



MISS MUFFET & JACK HORNER – THEIR PANTOMIME

by Rod Dungate

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Miss Muffet and Jack Horner – their Pantomime

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Characters

Marion Muffet

Jack Horner

Mrs Zanzibar Grindstone, Principal of the Home from Home Academy

Patsie Dazzle, Helper at the Academy

Marco da Marcos, a property developer

Arrack, a spider / Spider Woman character

Green Man

Robot

Male Puppeteer

Female Puppeteer

Puppet Characters

Corin, a magpie

Apple Urchin

Ferocious Dog

A Fallow Deer

A Fox, vixen

Two Hedgehogs

Frogs

Chicken

(This pantomime can be played by 9 performers. Notes on flexible casting, puppets, and production setting appear at the end of the script.)

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One: The Orchard

(We are in The Orchard. It is winter, so there are no leaves on the trees. There are a couple of holly bushes covered in red berries. There is an old-fashioned pump or well.)

The Green Man enters. He is singing a little wassail to himself as he sorts out the mistletoe.)

Hoh, bless the Master of this House (Tune: *Attached*)

Green Man

Hoh bless the master of this house,
mistress also,
and all the little children
that in this orchard go.

Well, goodness me. Shiver me old timbers. Here's me singing about children coming into the orchard and, blow me down, ain't my old orchard here filled filled up with children. Howdee do? Sorry I didn't see you come in, I was busy sorting out the mistletoe and singing my wassail. D'you know, I'll sing her again for you.

(He sings the song again. Now pick out one or two individuals.)

Hello. What's your name?

(Have very brief chats. This helps build the bond between children and the Green Man. You are bringing the children and adults into the world you are creating. Be reasonably free with the script. Then continue.)

This orchard with all its apple trees is part of my woods. And I look after the woods. It's my job. Me. Green Man. I'm famous wherever there's woods. And in woods I sing about woods. And in orchards I sing wassails.

What's a wassail? It's just a special sort of song specially for apple trees. Like carols is for Yule, fireworks songs are for November 5th, and lullabies for getting littluns to sleep . . . What other special sorts of songs might we have? *(Work with the audience to find a few.)*

So . . . Wassails is for apple trees. Helps the good spirits to stay, and get rid of bad spirits. I've got an idea! Would you like to learn a wassail? You'll know the tune. And I'll give you the words look. Here's wassail. You young'uns might have to help them great big children, and poke them if they don't sing. You'll know the tune alright.

Wassail With Me (Tune: *Three Blind Mice*)

Wassail with me, wassail with me,
Wassail round the tree, wassail round the tree,
Toot like a trumpet and clap like a gong,
It's really quite short 'cos it ain't very long,
In all your life did you sing such a song
as wassail with me?

(Work with the audience for a bit to get this song.)

Now you can all go wassailing. You does it in January, so wrap up warm. And you usually gets money when you sing wassails.

Just a quiet word for the grown-ups. Don't you go giving them little ones no tenners. No. No. No. Twenty quid is the going rate, but I won't tell the children. *(To the children.)* You didn't hear that, did you?

Now, lookee here, my friends. You might be able to give me a hand. There is a bad urchin in this orchard. She's called the Apple Urchin and always out to make trouble. Always trouble.

And I've got to keep me eye on Little Miss Muffet and Little Jack Horner. Know them? They've had to go and stay in the Home From Home Academy. It's a highly rated Education establishment. And they have to stay there because their Mum and Dad suddenly disappeared. Like the snow in summer. Or more like the sun in summer! Some say there's dark goings on.

And Little Miss Marion Muffet and Little Master Jack Horner are always trying to run away. They be seeking their magic powers. Magic powers. I don't much believe in magic powers, but word on the paths is they have got magic but need to find it. Foxes say they have. Robins say they have. Magpies always gossiping about it. Specially that magpie Corin, love a duck but he can talk. Magic powers. Even my old friend Oliver the Old Oak said they have. And that means Marion and Jack is in danger. Terrible danger. Always villains hiding in the dark waiting to grab their powers. So can you keep your eyes skinned?

Great stuff. *(And so on.)* I must just take this mistletoe down the way. I'll only be a sec. Don't you go away.

(Green Man goes off. Apple Urchin comes on.)

Urchin Glad that old stinky pants has gone. Always moaning and groaning and singing his stupid old songs. Needs to get cool. Bit of Rap, bit of Grunge, Drill and that. I hate all these berries. Yuk. Yuk. *(Impressive vomiting impression.)* I'll get rid of them, stinky red things.

(Begins to pick the berries.)

I wish they were poisonous to birds. Make the place more peaceful. Maybe I could poison all these yukky old apple trees, too. Watch them go all black and withery, all droopy dangly, hear them choking and puking.

I love to cause a bit of trouble. What I live for.

Be a Curse *(Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)*

I do like to be a curse
I do like to make things worse.
I do like to hubble bubble
I do like to double trouble.
I do like to be a curse
I do like to make things worse.

I adore badness. I love bad, naughty, horrible, cruel, mean children. Me best friends.

I'd feed the berries to goodie children too. Little puky goodie, stinky children. Yeah, man.

Oh yeah. What was the old duffer saying about stupid Muffet and Horner? (*See what information you can get.*)

Huh. Do what you can, you won't stop me having my bit of fun, getting stuck into the Muffet Horner story. Screw them up a bit, what a laugh.

Watch out, here's Stinky Pants back.

(*The Green Man returns.*)

Green Man I thought you'd show up sooner or later.

Urchin Why shouldn't I, Stin- . . . Sir?

Green Man Because you're trouble.

Urchin Give it a rest.

Green Man If I give it a rest you'd be killing off all my trees.

Urchin Stinky trees.

Green Man If you damage my trees, I'll damage you.

Urchin You and whose army?

Green Man And another thing, Missy. What do you know about Marion Muffet and Jack Horner?

Urchin Nothing.

Green Man That means you know something.

Urchin I don't know nothing. I don't even know who they are. Who are they?

Green Man If I hear you've been meddling in their business, . . .

Urchin What, old man?

Green Man I'll have a little think about it.

Urchin Don't make me laugh.

Green Man You won't be laughing if I have to sort you out. No meddling with Miss Muffet and Master Horner. Understood.

Urchin I'll have to think about it. (*Gross performance of thinking.*) OK.

Green Man Swear on your honour you won't get involved and stop them finding their magic powers.

Urchin Oh. It's magic powers they're after. Lovely jubbly. Oh, I'll get involved alright. You just watch me. What a duffer letting that slip out. I'm off to think up horrible things. Bye, Stinky Pants.

(The Urchin makes a spectacularly athletic exit.)

Green Man She's a nasty piece of work that one. Dangerous. You'll have to keep an eye out for Marion and Jack. I think things is going to go nasty.

Come on, it's a lovely day. Let's cheer ourselves up. Can you remember the wassail song? Let's have another go.

(Reprise of Wassail With Me. Then the Green Man goes.)

Two: A High Fence in the Academy Grounds

(It is night. This is the security fence around the Home from Home Academy. Marion and Jack creep in, Marion has a small back-pack, Jack has a huge one with saucepans, brushes, a hammer and so on.)

Marion Jack!

Jack What?

Marion Shh.

Jack Sorry.

(He tries to stop his clanking gear but only makes it worse.)

Marion Shh. You'll wake up Grindstone.

Jack I'll sort her out.

Marion You stand up to her she'd die laughing.

Jack She'd still be dead.

Escaping From Old Grindstone. *(Tune: What Shall We Do With The Drunken Sailor?)*

Marion

Think what you're doing, use your nous, bro
Quietly creep away from this house, bro
Like a teeny, tiny mouse, bro

Both Escaping from old Grindstone.

Jack Inside this house our lives get sadder,
Here with Grindstone gets worse then badder
climb this fence with rope or ladder,

Both Escaping from old Grindstone

Let's go and find our magic powers,
Search in basements and in towers,
Though it may take days and hours,
Escaping from old Grindstone.

(A loudspeaker switches on. Grindstone barks out an order.)

Grindstone Marcos. Get and check the security fence.

Marion Hide. Quietly.

(Marco comes along and makes a feeble attempt at checking the fence.)

Grindstone Marcos, you fool, check the fence properly.

(Marco tests one of the bars.)

Grindstone Properly. We need it secure to protect our inmates.

Marco I thought they are students.

Grindstone They are. I call them inmates because they are mates and they are in here.

(Marco checks and then leaves.)

Marco All secure.

(Marco leaves. After a moment, Marion and Jack creep back in.)

Marion Shh. You'll wake up the whole Academy.

(Jack endeavours to be quiet but trips.)

Jack Sorry.

Marion Do you want to end up in Grindstone's sweat room?

Jack No.

Marion Or her ice bucket room?

Jack No.

Marion Because you're going the right way about it.

Jack Do we have to take all this stuff?

Marion If we are out there in hiding for a long time we'll have to do our own cooking. And hygiene.

Jack Washing?

Marion Of course.

Jack What in?

Marion Streams. Lades. Rivers. Puddles.

Jack Yuk.

Marion Now be quiet. I'm calculating.

Jack What?

Marion The length of rope we need to loop over the top, and the tensile strength. Then how hard we'll hit the ground when we jump from the top on the other side. Our impact velocity.

Jack Do we have to jump?

Marion If you want to fly by all means give it a go.

Jack Couldn't we magic a way out?

Marion How are we going to do that?

Jack We've got magic powers. Everybody says.

Marion But they don't work.

Jack They might.

Marion They never have before.

Jack They might this time.

Marion I calculate there's only a 1,642,491 to 1 chance of that happening.

Jack But they might.

Marion Be my guest.

Jack I'll get us a ladder.

*For the power to take us hence
A ladder stand against this fence.*

(This clearly does not work.)

Marion Any other bright ideas?

Jack I'll make the rails disappear.

*To escape from Grindstone that we fear
Iron railings disappear.*

(They do not disappear.)

Marion Any other bright ideas?

Jack Perhaps the railings have moved into a different dimension and only look like they're here. I've seen it in *Dr Who*.

Marion Try it.

(Jack runs to the railings to run through them, but they are tough and he bounces back.)

Jack Ow.

Marion Still in this dimension, I'd say.

Jack That hurt.

Marion So shut up. I'm nearly done. Unless you want to end up in Grindstone's plastic cage.

Jack No.

*(Jack sings a little song, and does a little dance. **Drunken Sailor** tune as before.)*

When I dance and sing I feel much better,
Even when it's raining and I'm getting wetter
And everyone says, 'Oi what's the matter?'
Escaping from old Grindstone.

*(In the meantime, the **Apple Urchin** has come along, with a most ferocious dog. She indicates to the audience to keep quiet.)*

Marion OK. Get ready. Freedom, here we come.

*(The **Urchin** now launches the dog at the pair. Much shouting and barking as the two try to get away. Then loud sirens, searchlights. **Mrs Grindstone** calls through the loudspeaker.)*

Grindstone Stay where you are. This is Zanzibar Grindstone, Principal of the Home from Home Academy. By the power invested in me, I order you to lie down. On your stomachs. Arms stretched above your head. Do not move until ordered to do so. Dazzle will collect you. No funny business.

*(The dog is threateningly near. **Urchin** is watching from the side lines highly delighted; sings a little of her song. **Patsie Dazzle** comes in.)*

Patsie Oh dear me, what sort of mess have you got yourselves into? You can get up now. But no funny business. *(To the dog.)* You, shoo. *(The dog runs off.)* Look at you, anyone would think you were trying to escape.

Marion Of course we were.

Patsie Oh no, I don't think so. Don't think so, not at all. Oh, no.

(While Patsie is saying this she is indicating that Grindstone is listening.)

No, I think you were, I think you were . . .

Jack Getting ready for a car boot sale.

Patsie Ah, car boot sale. Excellent idea. Enterprising. Raise funds for the Academy.

Grindstone Dazzle, what are you up to? You look like you've got ants down your knickers. Bring them in. Over and out.

Patsie Come along then. You bad children. Bad children. Quick march.

(And out they go.)

Urchin That was really good for a laugh. You know what they say, you have to make your own entertainment.

(Off she goes, singing her little song.)