audience.

JACK (CONT'D)
It's self protection, right. Right?

AUDIENCE MEMBER
You're a coward Jack!

Jack hangs his head...

JACK
(waving off the insult)
Oh, what do you know.

He slowly walks off stage, to the wings.

JACK (CONT'D)
(deep sad sigh)
But I know she'll never talk to me again.

FADE OUT.

SCENE TWO

Thunder and flashes of lightning. Smoke fills the stage.

LIGHTS UP TO:

EXT. LORD LACKSHAFT OF SWINBURNE'S FANCY MANOR.

<< SET DRESSING >> A draped sheet, painted as the outside. An open window, LORD LACKSHAFT leans out.

Ageing, wild eyes, huge eyebrows. A monacle. Red cheeked and nose from overindulgence. Oozing pomposity and self service.

LACKSHAFT
RUN... RUN TO THE HILLS. GOT NO SHEEP YOU CAN'T PAY YOUR BILLS.

Lord Lackshaft cackles, menacingly.

LACKSHAFT (CONT'D)
LET THE VILLAGERS DEAL WITH IT. I'M FAR TOO PRECIOUS TO REPLACE.

AUDIENCE BOOS

He looks at the big gold watch around his neck.

LACKSHAFT (CONT'D)
TIME IS MONEY AND THERE'S NONE TO LOSE. ONWARDS TO THE HILL!

He points out of the window.

LACKSHAFT (CONT'D)
YOU. YES YOU.... FIGHT TO THE DEATH BOY AND I'LL GIVE YOUR MOTHER AN EXTRA BOX OF EGGS.
(to the audience - leering)
Amongst other things.
(to the running vilagers)
ONWARDS. GIANTS COST ME MONEY. AND I LOATH LOSING MY MONEY!

Sounds of giants roaring and a fierce battle. People screaming.

LACKSHAFT (CONT'D)
Five shillings to every man, woman and child who fights and returns to tell the tale.
(to another villager)
Morning Nanna Aitkin. How's that gammy leg.

NANNA AITKIN
(unseen/ OFF)
Mustn't grumble sir.

LACKSHAFT
(cheerily)
If you get your face eaten off I'll let you off that goat you owe me. TALLY HO.

FADE TO BLACK.

<< SET DRESSING >> THE EXTERIOR MANOR HOUSE SHEET RISES, REVEALING THE INTERNAL SET.

INT. LORD LACKSHAFT'S MANOR - DRAWING ROOM

Bookcased walls, silver artifacts, large paintings. Lackshaft leans out of the window.

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.

LACKSHAFT
ENTER.

TWO HENCHMEN arrive - dressed crowlike in black and feathered outfits. They barge into each other - terrified to approach him.

HENCHMAN STARK
Scuse me, if I dare... if I may, boss. It doesn't look good... you, erm... you... erm...

LACKSHAFT
Spit it out SQUIRE STARK.

HENCHMAN SNOW
If I dare boss... hiding away in here while the villagers... take to the hill.

LACKSHAFT
(tugging ANGRILY on his braces)
WHAAAAAAAAAT?!?!?

HENCHMAN STARK
(fearful)
I'm sorry boss... but.. they're people. You can't just...

Lackshaft marches into his face.

LACKSHAFT
Can't just what, SQUIRE SNOW? Spit it out boy...

HENCHMAN SNOW
But... but... humanity, sir.

LACKSHAFT
(roaring)
Hyoo... what?

HENCHMAN STARK
It doesn't look good at all.

Lackshaft reaches into his pocket and grabs a bag of coins. He spills them one by one on the floor.

LACKSHAFT
(gloating - slow and precise)
I can do whatever I want. Shillings and Pennies. Peasants and land. Titles and deeds... All by my hand.

He rubs the coins in their faces and scatters them to the floor.

LACKSHAFT (CONT'D)
(BREAKING INTO SONG)
It's just a commodity.
(pause)
Assets and trinkets and things that I love... and they all get given to ME.
(spoken word)
People. PFFFT. If they get chomped by giants we'll just...
(Singing)
We'll all have a big celebration, with wine and the finest of cheese. And oysters, macdonalds and lobsters and swine... and they'll all just fall to their knees. And they'll go home all jolly and merry and lustfully finish the night... and then... ha-ha-ha... my dearest of boys
(pause)
Nine-months later... they'll get a surprise.
(Spoken word/ menacing)
A whole new generation of MY subjects will be born. And then...
(MORE)

LACKSHAFT (CONT'D)
before you can say hop, skip and a hump, they'll be SIX years old, strong as an ox and we put them to work. Simples!

The Henchmen's lip trembles.

Lackshaft marches to a cupboard, grabs two large war hammers and hands them to the Henchmen.

LACKSHAFT (CONT'D)
So now you.. and you.. there's giants to be killed. And I'm bored of this conversation. So shoo... off and away. I've money to count.

HENCHMAN 1
(stammering)
B-b-b-but sir...

LACKSHAFT
(roaring)
ARE YOU DEAF?! I SAID LEAVE!

The Henchmen exit, terrified. Lord Lackshaft cackles as the audience boo's.

FADE OUT.

SCENE THREE - THE AFTERMATH

VFX - PROJECTION of a lone giant running away into forest.

CROWD CHEERING. TRIUMPHANT CHURCH BELLS

INT. JILL'S FAMILY HOME

MUSIC: SAD MUSIC PLAYS

SFX: CHURCH BELLS SEEP INTO THE DISTANCE

SPOTLIGHT ON CENTRE OF DARKENED STAGE. Jill kneels next to her father - laid out on a rough blanket and straw bed.

She sobs quietly and places STONES over his eyes - then leans over him to kiss his face.

JILL
(repeatedly)
Oh, Daddy... Why....

Jack ENTERS STAGE - slow and precise - stopping just a few feet into visibility.

He watches for a moment - head bowed.

He takes a step closer. And then several more gentle steps to her side.

He rests his hand on her shoulder. Jill looks up, sees it's Jack and pulls her shoulder away.

Jack takes a step back. FREEZE FRAME

NARRATOR
King Pyrrhus of Epirus... after winning a battle against the Romans in 279 BCE, suffered inconceivable losses. *Such a victory is like a defeat.* He remarked, full of shame and remorse.
(pause)
Forevermore known as a pyrrhic victory. A battle won, yet at the greatest of costs. And for poor Jill, such words offer little solace to the young villager and the loss of her father, slain by the hand of Giants.

UNFREEZE

Jack slowly turns and walks away as Jill sobs over her father.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE