

TOM THUMB

**SCRIPT BY
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Suggested songs are from the Chester Songpack (Songpack, Butler, Chester Music), Beatles Fakebook and Great Women! Great Songs!
Available from www.musicroom.com

Dramatis Personae

Jack, The Woodcutter

Mabel, His Wife

The Children:

Tom

Dick

Harry

Bill

Ben

Pete

Zak

Villager 1

Villager 2

4 Crows

Ogre

Ogre's Wife

The King

The Chamberlain

The Captain of the Guard

The Children's Army

Musician

Herald

Suggested Songs

- 1 Try to Remember the Kind of September
- 2 A Winter's Tale
- 3 Blowin' in the Wind
- 4 Raindrops Keep Falling on my Head
- 5 What Shall We Do With the Drunken Ogre
- 6 These Boots Were Made for Walking
(from Great Women! Great Songs!)
- 7 Money Can't Buy Me Love
(from The Beatles Fake Book)
- 8 Oh When the Kids (Saints)
- 9 On Top of the World

The above are all from The Songpack, Butler, Chester Music, except for songs 6 and 7.

The song books may be purchased from: www.musicroom.com

Scene 1, In the Village Outside Tom's Cottage

The villagers are very miserable. The crops have failed and they are hungry. The children are dressed in rags and have dirty faces. Tom is curled up inside a big bucket on one side and cannot be seen by the audience or cast. One side of the stage is the interior of the cottage.

SONG 1 Try to Remember the Kind of September

(At the end of the song most of the villagers drift upstage and carry on with menial tasks such as carving wood, hanging washing and bartering goods. The children play simple games with sticks and nuts. Enter Jack, the woodcutter.)

JACK Ah, there you are, wife.

MABEL Well, Jack, how much money did you take at market. You should have got a fair price for those hard-wood faggots. Good quality they were.

JACK *(Dejected)* Not a farthing, Mabel. They did not sell.

MABEL What? What do you mean, 'they did not sell'?

JACK They were damp and rotten, that's what. There must be a leak in the shed roof.

BEN I told you, father, there is a hole big enough for Tom to climb through in that shed roof. You wouldn't listen to me.

ZAK That's because he climbed onto the roof and fell through.

JACK Speaking of Tom, where is the boy?

BILL We haven't seen him since dinner.

DICK That was two days ago! We didn't eat yesterday.

MABEL You can't expect to eat every day. We simply don't have the money to buy food.

JACK And there's a limit to the number of wild berries we can gather. It's more important to gather wood to sell.

HARRY I'm so hungry, Ma. Will we be eating today?

MABEL Well, all you'll have is turnip stew. I was relying on your father bringing some meat home from the market.

PETE But we had turnip stew last time we ate.

ZAK And the time before.

JACK Enough! If you boys worked a little harder we might be able to buy food. Now, let's all go and find Tom and then we can go and collect some more wood from the forest.

BEN I'm frightened of the forest. Wild bears and wolves live there.

DICK Don't be such a wimp, Ben.

BILL Perhaps we could kill a bear and eat it.

ZAK Perhaps pigs might fly.

MABEL Come on, let's go and find Tom. He can help repair the damage he caused to the roof.

PETE He's probably hiding again like he normally does.

HARRY Let's check all the usual places first.
(Exit Jack, Mabel and the boys. Tom pops his head out of the bucket to check all is clear.)

TOM Hello! Did you hear that. What a cheek; I get blamed for everything. It's just 'cause I'm the youngest – and the smallest. They think I'm stupid but I'm smarter than all of them put together. One day I'll show them – you'll see. It's really miserable living here; never enough to eat, the rain comes through the roof, there are no blankets on my bed and I'm always cold and hungry. And now that winter is coming things will get even worse.

SONG 2 A Winter's Tale (Tom and Chorus)

(The villagers join in the chorus. After the song, enter Jack, Mabel and the boys.)

JACK Ah, there you are Tom Thumb. Where have you been?

TOM Oh, just here and there, nowhere in particular.

MABEL I'll give you nowhere in particular. *(She grabs him by the ear.)* Get into that house. It's time you were in bed.

TOM Why? I'm not tired.

MABEL Don't you answer me back, boy, or you'll be straight to bed with no supper.

TOM *(Aside)* Oh great, just like every other day.

MABEL What?

TOM I said I'm going to behave.

MABEL Good.
(They all enter the house. Exit villagers.)

JACK Now wash your hands ready for supper.

PETE *(Looking in the bucket)* There isn't any water.

JACK Then sit down at the table.
(They sit at a long table, the boys along the sides and the parents at each end.)

MABEL Who's going to say grace?

BEN Grace!

MABEL Ben, don't be naughty.

BILL I will, I'll say it.

JACK Very well, go ahead.

BILL For the little we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful, even though it is only turnip stew again.

OTHERS Amen!
(Jack serves a spoonful to each person.)

TOM Is that all I get.

ZAK You're only small, that's all you need.

TOM If I'm not fed properly I'll never grow big, will I!

BEN You'll never grow big anyway.

JACK That's enough talking. Get on with your meal.

PETE Meal is a slight exaggeration, I think.

MABEL Now we have a hard day ahead of us. We will need to collect double the normal amount of wood to make up for the disaster at the market.
(The boys groan.)

JACK Now, to bed – all of you.

TOM Please father, let me go at the top end. I keep falling out of the bottom.

JACK You will go where you are told, boy.

HARRY Why can't we have a bed each. It's too squashed all in the one bed.

JACK There's not room for more than one bed. You know that.

MABEL Shoo, shoo! Into bed. *(She shoes them off.)*
(Exit boys, grumbling and pushing one-another)

JACK Now, Mabel, you and I must have a serious talk.
MABEL It's not true. You can't believe idle village gossip.
JACK What on earth are you talking about, Mabel?
MABEL Oh, nothing, Jack.
(Tom enters, out of sight of his father and mother, and eavesdrops.)
JACK The truth is that we simply cannot afford to feed seven boys anymore.
MABEL But we can't let them starve either.
JACK Precisely. But I have an alternative suggestion. We must take them into the forest and leave them there to fend for themselves.
(Tom looks shocked and wipes away a tear with the back of his hand.)
MABEL Jack, how could you suggest such a thing?
JACK What alternative do we have? They will starve if we leave them here.
MABEL But...but...but...
JACK It is for the best, dear.
MABEL My heart will be broken in two.
(Tom sniffs violently.)
JACK What was that?
MABEL Just the wind, dear.
JACK Then we have our decision. The answer is blowing in the wind.

SONG 3 Blowin' in the Wind (Jack, Mabel and Chorus)

(The chorus enter and join in the song. During the song Tom weeps. He exits at the end with the chorus.)

JACK We'll get up very early in the morning and tell the boys we are all going to collect wood from the forest. When they are busy we'll sneak away and leave them. It is best that way.
MABEL But they'll never find their way home.
JACK Yes, that's the idea, Mabel.
MABEL Oh no, we can't, we can't.
JACK We must, Mabel, and we shall. Now, let's get to bed.
MABEL Not before I've kissed my little ones goodnight for the last time.

(Exit Jack and Mabel.) End of Scene

Scene 2, In the Forest

(The forest is thick and dark, with paths leading off in all directions.

Enter Jack and Mabel, closely followed by the boys.)

JACK Come along now boys, you'll get left behind if you don't walk faster.

PETE Wow, this forest is so huge.

HARRY There are paths leading off in every direction.

DICK I don't know how father knows the way. You could so easily get lost and never find your way out.

(Jack glances at the ground.)

ZAK It's a good thing we have father to guide us.

BEN I'm scared!

BILL Don't be foolish, Ben. What could possibly happen to us with father here.

MABEL Do stop your rabbiting, you boys – and hurry along Tom. You will be left behind. And eat up that bread I gave you for breakfast. You never know when your next meal might be.

(They all exit the other side as Tom enters, dropping breadcrumbs every few metres.)

TOM What a stroke of luck that mother gave us a big piece of bread each. I can make a trail and follow it home when they leave us in the forest.

JACK *(Offstage)* Hurry along, Tom, you will get lost.

TOM Coming, father.

(As Tom exits, enter four crows, following Tom and pecking up the breadcrumbs as they go.)

CROW 1 Hey, that one's mine. You had the last one.

CROW 2 I did not. You had it.

CROW 3 Stone the crows, do you two always have to argue.

CROW 1 Well I never start it. It's always him.

CROW 2 That's a lie, it's usually you.

CROW 4 There you go again.

CROW 3 Hey, look, who are all these people watching us?

CROW 1 Oh yea! My, they are so ugly!

CROW 2 Have you looked in the mirror lately?

CROW 3 Hey, it's an audience. They must be waiting to watch a play or something.

CROW 4 Oh great! We do love an audience.

CROW 1 Hey, shall we tell them some of our crow jokes?

CROW 2 Oh not again, please. We've heard those a million times.

CROW 1 They haven't though.

CROW 2 Make it quick.

CROW 1 What is a crow's favourite sport?

CROW 3 I don't think they know.

CROW 1 Crowquet.

(Crows 1,3 and 4 guffaw with laughter after each joke but Crow 2 is not impressed.)

CROW 4 I bet you didn't know that crows come from Crowatia!

CROW 3 Did you know you can tell a crow is insane when it's a-raven.

CROW 1 What sort of crow sticks to a wall when it hits it?

CROW 4 A velcrow.

CROW 3 Do you know where a crow goes to buy a pint of beer.

CROW 2 Of course we know. You tell us this joke every day.

CROW 1 A crow bar!

(More laughter)

CROW 2 Look, when you've quite finished we have some bread-crumbs to eat up here.

CROW 1 I'm not hungry any more.

CROW 4 Look, if we eat these crumbs those poor children will not be able to find their way home, will they?

CROW 3 But we have no choice. We have to eat them.

CROW 2 Why's that then?

CROW 3 The director says it's in the script and if we don't do it then the plot won't work out.

CROW 2 Come on, then. Let's get on with it.

(As they exit Crow 1 hangs back.)

CROW 1 I bet you don't know what a giant's favourite perfume is. Ogre cologne!

(He guffaws with laughter and exits.)

(Enter Jack, Mabel and the boys. Tom is still hanging back.)

JACK This is the place. *(To Mabel)* This is about as far as you can get from our cottage.

PETE At last. My legs are killing me.

JACK Now boys, I would like you to follow that path and see if there is any fallen wood down there. It is easier to gather fallen wood than to chop down trees.

ZAK Oh Father, do we have to?

JACK Yes, Zak, you do.

(The six older boys exit but Tom hangs back reluctantly.)

And you, Tom. You must go too.

(Tom rushes forwards and hugs first his mother tightly and then his father before rushing off to join his brothers, without a word. After he exits Mabel weeps.)

MABEL Oh Jack, I can't bear this. Life is so cruel. It's almost as if Tom knows what we are doing.

JACK Come Mabel. We should not stay here any longer. It would only make things more difficult.

(Jack leads her off. She sobs and casts frequent glances in the direction the boys went.)

(Enter the boys, some of them carrying sticks.)

PETE Mother, Father!

TOM I told you they would not be here. They planned to abandon us.

BILL That's why they brought us so far into the forest to an unfamiliar place.

TOM Don't worry. I didn't eat my bread for breakfast. I left a trail of breadcrumbs along the way. All we have to do is follow it home.

(They all look for crumbs, apart from Harry.)

HARRY You're wasting your time.

TOM Why?

HARRY Did you not notice that we were being followed on the way here by four big black birds. I wondered why they were so interested in us.

TOM You, you mean....

HARRY Yes, Tom, they ate all the crumbs.
BEN Oh no! Then we're lost. *(He begins to cry.)*
DICK Don't worry, Ben, we'll think of something.
BEN But it's getting dark. There are wolves and bears in the forest.
(There is a flash of lightning, as a thunderstorm begins.)
PETE And now there's a storm coming.
TOM I know, we must sing a song. That's always good for lifting your spirits.
HARRY Good idea, Tom.

SONG 4 Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head

(During the song Tom climbs a tree.)

TOM Hey, I can see a cottage in the distance with lights on. There might be a kind person there who will give us food and shelter for the night.
BEN Or there might be an evil witch.
HARRY Well if we don't go and see we'll never know, will we?
(Tom slithers down the tree.)
BILL Which way, Tom?
TOM *(Tom looks around.)* I can't see it from down here – but it was that way *(points)*.
PETE Let's go. The longer we stay here, the wetter we get.
(They exit singing a reprise of Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head.)

End of Scene

Scene 3, The Ogre's Cottage

The rain has stopped but the wind is still whistling through the trees and darkness is descending. The ogre's cottage is dark and foreboding but there is a light in the downstairs window. One half of the stage is the exterior of the cottage and the other the interior. The furniture inside is larger than life and one side there is a fire with a whole sheep and a cow roasting on it. Two lanterns are hung up on the back wall. Enter the boys, gingerly.

BILL This must be the place you saw, Tom.

BEN I'm frightened – I want to go home.

PETE We all want to go home, Ben, but we're lost, remember?

TOM I'm not frightened. I think this is quite an adventure.

ZAK Are we going to stand on the door-step all day or shall we knock.

TOM I'll knock.

(As Tom steps forward to knock, the door opens and takes him by surprise. The ogre's wife is old and grey and has a dead-pan expression.)

WIFE *(In a flat voice.)* Yes? What can I do for you?

(The boys jump in alarm.)

DICK H..h...hello. W..w..we are lost, cold and wet and wondered if we might shelter here for the night.

WIFE Shelter here? That would not be very wise.

DICK Why not? The house looks very big.

WIFE Do you not know who owns this house? My husband is an ogre.

HARRY An ogre. Goodbye, I'm off.

TOM Not so fast, Harry. I'm not afraid of an ogre.

WIFE He eats little children like you.

(Tom looks at the audience and gulps hard.)

BILL Well either we're eaten by wolves or by an ogre. What a choice.

PETE Look Mrs.....

WIFE Ogre!

PETE Mrs Ogre, if you don't mind we'll take a chance. Your husband might not be hungry.

WIFE My husband's always hungry. But I do have supper prepared for him. That might keep him happy. Come on in – I'll find a place for you to hide until morning.

PETE Thank you, Mrs....

WIFE Ogre!

PETE Mrs Ogre.
(She leads the way into the parlour and all the boys follow except Harry, who stays on the doorstep. Bill grabs his collar and pulls him inside.)

ZAK My, it's much bigger than it looks from outside. Just look at the size of that table and chair.

WIFE My husband is not a small man. Come and warm yourselves by the fire.

ZAK Thank you, Mrs Ogre. *(They settle by the fire.)*

HARRY What on earth is that?

DICK That's a sheep and a cow.

BEN Wow, the ogre must have some appetite!
(Sounds of monstrous footsteps approaching, which cause the whole house to shake.)

BILL Listen to that thunder.

WIFE That's not thunder, that's my husband returning.

BEN Oh no! *(The boys begin to panic.)*

WIFE Quick, hide behind this trunk.

HARRY There's hardly room here. Quick boys, squash up small.
(They hide behind the trunk but in view of the audience.)
(Enter the Ogre, flinging the door open with an enormous crash.)

OGRE Wife, where is my supper?

WIFE It's here, husband.

OGRE Not sheep and cow again! I had that yesterday and it gave me indigestion!

WIFE We had to eat them up, they are past their use-by date.

OGRE I suppose they were on offer at Tesco's again.

WIFE That's right, husband, two for one.

OGRE *(Sniffing the air.)* I smell fresh meat.

WIFE It must be the dinner.

OGRE I said FRESH meat, wife. It smells like – children!
(The children's knees begin knocking violently and they grab one-another.)

WIFE I think you are mistaken, husband.
(The ogre prowls around sniffing the air. He goes front of house and scares the children.)

OGRE I can smell fresh children, just ready for the cooking pot, young, tender and juicy, just how I like them.
(Ben is trying to stifle a sneeze as the ogre starts to look behind the furniture.)

BEN A...a...a...a...

OGRE Wife, I think you are deceiving me.

WIFE Why on earth would I....

BEN ACHOO!

OGRE Aha! That must be a very big mouse behind that trunk.
(He pulls the trunk to one side.)
My goodness, a whole gang of little mice. *(Pulling them out one at a time by the scruff of the neck.)* One, two three, four, five, six...seven.
Excellent, my starters for the whole of next week.

WIFE Look husband, you don't need to eat one tonight, you have plenty.

OGRE Very well wife. But I shall look forward to eating this one tomorrow, covered in my favourite sauce.
(He grabs Bill and shakes him then throws him to the floor.)
And if you deceive me again I shall eat you for breakfast *(aside)* even if you are old and chewy.
Now bring me my cow and sheep – and take these morsels away, they are tempting me.
(She leads the boys out of sight in one corner and serves the sheep and cow.)

TOM *(Whispered)* We've got to get away from here. We can't risk being eaten.

PETE But how? He's not going to let us walk out.

OGRE Stop your whispering, you rogues, or I'll bite your heads off. Wife, bring me some wine.
(She brings him an enormous flagon of wine which he downs in one.)
And another. *(He downs this too and then burps.)*
(He starts singing)

SONG 5 What Shall We Do With the Drunken Ogre
(Before the end of the song his head falls onto the table and he snores loudly.)

WIFE Quick, this is your chance to escape! You must not stay here any longer.

BEN But we don't know the way back to the village.

WIFE Take the path to the east and follow the track until it forks. Take the right fork and then the third track on the left. By the old oak take the sandy trail and follow it to the next clearing. Leave the forest by the old tree stump and keep walking till you reach the village. Have you got that?

BEN Yes, I think so.

WIFE Then go, before he wakes up. Here, take these two lanterns to help you find your way.

PETE Thank you Mrs.....

WIFE Ogre!

PETE Mrs Ogre.

TOM It's not difficult to remember is it? Mrs Ogre!
(They leave the cottage and make their way into the forest.)

ZAK That was a lucky escape.

HARRY We must go quickly in case he wakes up and chases us.

DICK Which way is east?

BILL *(Ponders then points)* That way!

DICK Then this must be the path. Quickly, lets go. *(They exit.)*
(Back in the cottage the wife starts to clear the table but in doing so she drops a large tin with a clatter. The ogre snorts and wakes up with a start.)

OGRE You clumsy woman. Can a man have no peace in his own house?

(He looks around for the boys.)

Where are my starters? *(He looks behind the trunk.)*

WIFE Oh my, they must have run away.

OGRE You will pay for this woman. Now bring me my seven league boots. Those midgets will never escape me. In these boots I can stride over hill and dale. *(She brings the boots and he pulls them on.)*

Now await my return, wife, and you shall receive your punishment.

(He strides off, leaving the wife weeping at the table.)

(As he exits...)

When I find those boys I will eat them all in one gulp.

(To the audience)

And if you're not careful I will come back and eat you too. *(Exits)*

End of Scene

Scene 4, In the Forest

(Enter the boys, fearfully picking their way through the forest by the light of the two lanterns, one at the front of the line and the other at the back.)

- PETE Look, this is the clearing and that must be the old tree stump she mentioned. We must be near the edge of the forest.
- BEN Well I don't recognise it. I'm sure we have never been this way before.
- TOM We have to trust Mrs Ogre, we have no alternative.
(Bill is exploring around the clearing.)
- BILL Hey look! There's a cave over here, half hidden by this bush.
- BEN Wow! Do you think there's any treasure in it?
(Sounds of booming footsteps in the distance.)
- HARRY Sounds like another thunderstorm is approaching.
- DICK Sounds more like the ogre to me. He must have woken up and found us gone.
- TOM Quick, hide in the cave.
(They all hide but Tom peeps out. Enter the Ogre)
- OGRE These boots are absolutely killing me. I think I'll get my money back. Sure, I can step over hills and across rivers with them but the label says, 'one size fits all'. They are supposed to grow or shrink to fit the owner's size. Why is it they are too small for me then? *(Yawns)* It's very tiring stepping over hill and over dale. I think I'll have a rest before I go on. Those little morsels will never escape me. *(Yawns)* Just five minutes or so.
(He lies down takes off the boots and starts to snore.)
- TOM *(Emerging from the cave and whispering)* What a stroke of luck. He's fast asleep. Come out everyone. *(They all come out.)*
- BEN *(Whispering)* Let's escape while we have the chance.
- TOM Look, you six follow the path by the stump back home quickly. I'll catch you up.
- PETE What are you going to do?
- TOM I have a little idea to pay back the ogre. You'll find out later.
- PETE Very well then, but don't be too long.

BEN Bye Tom.

TOM Bye boys.
(Exit boys)

(Tom creeps over to where the ogre is sleeping. He picks up a branch and tickles his nose, whereupon the ogre sneezes in his sleep. Tom hides behind a rock in case he wakes. He then puts an acorn in his mouth, which causes him to splutter, but still he does not wake. Finally, Tom pulls on the seven league boots, which magically shrink to his size.)

SONG 6 These Boots Were Made for Walking

(With a grin and a wave to the audience he strides off back in the direction of the ogre's cottage.)

End of Scene

Scene 5, The Ogre's Cottage

Mrs Ogre sits at the table waiting for her husband's return. Tom runs in, out of breath.

- TOM Help me, help me, Mrs Ogre. Your husband is in trouble.
- WIFE What kind of trouble?
- TOM He has been kidnapped by thieves in the forest. He sent me to tell you so that you might help him. His life is in danger.
- WIFE How do I know you are telling the truth, boy?
- TOM Look! I am wearing his boots. He gave me these so that you might believe me and so that I may return quickly to his aid.
- WIFE What do you want of me?
- TOM He wishes you to fill a sack with his hoard of gold and silver. This is the only thing which will appease the robbers and persuade them to let him go unharmed.
- WIFE All his gold and silver. But this cannot be so. This is the fruit of many years of plunder.
- TOM Then it does not rightfully belong to him anyway. Now hurry Mrs Ogre or else I will return and find him with his throat cut.
- WIFE Oh very well. Money has never brought me happiness anyway. I'll not miss it.
- TOM That's true, Mrs Ogre. Money certainly can't buy you love.
- SONG 7 Money Can't Buy Me Love Tom, Mrs Ogre and Chorus.**
(The chorus enter to join in the song.)
- WIFE You are a very sensible young man, Tom. For one so small you think like an adult. And do you know what? I will not be sorry if Mr Ogre never returns; he has brought me nothing but misery.
- TOM Here, have some of these gold coins. Leave this house and build a new life in the village.
- WIFE Thank you, Tom. Now go and do what has to be done.
- TOM Farewell, Mrs Ogre. We may meet again some day. *(Exit Tom)*

End of Scene

Scene 6, In the Village, Outside Tom's Cottage

Enter Tom, whistling or singing Money Can't Buy Me Love and carrying a large sack of coins, with difficulty. As he approaches he is spotted by Ben.

- BEN Tom, Tom you're back safely! Hurry everyone, Tom's home!
(The other children, Mabel and Jack hurry out of the cottage. The brothers all crowd around Tom, patting him on the back. He puts the sack down.)
- MABEL Oh Tom, we were so worried about you. We'll never let you out of our sight again. *(She gives him a big hug.)*
- TOM It's good to have you home again, son. *(Clapping him on the back.)*
Hey, nice boots!
- PETE What's in the sack, Tom?
- TOM Oh, nothing much, just a little gift from the ogre. *(With a cheeky smile on his face.)*
- BILL What sort of gift.
- MABEL Tom! What have you been up to?
- TOM Well, I paid a visit to Mrs Ogre and she gave me some of the Ogre's treasure.
- ZAK Oh yes, that's really likely!
- TOM You see, she really hates the ogre and she has left to make a new life for herself.
- BEN Hooray!
- DICK But what of the ogre?
- TOM Well, he'll return home to an empty house; no wife and no treasure.
- HARRY Won't he be very angry?
- TOM Maybe, but I haven't finished with him yet.
- JACK You must be careful, Tom. We don't want you to end up in the cooking pot.
- TOM Don't worry about me – I can look after myself. Now, I have an announcement to make.
- HARRY Oh, here we go!
- TOM Tomorrow, I shall go to market to buy food and fine clothes for all the family. And then, I shall go to the royal palace to meet the king.

BEN The king? But he won't want to meet you, even if you wear fine clothes.

TOM Oh, I think he will, when I offer myself as a servant. Don't forget, I have the magic boots.

ZAK Can I try the boots on? Is it true that the wearer can stride over hill and dale?

HARRY You saw the ogre stepping from hilltop to hilltop.

TOM Maybe you can try them tomorrow, Zak, when I return.

MABEL Come inside, Tom, and tell us all about your adventure.
(They all start to drift into the cottage.)

TOM If you wish, but then I must get a good night's sleep. I have a difficult day in front of me tomorrow and must make an early start.

BEN We'll come with you, Tom. You might need our help.

TOM Thanks Ben, but no! This is something I must do alone.

JACK Mabel, I think I'll open that bottle of scrumpy we have been keeping for a special occasion. We won't have a more special day than that in which our whole family is re-united again.

MABEL We can't open that. We've been saving it for years.

DICK Go on, mother.

MABEL Oh, very well, you've persuaded me.
(Jack opens the bottle, fetches nine cups and pours the first one for Mabel.)

MABEL Steady on now Jack, you don't want to get me drunk do you?

BILL No, you know what happened to the ogre when he had too much to drink.

PETE *(Stands and sings)* What shall we do with the drunken ogre,
(Other boys stand and join in, swinging their cups)

BOYS What shall we do with the drunken ogre,
What shall we do with the drunken ogre early in the morning.
(Jack and Mabel stand and join in, rather raucously.)

ALL Hooray and up he rises ... etc.

End of Scene

Scene 7, The Royal Palace

The palace is richly decorated and populated with finely-dressed courtiers. Some of these are dancing an estampie or similar medieval courtly dance. The king sits to one side with the chamberlain, in grave conversation. The captain of the guard stands aloof the other side regarding the dancing with disdain.

DANCE **Estampie** or similar *(With lots of stamping and clapping.)*

(Every time the dancers are near the king they stamp or clap. He jumps, breaks off his conversation with the chamberlain and glares at them.)

KING Oh do cease that infernal noise, musicians. How can I have an important conversation with the chamberlain with you making that row?

MUSICIAN But sire, we have been paid to entertain the court. We can't do that in silence.

KING You impudent upstart! How dare you speak like that to your king?

MUSICIAN But sire, I appeal to you...

KING You certainly do not appeal to me. And now, I shall pay you not to play. Captain, throw these mischievous minstrels into the dungeon. They can entertain the rats.

CAPTAIN Certainly, sire.
(He grabs the musicians by the ears and escorts them out of the hall. Some of the crowd are disgusted and leave. Others stay to witness the king's fury.)

KING Why am I surrounded by incompetent fools and idiots?

CHAMB I suppose they take their example from you, my lord.

KING How dare you? You are no better than those damn fool musicians, chamberlain.

CHAMB Not so, my lord. I can at least sing in tune.

KING You'll sing beautifully when the torturer begins to crank up the rack.

CHAMB But my lord, you have been imprisoning and executing all your officers. I myself have only been chamberlain for a week. Who will be left to guard and advise you?

KING I'll go into the village and round up some peasants. They will do a better job than you nobles. After all, what else is a nobleman than just another idiot with money?

(Enter herald with the Captain.)

HERALD My lord, I regret I am the bearer of bad tidings.

KING Execute him, Captain.

CAPTAIN My lord, I believe one allows the herald to give you the news before you execute him.

KING I know that. Carry on, herald.

HERALD I haven't started yet so how can I carry on.

CHAMB Begin herald.

HERALD My liege, rumour has it that a vast heathen army is gathered on the border ready to strike at our kingdom.

KING Rumour, what rumour?

HERALD Travellers from the north have reported seeing great camps of hairy unwashed barbarians massing in the fields.

CAPTAIN Sounds like a pop festival.

KING Enough! We must believe these rumours and act fast. What do you suggest, chamberlain?

CHAMB I suggest we send a scout north to assess the size of this army so that we can plan a suitable course of action.

KING Do be quiet, chamberlain. I can't get a word in. Now, I suggest we send a scout north to assess the size of this army so that we can plan a suitable course of action.

CHAMB Good idea, my lord.

CAPTAIN But sire, the journey is five days by horse. By the time the scout returns the barbarians will be pouring into the country on all sides.

KING Then I have a better idea....

(Long pause while they wait.)

CHAMB Well, what is it, sire?

KING What is what?

CHAMB The idea.

KING Oh yes, I suggest we e mail my cousin who lives in the north. He can go and look.....

CAPTAIN No sire, computers have not been invented yet.

KING How about we telephone him?

CAPTAIN Not invented.

KING Morse code?

CAPTAIN No.

KING Semaphore?

CAPTAIN Not invented.

KING Why on earth do I pay my inventors huge sums of money. Have they not invented anything yet?

CHAMB Every time they are on the verge of a breakthrough you execute them, my lord.

KING Oh that's right, blame me again, why don't you. Well I have had one little idea.

CHAMB Thank goodness for that.

KING I suggest we send a scout north to assess the size of this army so that we can plan a suitable course of action.

CAPTAIN Excellent idea, my lord.

KING We need someone who knows the land, is fast, fearless and resourceful.
(Pause)

CHAMB Well, that's that idea down the drain.

HERALD May I make a suggestion?

KING Are you still here? I thought you had been executed.

HERALD There was a person waiting outside just now who told me he was fast, fearless and resourceful.

KING Was there, indeed? Well what are you waiting for? Show him in. And then, you had better go and have your last meal.

HERALD Thank you, sire.
(Exit herald, enter Tom, dressed in fine clothes, to sniggers from the crowd. Meanwhile, the king has engaged in conversation with the chamberlain. Tom stands behind the king, observed by the captain.)

CAPTAIN Sire, your fast, fearless and resourceful visitor has arrived.
(The king turns around and looks clear over the top of Tom's head)

KING What? Where is he then?

CAPTAIN Right in front of you, my lord.

(The king looks around, confused, then slowly looks down until his eyes rest on Tom.)

- KING What is the meaning of this? A visitor from Lilliput?
- TOM Tom Thumb at your service my lord. *(More sniggers from the crowd.)*
- CHAMB My lord, I fail to see how this stunted sprog can solve our problem.
- TOM You tell me what your problem is and I'll tell you how I can solve it.
- CHAMB Very well. We need intelligence very quickly about a possible attack from a barbarian army amassed on the northern border.
- TOM Ah, the northern border.
- CHAMB Yes.
- TOM About five days ride away?
- CHAMB Yes.
- TOM I shall go and spy on this army and report back to you in two minutes.
- CHAMB Impossible. How can you do this?
- TOM See these boots?
- CAPTAIN Hey, I know those boots. We used those last year when we put on Puss in Boots.
- TOM Well, you can't expect us to buy new costumes every year. But these are no ordinary boots. They are seven league boots.
- CAPTAIN What, you play football in those?
- TOM Not that sort of league. I can stride over hill and dale in the blink of an eyelid.
- KING Then you shall represent us in the hurdles in the next Olympics.
- TOM I shall go now and before two minutes is up I shall return with the news you seek. *(He exits in a flash.)*
- KING Well young man, if you succeed..... Where did he go?
- CHAMB My lord, it may be foolish to put your trust in a mere boy. Why he can't be more than seven years old.
- CAPTAIN Well, he has spoken more sense than anyone around here has for years. I believe he can do this thing. Just wait and see.
- CHAMB Supposing he brings us the news we fear. What then?
- KING We send our army to defeat the barbarians.

CAPTAIN But you forget, my lord, that most of our soldiers have been executed.
Those who are left are old and not fit to fight.

(Enter Tom)

KING What, have you not left yet? There is no time to lose.

TOM I have been to the border, my lord.

CHAMB Incredible!

CAPTAIN I told you he could do it.

TOM The rumours are true. There is a huge army on the northern border
poised to attack the kingdom.

KING Then all is lost.

TOM Not so, my lord.

KING But we have no army. Do you have a plan?

TOM Yes, sire. You see, in my travels I have gathered together a few friends
who will be able to help us defeat the enemy.

CAPTAIN Friends? What friends?

*(Tom whistles and the introduction to the song begins. Enter, marching
in formation, an enormous crowd of children, carrying spears and
other weapons)*

Fantastic!

SONG 8 Oh When the Kids Go Marching In Army of Children and Tom

*(At the end of the song the children march off. The crowd in the court
wave to them as they exit. Tom waits behind.)*

CAPTAIN Good luck, Tom. Come back safely.

KING Young man, if you are successful I shall make you a general and give
you command of the army.

TOM Thank you, sire. And when we have defeated the enemy we have a
score to settle with a certain ogre. He shall be made to pay for his
wicked deeds.

CHAMB Goodbye Tom.

*(Tom exits singing, 'Oh When the Kids'. The other children join in
from the wings.)*

End of Scene

Scene 8, In the Village

All the people of the village are on the green ready to welcome Tom home as a hero. During this song the children dance a country dance or dance around the maypole.

SONG 9 On Top of the World

(At the end of the song, Tom strides in, dressed in an army general's uniform. He is closely followed by the captain and chamberlain.)

VILLAGER 1 Here he is. The hero returns.

VILLAGER 2 Look! He has been made a general.

ZAK What a hero!

MABEL Tom, my little boy!

JACK Mabel, don't! You'll embarrass him. He's an important person now.

TOM Good morrow to you, my friends.

HARRY He even talks like a posh person.

DICK Tell us what happened at the palace, Tom. You must have done something incredible to gain favour with the king.

TOM Oh, it was nothing, nothing at all.

CHAMB General Thumb is being falsely modest.

VILLAGER 1 Who are you?

TOM I'm sorry, it's very rude of me not to introduce my friends. This is the lord high chamberlain.

(All bow)

JACK It is an honour to meet you, my lord.

TOM And this is the captain of the king's guard.

MABEL Very pleased to meet such a handsome captain. *(She moves closer and fawns at the captain.)*

TOM And this is my mother and father, my brothers Dick, Harry, Bill, Ben, Pete and Zak, and my friends from my village.

CH/CAPT Pleased to meet you all.

DICK Well, Tom? What happened?

TOM Well, you see, there was a barbarian army threatening the country and I went to meet them, with some of my new-found friends, and drove them out of the country with their tails between their legs.

JACK Good Lord.

CHAMB The king was so impressed he has made Tom lord high general of all the army.

MABEL My goodness! *(She faints and is caught by the captain.)*

TOM And I have come home to tell you that all my family will be coming to live with me at the palace.

BEN Hooray!

TOM And all our village friends will be welcome to visit us whenever they wish.

CHAMB Tom's first act as general was to ban all executions.

CAPTAIN That's just as well or there would be no-one left in the country.

BEN But what about the ogre, Tom?

TOM He won't trouble us again. He was last seen, securely tied with rope, floating down the river out of the country on a raft. It's amazing what an army of little people can achieve.

PETE Well done, Tom.
(Noises off: a large crowd approaching.)

VILLAGER 2 What on earth is that.

TOM Oh, that's just my army. They've come to see where I am.

BEN Three cheers for General Tom Thumb.
Hip hip.

ALL Hooray. Etc

(Enter the army of children.)

SONG 8 REPRISE Oh When the Kids Whole Company

The End