

# Mother GOOSE



**By Flip Kobler and Cindy Marcus**

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**For preview only**

# Mother Goosed!

By FLIP KOBLER and CINDY MARCUS

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Speaking)

		<i># of lines</i>
JOE AUGUST .....	no-nonsense, by-the-book cop; female	187
STAGEHAND.....	assists the actors as needed	n/a
BO PEEP .....	inept shepherdess and damsel in distress; deary me	25
GEORGIE .....	babe magnet and all-around “playa”	55
MARY LAMB.....	one of Georgie’s girls—wants some space from her clingy lamb	38
MARY CONTRARY .....	girl who will argue anything and everything—always	28
LAMB .....	totally, completely obsessed with Mary Lamb; male	33
JACK .....	all-around good guy with a major short-term memory problem	46
JILL .....	Jack’s older sister who’s tired of looking after him	52
DOG .....	terminally hungry and looking for someone to blame; male	33
MOTHER HUBBARD .....	poor and ashamed of her financial status	19
SIMPLE SIMON .....	gets a little upset when the prose doesn’t rhyme	34
JACK HORNER.....	thinks he is the greatest guy in the history of the universe	27
HUMPTY DUMPTY.....	good egg who tends to bruise easily	34
CHILD.....	hyper-curious kid jumping on mom’s last nerve	30
OLD WOMAN.....	frazzled, over-worked mom down to her last nerve	38
OLD MACDONALD.....	simple country-folk farmer	24
FREIDA .....	farmer’s wife, hiding a secret criminal history	27

PETER'S WIFE .....	loving wife; totally enamored with her husband	33
PETER PETER .....	over-protective husband; jealous of his wife	47
ST. IVES GUY .....	in a major hurry to get to St. Ives	42
MRS. ST. IVES.....	in an even bigger hurry, if that's possible; also plays MOTHER GOOSE	37

## SETTING

Time: Right now.

Place: Mother Goose Land Police Department.

## SET DESCRIPTION

The set is comprised of two areas: a room in the police department, and a “flashback place” where the past is reenacted onstage. Both can be very simple sets with little to no props necessary.

For the police department, a few chairs and a desk would work well. Your set can also be done in a black box with lots of colorful costumes.

The flashback area can be a separate side of the stage or a raised platform. Even an area on the floor painted a different color works wonderfully. Alternatively, the transition between real time and flashbacks can be established by a simple shift in stage lighting or with a special, magical sound effect.

Since this is an amalgam of so many nursery rhymes, it's difficult to find one specific flashback setting for all, so we advise keeping it simple. Rather than try to recreate the world of Mother Goose, we suggest simple sets in bright primary colors.

## Mother Goosed!

1 LIGHTS UP: *Dragnet* style MUSIC STING. JOE ENTERS in front of the curtain. She is a stoic babe and the deadeast pan you've ever seen. She wears a trench coat and carries a fedora.

**JOE:** There are a million stories in the book. This is one of them. It  
5 isn't true. The names have not been changed. My name is August. Joe August. I'm a cop. (*MUSIC STING. [NOTE: The same MUSIC STING is used throughout.]*) I work out of the Fairy-Tale precinct, Nursery Rhyme Division. It was Tuesday when I got the call. (*A STAGEHAND ENTERS and hands her a tin can on the end of a*  
10 *string. The other end remains OFFSTAGE. She puts it to her ear like a phone.*) August. (*She listens.*) Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am. (*Hands the can back and STAGEHAND EXITS with it.*) Seems that Mother Goose was missing. That meant trouble. Someone had to find her. That's what I do. I'm a cop. (*Another MUSIC STING.*)  
15 I hit the streets. (*Puts on her fedora and walks across the stage.*) By Thursday, I had a pretty good idea what had happened. I rounded up the usual suspects. (*EXITS as the CURTAIN OPENS, revealing the Mother Goose Land Police Department. The ENTIRE CAST is there except JILL and JACK HORNER. We first notice GEORGIE with BO*  
20 *PEEP, MARY LAMB, MARY CONTRARY and LAMB.*)

**BO PEEP:** Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear. What are we doing here?

**GEORGIE:** S'alright, babe, don't sweat it.

**MARY LAMB:** Are we in trouble?

**GEORGIE:** No.

25 **MARY CONTRARY:** Yes.

**GEORGIE:** We are not in trouble.

**MARY CONTRARY:** We are in trouble.

**GEORGIE:** Mary.

**MARY LAMB:** Your name is Mary?

30 **MARY CONTRARY:** No.

**GEORGIE:** Yes, it is.

**MARY LAMB:** My name is Mary.

**MARY CONTRARY:** Mine's not

**GEORGIE:** Don't listen to her. She's just being contrary.

35 **MARY CONTRARY:** No, I'm not.

**MARY LAMB:** So your name isn't Mary?

**MARY CONTRARY:** Yes, it is.

**MARY LAMB:** Well, my name is Mary.

**MARY CONTRARY:** No, it's not.

- 1 **BO PEEP:** *(To GEORGIE.)* So, we're not in trouble?  
**MARY CONTRARY:** Yes, we are.  
**GEORGIE:** *(To BO PEEP.)* Yo, I got this. Take a chill pill or somethin'.  
**LAMB:** *(To MARY LAMB.)* We'll be okay. Can I get you something?
- 5 **MARY LAMB:** No.  
**LAMB:** Pail of water? Curds? Whey?  
**MARY LAMB:** For the last time, I'm fine. Leave me alone.  
**BO PEEP:** Who's this?  
**LAMB:** Hi, I'm Dwayne.
- 10 **MARY LAMB:** He's nobody.  
**LAMB:** Don't listen to her. I'm her lamb.  
**BO PEEP:** You have a lamb?  
**MARY LAMB:** No.  
**LAMB:** Yes.
- 15 **MARY LAMB:** I don't want a lamb.  
**BO PEEP:** I used to have a lot of sheep.  
**LAMB:** Good for you.  
**BO PEEP:** But I lost them.  
**LAMB:** You lost your sheep?
- 20 **BO PEEP:** I left them alone.  
**LAMB:** Okay, not cool.  
**MARY LAMB:** Don't worry, they'll come home.  
**LAMB:** And they'll have a tale to tell.  
**BO PEEP:** I miss them so.
- 25 **MARY CONTRARY:** No, you don't.  
**BO PEEP:** I wish they were here.  
**MARY LAMB:** You can have mine.  
**LAMB:** Hello? Standing right here. I can hear you.  
**BO PEEP:** Oh, I don't want yours.
- 30 **MARY LAMB:** Don't blame you. I don't want mine.  
**LAMB:** Again. Right here, guys.  
**BO PEEP:** Where'd you get him?  
**MARY LAMB:** I don't even know. He just followed me to school one day.
- 35 **BO PEEP:** To school one day?  
**LAMB:** To school one day.  
**MARY LAMB:** Yeah. It's against the rules.  
**MARY CONTRARY:** No, it's not.

- 1 **LAMB:** I was lonely.  
**MARY LAMB:** I got laughed at and everything.  
**LAMB:** I was trying to protect you.  
**MARY LAMB:** From who?
- 5 **LAMB:** From everyone. Anyone. I don't want you in trouble.  
**MARY LAMB:** But we're in trouble now, aren't we?  
**GEORGIE:** We are not in trouble. Just don't say nothin'.  
**JACK:** (*Crosses to them and introduces himself.*) Hi, how you guys doing? I'm Jack.
- 10 **GEORGIE:** I know. We've met.  
**JACK:** We have?  
**GEORGIE:** Lot of times. I'm Georgie. (*Indicating the GIRLS.*) And these are my peeps.  
**BO PEEP:** Hi. I'm Bo.
- 15 **MARY LAMB:** I'm Mary. And this is Mary, too.  
**MARY CONTRARY:** No, I'm not.  
**LAMB:** Hi. I'm Dwayne.  
**JACK:** Hi. How you guys doing? I'm Jack.  
**LAMB:** Didn't we just do this?
- 20 **JILL:** (*Runs IN.*) Sorry. Ignore my brother. He's not thinking right.  
**JACK:** (*Shakes JILL'S hand.*) Hi. I'm Jack.  
**JILL:** Yeah, I know. He fell down and broke his crown.  
**MARY LAMB:** He has a crown?  
**LAMB:** You want a crown? I could get you a crown.
- 25 **MARY LAMB:** No. Leave me alone.  
**LAMB:** I just want you to be happy.  
**GEORGIE:** I could maybe fix his crown. For a fee. I know a guy who does jewelry.  
**JILL:** No, his head. Crown means head.
- 30 **LAMB:** It does?  
**MARY CONTRARY:** No, it doesn't.  
**MARY LAMB:** I've never heard that.  
**JILL:** Well, it does. Crown means head. He's got a little short-term memory loss. (*Leads JACK away.*)
- 35 **DOG:** (*Takes CENTER STAGE, yelling above the chatter.*) Excuse me! Does anybody have anything to eat? Anything at all?  
**MOTHER HUBBARD:** Please don't do this.  
**DOG:** I am not talking to you. You had your chance.

- 1 **MOTHER HUBBARD:** It's not my fault.  
**DOG:** (*Holds up hand.*) Talk to the paw. (*To the CROWD again.*) I'll take anything. A bone. Table scraps. An old shoe. Whatever you've got. I haven't eaten in forever.
- 5 **MOTHER HUBBARD:** I went to the cupboard to get you a bone.  
**DOG:** Yeah, but when you got there, the cupboard was bare. So poor little me had none.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** That doesn't rhyme. Bone and none do not rhyme.  
**MARY CONTRARY:** It doesn't have to rhyme.
- 10 **SIMPLE SIMON:** It's poetry.  
**MARY CONTRARY:** No, it's not.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** This is what I'm saying.  
**JACK HORNER:** (*ENTERS and crosses the stage with an empty pie tin in one hand and a plum on the thumb of his other hand.*) Oh, score!
- 15 Look at this. I just stuck in my thumb and pulled out a plum.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** See? That rhymes. Thumb and plum. Simple.  
**DOG:** Did someone say plum? Food? (*Jumps up and sniffs pie tin.*) What's in there? (*Begs.*)  
**JACK HORNER:** What a good boy am I!
- 20 **DOG:** I'll be a good boy if you feed me that plum! (*JACK ignores DOG as he follows JACK around.*)  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** (*Hobbles up on crutches.*) You pulled a plum out of a plum pie?  
**JACK HORNER:** Am I the greatest or what?
- 25 **HUMPTY DUMPTY:** It's a plum pie.  
**JACK HORNER:** I know.  
**DOG:** I know!  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** That's not great. Pull a plum out of a lemon pie, that's great. Keep a soufflé from falling, that's something. But you,
- 30 you didn't do anything.  
**JACK HORNER:** Pulled out a plum, baby. (*Slaps HUMPTY DUMPTY on the back as he eats it.*)  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** Ow.  
**DOG:** (*Whines.*) Awwww!
- 35 **JACK HORNER:** I am king of the world!  
**JACK:** Hi, King. How you doing? I'm Jack.  
**JACK HORNER:** Your name is Jack? My name is Jack.  
**JACK:** Hi. I'm Jack, too.  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** We have a lot of Jacks.

1 **MARY LAMB:** And a lot of Marys.  
**MARY CONTRARY:** No, we don't.  
**JACK HORNER:** Jack is the greatest name in the world!  
**JACK:** Hey, that's my name. Hi. I'm Jack.

5 **JILL:** Sorry, he's a little out of his crown.  
**JACK HORNER:** His crown?  
**JILL:** It means head.  
**MARY CONTRARY:** No, it doesn't.  
**DOG:** I'll take anything at all. I'll eat the lint out of your pocket.

10 **MOTHER HUBBARD:** Please, you're embarrassing me.  
**DOG:** Not listening to you.  
**CHILD:** Mommy, what's happening? Huh, Mommy? What? Huh, Mommy, huh?  
**OLD WOMAN:** I don't know.

15 **CHILD:** When can we leave?  
**OLD WOMAN:** I don't know.  
**CHILD:** So why are we here? Huh? How come, why?  
**OLD MACDONALD:** Well, I reckon'—  
**FREIDA:** Quiet, Old. She ain't askin' us.

20 **PETER'S WIFE:** Peter, maybe we should leave.  
**PETER PETER:** It's fine.  
**PETER'S WIFE:** I just thought—  
**PETER PETER:** We're fine!  
**GEORGIE:** *(To PETER'S WIFE.)* Well, hello dere. Da name's Georgie

25 Porgie, and who might you be?  
**PETER'S WIFE:** I'm Mrs. Pumpkin Eater.  
**PETER PETER:** *(To GEORGIE.)* Hey! Stay away from the wife. *(To his WIFE.)* Really? Again? We talked about this. You said you'd stop.  
**PETER'S WIFE:** I know. You're right. It's just he seemed so friendly.

30 *(PETER PETER grunts disapproval.)*  
**DOG:** *(Asks OLD MACDONALD.)* Got a Tic-Tac? Gum? I'll take anything, I'm dying here.  
**OLD MACDONALD:** Ah... nope.  
**CHILD:** Do you know why we're here? Huh? Do ya? Huh?

35 **JOE:** *(ENTERS.)* I can explain. *(MUSIC STING.)*  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** Who are you?  
**JOE:** My name is August. Joe August. I'm a cop. *(MUSIC STING.)*  
**JACK:** Hi. I'm Jack.



- 1 **JILL:** She knows. Everybody knows who you are. Can't you get that through your crown?
- JOE:** I called you all here to get to the bottom of this case.
- ST. IVES GUY:** What case?
- 5 **JOE:** The case of the missing Mother Goose. (*The CROWD gasps. MUSIC STING.*)
- ST. IVES GUY:** Will this take long? I've got to get to St. Ives.
- MRS. ST. IVES:** Yes, we're in a terrible hurry.
- JOE:** Nobody is leaving until we find Mother Goose.
- 10 **HUMPTY DUMPTY:** So why are we here?
- JOE:** Because someone in this room is responsible. (*MUSIC STING. More gasps.*)
- HUMPTY DUMPTY:** How do you know?
- JOE:** It's what I do. I'm a cop. (*MUSIC STING.*)
- 15 **GEORGIE:** Yo, you sayin' one of us is the reason she's gone?
- JOE:** Yes.
- GEORGIE:** With all due respect, I gotta disagree. Did you check with the goose?
- CHILD:** What goose? Huh? There's a goose? Can I pet it? Can I,
- 20 Mommy, huh?
- OLD WOMAN:** Shhh, please, Mommy's got a headache.
- GEORGIE:** I mean, you know the saying. Old Mother Goose when she wanted to wander would ride through the air on a very fine gander.
- SIMPLE SIMON:** That doesn't rhyme. Wander and gander do not
- 25 rhyme. That drives me crazy.
- JOE:** I checked with the gander. Has an air-tight alibi and no motive. But everybody in this room has a motive. Somebody here is the culprit.
- JACK HORNER:** Is culprit a good thing? 'Cause I would be a great
- 30 culprit.
- HUMPTY DUMPTY:** Culprit means bad guy.
- JACK HORNER:** Then that ain't me. I am the greatest guy ever! Check it out. Boom. (*Does some muscle poses.*) Boom.
- ST. IVES GUY:** I'm very late for an appointment in St. Ives.
- 35 **MRS. ST. IVES:** We've really got to run.
- JOE:** Everybody settle down, and I'll tell you what happened. (*The CROWD settles down.*) Like I said before, I got the call on Tuesday. (*STAGEHAND ENTERS with the tin can phone again.*) Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am. Yes, ma'am. (*STAGEHAND EXITS with the phone.*) I

1       knew I had to find Mother Goose. And I knew right where to start.  
(Crosses to JACK and JILL.) With her most popular kids.

**JACK HORNER:** Excuse me. (*Points to himself.*) Jack Horner? I'm the most popular.

5 **HUMPTY DUMPTY:** You have the biggest ego I've ever seen.

**JACK HORNER:** I know. Best ego ever.

**JOE:** I started with Jack and Jill. Do you remember?

**JACK:** No.

**JILL:** He's a little confused. I remember when you came to talk to us.

10 (*JACK and JILL EXIT as we shift to a FLASHBACK.*)

**JOE:** (*Moves into the FLASHBACK.*) I went to the bottom of the hill. No one was there. but I didn't have to wait long.

**JACK:** (*SCREAMS from OFFSTAGE, getting louder and louder until he comes somersaulting IN and lands in a heap at JOE'S feet.*)

15 Ahhhhhhhh!

**JOE:** Are you okay?

**JACK:** I don't know. Who are you?

**JOE:** I'm Joe August.

**JACK:** Who am I?

20 **JOE:** You don't know?

**JACK:** No. That's weird. I don't know who I am.

**JOE:** You're Jack.

**JACK:** Jack? Cool.

**JOE:** What's the last thing you remember?

25 **JACK:** I went up the hill to fetch a pail of water.

**JOE:** Where's the pail?

**JACK:** I don't remember.

**JOE:** Were you alone?

**JACK:** I don't think so.

30 **JOE:** Who was with you?

**JILL:** (*Tumbles IN, frantic. She drops to her knees and dotes over her brother.*) Jack! Oh, Jack. I am so sorry. I didn't mean it. Are you okay?

**JACK:** I think so. Who are you?

35 **JILL:** Who am I?

**JACK:** You don't remember either?

**JILL:** Jack, honey, it's me. It's Jill.

**JACK:** How you doin', Jill? My name is Jack.

**JILL:** I know who you are.

1 **JACK:** Good. One of us should.  
**JILL:** Jack, I'm your sister.  
**JACK:** I have a sister?  
**JILL:** Yes, don't you remember?

5 **JACK:** Not much.  
**JILL:** What happened?  
**JOE:** Looks like Jack fell down, broke his head.  
**JILL:** You mean crown?  
**JOE:** What?

10 **JILL:** Crown means head.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** (*Crosses into the FLASHBACK.*) And it rhymes. Jack fell down, broke his crown. See, this is what I'm talking about. It's just good structure.  
**JOE:** (*Pushes SIMON out of the FLASHBACK.*) This is a flashback. You weren't there. So Jack fell down and broke his crown?

15 **JILL:** I guess. Who are you?  
**JOE:** Joe August. I'm a cop.  
**JILL:** A cop?  
**JOE:** Fairy-Tale Precinct, Nursery Rhyme Division. What are you sorry for?

20 **JILL:** What?  
**JOE:** Just now you said, "I'm sorry, Jack." What are you sorry for?  
**JILL:** I never said that.  
**JACK:** Yes, you did.

25 **JILL:** THAT you can remember?  
**JOE:** You said you didn't mean it. Didn't mean what?  
**JILL:** I ah... I just... I didn't want Jack to get hurt.  
**JOE:** Where were you while your brother came tumbling down the hill head first?

30 **JILL:** You mean crown first? I was with him.  
**JOE:** No, ma'am. You weren't.  
**JACK:** You weren't?  
**JOE:** Not today.  
**JILL:** Sure I was.

35 **JOE:** Don't lie to me, ma'am. Just the facts.  
**JILL:** Okay, so I wasn't with him today. What's the big deal? I go with him every day. Every single day we have to go all the way up the hill to get water. Seriously, who puts a well on top of a hill? It's stupid.

- 1        You put the well in the valley or near the house. Not at the top of the hill. Who would do that?
- JOE:** Mother Goose. She created this world.
- JILL:** And it's stupid. I hate it.
- 5 **JOE:** You hate Mother Goose?
- JILL:** Hey, I didn't ask to be written, okay? But it's her world. She's the head honcho.
- JOE:** You mean crown honcho.
- JILL:** Yes. We all have to play by her stupid rules.
- 10 **JOE:** It would be nice if you didn't have to do what she said, huh?
- JILL:** That would be great. Just for one day.
- JOE:** I see. *(Whips out a tablet and starts writing things down.)*
- JILL:** Why do you care?
- JOE:** I'm looking into the disappearance of Mother Goose.
- 15 **JILL:** Mother Goose is gone?
- JOE:** Yes. And so were you.
- JILL:** Hey, you don't think I had anything to do with this?
- JOE:** Where were you just now?
- JILL:** I can't tell you that.
- 20 **JOE:** If you don't have an alibi, ma'am, you'll be a person of interest in our investigation.
- JILL:** I didn't do anything.
- JOE:** We can do this the hard way. You don't want the hard way.
- JILL:** I um... I can't... I don't want...
- 25 **JOE:** You're in trouble, ma'am. Where were you?
- JILL:** All right, fine. Whatever. I leave for a little while, and Jack falls down. Typical.
- JOE:** Where were you?
- JILL:** I was off seeing... my boyfriend.
- 30 **JOE:** I see. This boyfriend have a name?
- JILL:** Why?
- JOE:** I'll need to talk with him.
- JILL:** You can't do that. I'll get in trouble.
- JOE:** Ma'am, you are in trouble. What's your boyfriend's name?
- 35 **JILL:** Um... Ah... Urgh! Georgie Porgie. *(They transition out of the FLASHBACK and return to REAL TIME with the other characters.)*
- GEORGIE:** *(Angry.)* You told him?
- JILL:** I had to, Georgie.

- 1 **GEORGIE:** You said you'd keep it a secret.  
**JILL:** I'm sorry, Georgie.  
**BO PEEP:** Georgie Porgie. You got yourself another girl?  
**GEORGIE:** No, Peep. I didn't.
- 5 **JILL:** What? That's not what you said. You said I was the only girl for you.  
**BO PEEP:** That's what you told me.  
**MARY LAMB:** That's what you told me.  
**GEORGIE:** *(To BO.)* Listen, baby, doll face... *(Kisses her cheek.)*
- 10 **BO PEEP:** *(Starts to cry.)* I can't believe I left my sheep for you. *(Slaps his face.)*  
**LAMB:** You left them? I thought they ran away.  
**GEORGIE:** *(To MARY LAMB.)* Don't listen to this. *(Kisses her cheek.)*  
**MARY LAMB:** *(Bursts into tears.)* I thought you cared about me. *(Slaps his face.)*
- 15 **LAMB:** *(To MARY LAMB.)* See. I would never treat you like that.  
**MARY LAMB:** You're a lamb.  
**LAMB:** And he's a pig. I think it's a step up.  
**GEORGIE:** *(To MARY CONTRARY.)* You're the only girl for me. *(Kisses her cheek. She starts to laugh.)* See dere. Somebody ain't upset.
- 20 **MARY LAMB:** Yes, she is. She's just being contrary.  
**GEORGIE:** You is? *(MARY CONTRARY starts to cry and slaps his face.)*  
**JOE:** *(Takes notes.)* So, Georgie Porgie puddin' and pie. Kissed the girls and made them cry. Now I'm afraid I have to ask. Where were you on Tuesday last?
- 25 **SIMPLE SIMON:** That doesn't rhyme. Ask and last do not rhyme.  
**JOE:** Wasn't trying to rhyme.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** Use to be rhyming mattered. Now it's all free-form poetry. And haikus.
- 30 **OLD MACDONALD:** It's a darn shame.  
**FREIDA:** If it concerned us, Old, which it don't.  
**JOE:** So, Georgie, what do you say? Where were you on last Tuesday?  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** Nice rhyme. Good meter.  
**JOE:** Thanks. So, Georgie, what do you say?
- 35 **GEORGIE:** Why? You think I had somethin' to do with Mother Goose?  
**JOE:** I found you on the road to St. Ives.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Which is where I should be.  
**MRS. ST. IVES:** We're very late.  
**JOE:** What were you doing before I found you?

1 **GEORGIE:** I don't remember.  
**JACK:** Oh! I do.  
**GEORGIE:** THAT you remember?!

**JACK:** Jill had just told me she left me alone to go and meet you.

5 **GEORGIE:** So?

**JACK:** So I wasn't happy. I went looking for you. *(Shift to another FLASHBACK. JACK moves into the FLASHBACK and hunts for Georgie Porgie.)* Georgie Porgie, come out to play. Oh, Georgie Porgie, come out to play.

10 **GEORGIE:** *(Steps into the FLASHBACK.)* Who keeps callin' me? *(FREEZES at the sight of JACK.)*

**JACK:** Georgie Porgie. I got my crown busted 'cause of you. Now what are— *(GEORGIE turns and runs away, leaving a startled JACK in his wake.)* Hey! Wait! You can't just run away. *(We're back to REAL TIME. EVERYONE is looking at GEORGIE.)*

15 **HUMPTY DUMPTY:** You ran away?

**CHILD:** Is Georgie a coward, Mommy? Is he? Huh? Look at me, Mommy, why aren't you answering?

**GEORGIE:** Hey, I ain't no chicken.

20 **DOG:** Mmmm, chicken. That sounds delicious. Not that I'd know.  
**MOTHER HUBBARD:** I'm sorry.  
**DOG:** Not listening.  
**GEORGIE:** I was just late for something. Yeah. I was late is all.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Like me.

25 **MRS. ST. IVES:** We really have to run.  
**JOE:** Nobody's going anywhere until we discover what happened to Mother Goose.  
**GEORGIE:** I didn't have nothin' to do with that. You found me just a little while later, remember? *(Shift to a new FLASHBACK. GEORGIE comes creeping into the scene, trying not to be seen. JOE steps into the scene.)*

30 **JOE:** Georgie Porgie.  
**GEORGIE:** Ahhh!  
**JOE:** Didn't mean to scare you.

35 **GEORGIE:** *(Lies.)* What? I ain't scared.  
**JOE:** Then why did you run away?  
**GEORGIE:** I gotta, okay? It's what I do.  
**JOE:** Run away?  
**GEORGIE:** Yeah. What... you think I like it? I don't. I hate it.

1 **JOE:** Then why do it?

**GEORGIE:** I gotta, don't I? On account of Mother Goose. It's her world.  
I gotta run away every time da boys come out to play. You know I  
never played stick ball once my whole life.

5 **JOE:** And you'd like to.

**GEORGIE:** Heck, yeah. I'd do anything to play ball or marbles or maybe  
try dat PlayStation I keep hearin' about. But no. 'Cause of stupid  
ol' Mother Goose.

**JOE:** If Mother Goose were gone, you could do what you want.

10 **GEORGIE:** Yeah.

**JOE:** *(Takes notes again.)* I see. So where were you just now?

**GEORGIE:** How come I gotta tell you?

**JOE:** Mother Goose is missing.

**GEORGIE:** Whoa-whoa-whoa. I didn't do nothin'.

15 **JOE:** So where were you?

**GEORGIE:** Ahhh...

**JOE:** You just admitted you wanted Mother Goose gone. You could've  
done it.

**GEORGIE:** Okay, so I was hiding.

20 **JOE:** Where?

**GEORGIE:** At a farm just up the road. In a haystack.

**JOE:** Anyone who can verify your alibi?

**GEORGIE:** That one kid with the horn.

**JOE:** Little Boy Blue?

25 **GEORGIE:** That his name?

**JOE:** He can vouch for you?

**GEORGIE:** Nah, he's asleep. Kid can sleep through anything. I mean  
his sheep's in the meadow, his cow's in the corn, and he snores  
like a woodsman. It's creepy. But the farmer's wife caught me  
30 hiding in his haystack and run me off with an axe.

**JOE:** The farmer's wife. From the farm down the road?

**GEORGIE:** Yeah. *(We're back in REAL TIME. The CAST is gathered  
around.)*

**JOE:** I still wasn't sure if he'd caused Mother Goose harm, but I went  
35 down the road to the MacDonald ranch.

**SIMPLE SIMON:** Argh! Again with the not rhyming thing. You couldn't  
say farm? Harm—farm. Farm—harm. How hard is that?

**CHILD:** Mommy, can we play a rhyming game? I'm good at rhyming. I  
bet I could, I bet, I bet. Can we play, Mommy, huh, can we?

- 1 **OLD WOMAN:** Sweetie, Mommy's clinging to her last nerve.  
**JOE:** *(To OLD MACDONALD and his WIFE.)* You two have been awfully quiet so far.  
**OLD MACDONALD:** Ayup, reckon we have at that.
- 5 **JOE:** Why is that?  
**OLD MACDONALD:** Just don't have much to say—  
**FREIDA:** Quiet, Old, you don't have to tell her anything.  
**JOE:** I'm just after the facts, ma'am.  
**FREIDA:** Well, I know my rights.
- 10 **JOE:** Ma'am?  
**FREIDA:** We have the right to remain silent.  
**JOE:** Yes, you do.  
**FREIDA:** I'm not telling you anything without my lawyer.  
**JOE:** Why do you think you need a lawyer?
- 15 **FREIDA:** Oh, I remember the way you treated us when you came to us on Tuesday. *(Scene shifts into a FLASHBACK. OLD MACDONALD stands there, his wife FREIDA hiding behind him. JOE crosses to them.)*  
**JOE:** This the MacDonald farm?
- 20 **OLD MACDONALD:** Ayup. Reckon it is.  
**JOE:** And are you the owner?  
**OLD MACDONALD:** Ayup.  
**JOE:** *(Takes out her tablet.)* Your name, sir?  
**OLD MACDONALD:** MacDonald.
- 25 **JOE:** M-A-C?  
**OLD MACDONALD:** Ayup.  
**JOE:** First name?  
**OLD MACDONALD:** Old.  
**JOE:** Old?
- 30 **OLD MACDONALD:** Ayup.  
**JOE:** Your first name is Old?  
**OLD MACDONALD:** I's named after my grandfather.  
**JOE:** Can you spell it?  
**OLD MACDONALD:** O-L-D. This here's the wife.
- 35 **JOE:** Ma'am.  
**FREIDA:** Hello. I'm Freida.  
**JOE:** Freida. *(Writes in her tablet.)* F-R-E-I?  
**FREIDA:** E-I.



- 1 **JOE:** Oh. Did either of you see a young man on your property?  
**OLD MACDONALD:** Boy Blue there. Asleep in the hay.  
**FREIDA:** That boy never does his work.  
**JOE:** Anybody else?
- 5 **OLD MACDONALD:** Not that I recollect.  
**JOE:** Ma'am?  
**FREIDA:** No.  
**JOE:** You didn't chase a different boy out of your haystack with an axe?  
**FREIDA:** I would never do such a thing.
- 10 **JOE:** I'm sorry, ma'am, but you do have a history of violence.  
**FREIDA:** That's not true.  
**JOE:** (*Reads her notes.*) Two years ago you were arrested for aggravated assault with a deadly weapon.  
**FREIDA:** I was never convicted.
- 15 **JOE:** You willfully attacked three mice.  
**FREIDA:** They ran after me.  
**JOE:** You cut off their tails with a carving knife.  
**FREIDA:** It was self defense.  
**JOE:** They were blind, ma'am.
- 20 **FREIDA:** Well, I didn't know that. Little creatures scurrying everywhere. I had just had enough.  
**JOE:** Enough of what, ma'am?  
**FREIDA:** Of this life. With the mess, and the smell and the noise. All night long it's a moo-moo here and a cluck-cluck there, here an oink, there an oink, everywhere an oink-oink.
- 25 **OLD MACDONALD:** You said you liked pigs.  
**FREIDA:** I said I liked bacon! I just can't take it anymore.  
**OLD MACDONALD:** You want to leave?  
**FREIDA:** But I can't, can I? Oooh, no. I'm the farmer's wife, so I have to stay on the farm. Stupid Mother Goose created a world where we have no choices.
- 30 **JOE:** So you'd like it if she were gone.  
**FREIDA:** I wish for it every night on Star Light, Star Bright.  
**JOE:** Looks like you got your wish.
- 35 **OLD MACDONALD:** Mother Goose is gone? Do you suspect fowl play?  
(*ALL THREE do a slow take to the AUDIENCE on that joke.*)  
**FREIDA:** I had nothing to do with Mother Goose.  
**JOE:** Where were you just now, ma'am?

- 1 **FREIDA:** *(Sighs.)* Chasing that Porgie boy out of our hay, just like you said. Reckon Little Boy Blue saw me.
- JOE:** And before that?
- OLD MACDONALD:** We were down the lane, delivering a pumpkin.
- 5 **Reckon it took a few hours.**
- JOE:** Can anyone verify that?
- OLD MACDONALD:** Ayup. You could talk to the man we done sold it to. *(Characters transition back to REAL TIME.)*
- PETER'S WIFE:** Oh. Hi. Yes. That's right. It's us.
- 10 **PETER PETER:** *(To his WIFE.)* So?
- PETER'S WIFE:** But I never get to meet people.
- PETER PETER:** And this is why.
- PETER'S WIFE:** But, Peter—
- PETER PETER:** I don't want you talking to nobody. You've done enough.
- 15 **PETER'S WIFE:** But, Peter, I think—
- PETER PETER:** You don't think. I think. You do what I tell you.
- JOE:** Mr. Pumpkin Eater, I see you didn't take my advice.
- PETER PETER:** What advice is that?
- JOE:** Do you remember what I told you when we met on Tuesday? *(We transition to a FLASHBACK. PETER PETER and his WIFE are there first.)*
- 20 **PETER'S WIFE:** But, Peter, why can't I stay in the house?
- PETER PETER:** 'Cause I can't keep you there.
- PETER'S WIFE:** But I don't want to go in there.
- 25 **PETER PETER:** Don't argue with me.
- PETER'S WIFE:** But it's cold and gooey and smells funny.
- PETER PETER:** I just spent a lotta money on this pumpkin shell, and there I'll keep you very well.
- PETER'S WIFE:** But, Peter, I think—
- 30 **PETER PETER:** I ain't tellin' you again. I think for both of us.
- JOE:** Take my advice, people need to think for themselves.
- PETER PETER:** Hey, why don't you mind your own business, girly.
- JOE:** This is my business. I'm a cop. *(MUSIC STING.)* Where'd you get this pumpkin shell?
- 35 **PETER PETER:** Got it from a farmer down the road.
- JOE:** Just now?
- PETER PETER:** Few hours ago. Took a while to scoop all the junk out of it.
- PETER'S WIFE:** He wants me to live in it.

1 **JOE:** Why?

**PETER PETER:** 'Cause I can't keep her anywhere else. Leave it to Mother Goose to stick me with some whacky dame.

**PETER'S WIFE:** I'm trying to be a good wife. I clean, I cook—

5 **PETER PETER:** You are a lousy cook. Why couldn't Mother Goose hook me up with some other dame?

**PETER'S WIFE:** Like who?

**PETER PETER:** I dunno. I think that Bo Peep's kind of cute. (*Characters transition back to REAL TIME.*)

10 **BO PEEP:** Wait a minute. Wait! Me?

**PETER PETER:** Yeah. Mother Goose is gone, right? So we can do what we want. What do you say, doll?

**GEORGIE:** Forget it. She's taken.

**BO PEEP:** Says who? I thought you were with Jill now.

15 **JACK:** Hey, I have a sister named Jill.

**JILL:** They know.

**JACK:** (*To JILL.*) Oh, hi. How you doin'? I'm Jack.

**JILL:** Oy.

**GEORGIE:** So I'm a playa. It's in my nature. I can't help the way I was  
20 written.

**PETER PETER:** (*To MARY LAMB.*) What about you? You a vegetarian?

**LAMB:** Stay away from her.

**MARY LAMB:** Dwayne, please.

**LAMB:** Tell me you're not thinking about him.

25 **MARY LAMB:** He doesn't seem so bad.

**PETER'S WIFE:** Oh, he is.

**PETER PETER:** Quiet, you. I'm a great guy.

**JACK HORNER:** Yeah, but who is the greatest guy ever? Give you a hint, his name rhymes with Mack Morner.

30 **SIMPLE SIMON:** Okay, that was a little too simple, even for me.

**LAMB:** The guy's an animal.

**MARY LAMB:** You're a lamb.

**LAMB:** Sweet and cuddly. Thoughtful and cute. I mean, come on.

**PETER PETER:** (*To MARY CONTRARY.*) What about you? You interested?

35 **MARY CONTRARY:** No.

**PETER PETER:** Wait, you're the contrary one, right?

**MARY CONTRARY:** No.

**MARY LAMB:** She means yes.

1 **PETER PETER:** So that mean you wanna go out with me?  
**MARY CONTRARY:** No!  
**PETER PETER:** But no means yes, right?  
**ENTIRE CAST:** No means no!

5 **PETER PETER:** All right. I get it.  
**PETER'S WIFE:** See, this is what I was telling you about. (*They transition to a FLASHBACK.*) You wish you were married to somebody else?  
**PETER PETER:** If wishes were horses... Just my luck to be stuck with you.

10 **JOE:** So you've been here for several hours. Is that true, ma'am?  
**PETER PETER:** What are you askin' her for? She don't know nothin'.  
**JOE:** Ma'am?  
**PETER PETER:** Besides, I ain't seen her around in a few hours.  
**JOE:** Is that true, ma'am?

15 **PETER'S WIFE:** Um...  
**JOE:** Where were you?  
**PETER PETER:** I told you I couldn't keep her.  
**JOE:** Who were you with, ma'am? (*They return to REAL TIME.*)  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** You told him?!

20 **PETER'S WIFE:** I'm sorry, Humpty. I didn't mean to.  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** I wondered how he found me. I mean, it was Tuesday afternoon, and I was just sitting' there, minding my own business. (*Moves into FLASHBACK, where STAGEHAND brings ON a short wall and EXITS. HUMPTY DUMPTY sits on the wall.*) Doop-de-doo. Hum-de-dum.

25 **JOE:** (*Crosses to HUMPTY.*) Are you Humpty Dumpty?  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** Yes.  
**JOE:** What are you doing on the wall?  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** I don't know. It's what I do. We all have to do

30 things we don't want to do.  
**JOE:** And you don't want to sit on a wall?  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** Hey, I have dreams. Ambitions. But I'm stuck here.  
**JOE:** (*Makes notes.*) I see. (*There's a commotion OFFSTAGE. Shouts and clatters.*) What's that?

35 **HUMPTY DUMPTY:** I don't know. It's been going on all day. Big ruckus at the shoe.  
**JOE:** The shoe?  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** Yeah, the shoe.

- 1 **JOE:** I see. *(Makes a note.)* Do you know a Mrs. Pumpkin Eater?  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** Why?  
**JOE:** Just answer the question, sir. Was she here earlier today?  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** Yes. *(They return to REAL TIME.)*
- 5 **PETER PETER:** I knew it.  
**PETER'S WIFE:** Peter Peter.  
**PETER PETER:** Don't Peter Peter me me. *(To HUMPTY DUMPTY.)* You told me you hadn't seen her.  
**PETER'S WIFE:** Wait, you talked to Humpty?
- 10 **PETER PETER:** So?  
**PETER'S WIFE:** When?  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** *(To JOE.)* After you left, he came to talk to me.  
**PETER'S WIFE:** Is that what happened to you?  
**PETER PETER:** Hey, I didn't touch him.
- 15 **HUMPTY DUMPTY:** No, I fell.  
**PETER PETER:** See, he fell.  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** I had a great fall.  
**JACK HORNER:** If it were me, it would've been the greatest fall ever. Epic fall.
- 20 **PETER'S WIFE:** Oh, Humpty. Did you see a doctor?  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** I saw all the king's horses and all the king's men. They were no help.  
**PETER'S WIFE:** You need a doctor.  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** They're not covered by my insurance.
- 25 **PETER'S WIFE:** We really need a single-payer system.  
**JACK HORNER:** Greatest health coverage ever!  
**PETER PETER:** So what were you doing with my wife? *(Gets in HUMPTY DUMPTY'S face.)*  
**PETER'S WIFE:** *(Pulls PETER away.)* Peter! He was teaching me to
- 30 cook.  
**PETER PETER:** To cook?  
**PETER'S WIFE:** To cook.  
**PETER PETER:** *(To HUMPTY DUMPTY.)* You cook?  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** I told you I have dreams. Ambitions. I want to be
- 35 a great chef.  
**DOG:** Like omelettes and stuff.  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** Okay, that's just sick.  
**DOG:** Hey, I haven't eaten in three days, okay? Give me a break.

- 1 **PETER PETER:** You were learning to cook?  
**PETER'S WIFE:** Yes. I know I'm not very good. I want to get better. I want to make you happy.  
**PETER PETER:** You do?
- 5 **PETER'S WIFE:** Of course I do. I love you.  
**PETER PETER:** You do?  
**PETER'S WIFE:** Yes, dummy.  
**PETER PETER:** Awww. *(They hug.)*  
**CAST:** Awww.
- 10 **ST. IVES GUY:** So what, is that it? Can we go now?  
**MRS. ST. IVES:** We really need to get to St. Ives.  
**JOE:** No. We are not finished yet.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** I don't understand. It seems like everyone has an alibi so far.
- 15 **JOE:** So far. But something was bothering me.  
**DOG:** Was it hunger? 'Cause that bugs me.  
**MOTHER HUBBARD:** I am so sorry.  
**DOG:** Not listening.  
**JOE:** That's when I started to wonder if I wasn't going about this all
- 20 wrong. Maybe no one was responsible for Mother Goose going AWOL. Maybe she wasn't missing at all.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** AWOL and at all? Really?  
**OLD MACDONALD:** Carnsarn it. Speak plain. What are you sayin'?  
**FREIDA:** Whatever she says, it ain't no business of ours.
- 25 **JOE:** Maybe there wasn't any foul play. But then something happened. *(Moves into FLASHBACK.)* A girl came skipping by.  
**CHILD:** *(ENTERS the FLASHBACK with OLD WOMAN.)* Oh, Mommy, can I be the girl? Please? Pretty please? Can I?  
**OLD WOMAN:** Fine. Yes. Just make sure to look both ways before
- 30 crossing.  
**CHILD:** A tisket, a tasket.  
**JOE:** She had paper in a basket. *(STAGEHAND ENTERS and hands green and yellow basket with letter in it to CHILD and EXITS.)*  
**CHILD:** I wrote a letter to my love. *(Drops the letter.)*
- 35 **JOE:** But on the way she dropped it. I picked it up and put it in my pocket. *(Picks it up and pockets it. They return to REAL TIME.)*  
**JILL:** What did it say?  
**JOE:** *(Reads the note in rhyming meter.)*  
If you're looking for Mother Goose,

1     You should know we have her.  
       You'll need ten bags of gold in a yellow sack  
       If you want to pull her from our trap.

**SIMPLE SIMON:** Again with the rhymes. Does this not bother anybody  
 5     else? Really? I mean, sack and trap? They're not even close.  
       You're all okay with this?

**MARY CONTRARY:** I'm okay with it.

**SIMPLE SIMON:** You are?

**MARY CONTRARY:** No.

10 **SIMPLE SIMON:** No?

**MARY CONTRARY:** Yes.

**SIMPLE SIMON:** What does that mean, I don't even know anymore.  
       *(To JACK.)* Do you understand her?

**JACK:** Hi. How you doin'? I'm Jack.

15 **SIMPLE SIMON:** I remember.

**JACK:** Sure. Rub it in.

**JILL:** Are you okay?

**JACK:** I'm feeling a little light-crowned. *(Holds his temples and swoons a tad.)*

20 **ST. IVES GUY:** So, Mother Goose was kidnapped?

**JOE:** That's what the note said. They wanted ten bags of gold. I knew  
       where I had to look. Who needed the money most? *(Transition to FLASHBACK.)*

**OLD WOMAN:** *(ENTERS the FLASHBACK and screams to OFFSTAGE.)*

25     Tommy, stop jumping on the bed. Elizabeth, stop kicking the wall.  
       Daniel, get those out of your mouth, you don't know where they've  
       been. Rachael, we do not throw frogs at our brother. I will count to  
       three, I am not kidding. One—do not give me that look. Two—okay,  
       that's it—

30 **CHILD:** *(Goes to OLD WOMAN in tears.)* Mommy, Mommy... *(Sobs.)* ...  
       waaah... blaaahhh, boo-hooo...

**OLD WOMAN:** Huh? What?

**CHILD:** I-was-before-he-did-and-I-couldn't....

**OLD WOMAN:** I can't understand you.

35 **CHILD:** Wahhhh?!

**OLD WOMAN:** Stop crying. Stop crying.

**CHILD:** I caaan't.

**OLD WOMAN:** Then go to your room.

**CHILD:** I don't have a room.

- 1 **OLD WOMAN:** Go... somewhere else. (*CHILD sits and pouts, sniveling.*)  
**JOE:** (*Crosses to them.*) Excuse me, ma'am.  
**OLD WOMAN:** What?!
- JOE:** Sorry, ma'am, need to ask you a few questions.
- 5 **OLD WOMAN:** I'm very happy with my long-distance carrier. I don't need any insurance.  
**JOE:** Not those questions.  
**OLD WOMAN:** You're not from the census bureau, are you?  
**JOE:** No, ma'am.
- 10 **OLD WOMAN:** Thank goodness.  
**JOE:** Is this your home?  
**OLD WOMAN:** Yes.  
**JOE:** Looks like a shoe.  
**OLD WOMAN:** Yes, yes, it's a shoe. A shoe. I'm a single mother on a
- 15 budget. You think I live in some fancy boot or one of those posh strapless sandals? (*Screams to OFFSTAGE.*) Stop that! It's all fun and games until somebody loses an eye.  
**JOE:** You live here alone?  
**OLD WOMAN:** Ha! I wish.
- 20 **JOE:** Who lives here with you?  
**OLD WOMAN:** My children.  
**JOE:** I see. How many children?  
**OLD WOMAN:** I have so many I don't know what to do. (*Screams to OFFSTAGE.*) If you keep making that face, it'll freeze like that, and
- 25 we'll have to sell you to the circus!  
**JOE:** All those children are yours?  
**OLD WOMAN:** Yes.  
**JOE:** (*To the CHILD.*) What's your name?  
**CHILD:** Child.
- 30 **JOE:** Child? Your name is Child?  
**OLD WOMAN:** After a while, you run out of ideas.  
**JOE:** Ma'am, I got a report there's been a lot of screaming over here today.  
**OLD WOMAN:** Yeah? We call those weekdays.
- 35 **JOE:** Can you tell me what the screaming was about?  
**OLD WOMAN:** I don't know anymore. I tend to block it all out.  
**JOE:** (*To CHILD.*) Do you know what the yelling was about?  
**CHILD:** We were all hungry and starving, and our tummies were going grrr and arrrgh.



1 **JOE:** Hungry?

**CHILD:** Yeah, last night Mommy gave us some broth without any bread, then whipped us all and put us to bed.

**OLD WOMAN:** I am doing the best I can. You think it's easy being a

5 single mother, living on a fixed income? You think I asked for this life? Talk to that goose!

**CHILD:** You don't love us, Mommy? Huh, Mommy, huh?

**OLD WOMAN:** Of course, I do, sweetie. I just wish we had a bigger place. A size 13 or something. Where you could have your own

10 room near the heel. Wouldn't that be nice?

**CHILD:** Yeah, we could all have our own room and a basketball hoop and plenty to eat.

**OLD WOMAN:** Oh, honey. If wishes were horses.

**JOE:** If you whipped them all last night, why was there yelling today?

15 **CHILD:** We were still hungry. Starving.

**JOE:** And you yelled because you were hungry?

**CHILD:** No, silly, don't be a silly Billy. No, that's not why. Billy Billy silly girl. It was because of the pie.

**JOE:** The pie?

20 **OLD WOMAN:** Yes. That nice Mrs. Hubbard brought over a pie for the children. (*They return to REAL TIME.*)

**DOG:** Whoa. Whoa-whoa. Time out. (*To MOTHER HUBBARD.*) A pie? You brought them a pie?

**MOTHER HUBBARD:** I am so sorry.

25 **DOG:** That's why the cupboard was bare?

**MOTHER HUBBARD:** They were all so hungry.

**DOG:** You gave the last of our food to them?

**MOTHER HUBBARD:** I'm so sorry. They needed it so badly.

**DOG:** Oh, great. Just great. Now I have guilt.

30 **CHILD:** Mister puppy-puppy-puppy dog. It was awfully nice—

**DOG:** Don't, kid. Don't give me the big human eyes.

**MOTHER HUBBARD:** It won't happen again—

**DOG:** Oh, so now I'm the bad guy?

**MOTHER HUBBARD:** No, you're a good boy. Who's a good boy? Who

35 is? You are. Yes, you are. You're a good boy.

**DOG:** Grrroowl-rooowrrr. (*Makes happy panting sounds.*)

**MOTHER HUBBARD:** How was the pie?

**CHILD:** I don't know. We never got to eat it, any of it, not even a bite, not one.

- 1 **MOTHER HUBBARD:** What happened?  
**OLD WOMAN:** I set the pie on the windowsill to cool. But when the time came to eat it, it was gone! (*Gasps from the CROWD.*)  
**MOTHER HUBBARD:** The children didn't get anything to eat?
- 5 **OLD WOMAN:** Not a crumb. (*Gasps from the CROWD.*)  
**MOTHER HUBBARD:** That's horrible.  
**JOE:** Ma'am. What kind of pie was it?  
**MOTHER HUBBARD:** Plum. (*Gasps from the crowd. MUSIC STING. All eyes turn to JACK HORNER, who stands there proudly, the pie tin at his feet.*)
- 10 **JACK HORNER:** Greatest pie ever.  
**DOG:** You took their pie?  
**JACK HORNER:** Stuck in my thumb, pulled out a plum. Boooya! What a good boy am I.
- 15 **DOG:** That's not good. You're a bad boy. Bad boy!  
**JACK HORNER:** (*Clueless.*) What?  
**BO PEEP:** You stole their pie!  
**MARY LAMB:** How could you?  
**LAMB:** You want a pie? I could go make you a pie.
- 20 **MARY LAMB:** Dwayne, please.  
**LAMB:** I'm just saying, a little lard, some flour. It's no trouble—  
**MARY LAMB:** Dwayne!  
**JACK HORNER:** I'm not a bad boy.  
**MARY CONTRARY:** No, you are a great man.
- 25 **JACK HORNER:** See? Wait. If she's saying I'm a great man, and she's contrary... Are you being contrary?  
**MARY CONTRARY:** No.  
**JACK HORNER:** That means yes! Ah, you all think I'm the bad guy? I'm not bad. I am the greatest kid ever.
- 30 **BO PEEP:** Says who?  
**JACK HORNER:** Everybody.  
**DOG:** I'm not saying that. You saying that?  
**CAST:** (*Ad libs.*) No. Not me. Words never crossed my lips. Reckon not, etc.
- 35 **MARY CONTRARY:** Yes.  
**JACK HORNER:** Ahhh! But what a good boy am I.  
**BO PEEP:** You're a thief.  
**JACK HORNER:** Greatest thief ever?  
**BO PEEP:** No.

- 1 **JACK HORNER:** Oh, man. I'm not the greatest guy ever? (*Sits in defeat.*)  
**ST. IVES GUY:** (*Beat.*) This is all very fascinating, but what does it have to do with Mother Goose?  
**MRS. ST. IVES:** Or St. Ives.
- 5 **JOE:** You seem in a hurry to get to St. Ives.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** We are.  
**JOE:** We?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** My wives and I.  
**JOE:** Wives? You have more than one wife?
- 10 **ST. IVES GUY:** I have seven wives.  
**JOE:** Where are your wives now?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Waiting outside with the luggage.  
**JOE:** Luggage?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Yes, we have a lot of luggage.
- 15 **JOE:** How much luggage?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Each wife has seven sacks.  
**JOE:** Seven wives with seven sacks. What's in the sacks?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Cats. Seven in each sack.  
**JOE:** Are you a veterinarian?
- 20 **ST. IVES GUY:** I'm a rancher.  
**JOE:** A cat rancher. With seven sacks of seven cats.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Well, each cat has seven kittens.  
**JOE:** So kittens, cats, sacks, wives. And you're all going to St. Ives?  
**MRS. ST. IVES:** Yes, and we're very late.
- 25 **JOE:** Won't be long now. I know who done it. Long story short—  
**CAST:** Too late.  
**JOE:** I'll recap. Mother Goose is missing. Nearly everyone here had a motive to see the old girl gone. But everyone seemed to have an alibi.
- 30 **JACK:** So maybe nobody did it.  
**JOE:** Very good, Jack. Go to the crown of the class.  
**MARY LAMB:** What do you mean nobody did it?  
**JOE:** Maybe nothing happened to Mother Goose.  
**OLD MACDONALD:** But you got a ransom note.
- 35 **FREIDA:** So? Don't matter to us.  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** Matters to me. Where did it come from?  
**MRS. ST. IVES:** He said the girl with the green and yellow basket.

- 1 **JOE:** What's that? I never said what color her basket was. (*MUSIC STING.*) And why did that ransom note come just when I was beginning to think maybe Mother Goose wasn't missing? It was as if somebody wanted to throw me off track.
- 5 **HUMPTY DUMPTY:** The girl with the basket.  
**JOE:** It seems likely. (*To MRS. ST. IVES.*) How did you know what color the basket was?  
**MRS. ST. IVES:** I was just... I didn't... You must've said.  
**JOE:** (*To the ST. IVES GUY.*) Sir, you said your wives were waiting outside?
- 10 **ST. IVES GUY:** Yes, I told them to wait outside.  
**JOE:** And they did.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Yes.  
**PETER PETER:** Good for you. Wives should do what they're told.  
**PETER'S WIFE:** Peter.
- 15 **PETER PETER:** Aw, I'm just kidding.  
**LAMB:** (*To MARY LAMB.*) I don't think he's kidding. I would never treat you that way.  
**JOE:** So why is this wife in here with you?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Say, that's a good question.
- 20 **JOE:** What's your wife's name, sir?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** (*Looks hard at MRS. ST. IVES, who tries to avoid his glare.*) Ummm...  
**MRS. ST. IVES:** Brenda.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** No, I don't have a wife named Brenda.
- 25 **MRS. ST. IVES:** Patty?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** No, don't have one of those either.  
**MRS. ST. IVES:** Cheryl? Bonnie?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** No. Why don't I know your name?  
**JOE:** Because sir, this is not your wife. (*In a big dramatic flourish, she whips the huge hat off MRS. ST. IVES.*) This is Mother Goose! (*Gasps and shocked reactions from the CAST.*)
- 30 **GEORGIE:** Yo, wait a sec. Hold it. Does anybody know what is going on?  
**MARY CONTRARY:** Yes.
- 35 **GEORGIE:** Me neither.  
**DOG:** So what, you didn't leave?  
**JOE:** No, she's been here the whole time.  
**BO PEEP:** But I don't understand.

- 1 **JACK:** Wait, she's Mother Goose? (*NOTE: Just to make things easier, we will now refer to MRS. ST. IVES by her real name—MOTHER GOOSE.*)
- MOTHER GOOSE:** Yes, dear, I'm afraid so.
- 5 **JACK:** You're Mother Goose?
- MOTHER GOOSE:** Yes, dear.
- JACK:** Hi. How you doin'? I'm Jack.
- CAST:** She knows.
- JILL:** Everybody knows who you are.
- 10 **JACK:** Except me. (*To HUMPTY DUMPTY.*) I broke my crown.
- HUMPTY DUMPTY:** I broke everything else.
- LAMB:** Dangerous place. That's why you need somebody who's got your back.
- MARY LAMB:** Dwayne, not now.
- 15 **MOTHER HUBBARD:** (*To MOTHER GOOSE.*) But why would you do this?
- CHILD:** Yeah, why, Mommy, why would she do that? Huh? How come? Why? Huh?
- OLD WOMAN:** I don't know, sweetie.
- MOTHER GOOSE:** I just wanted to get away.
- 20 **DOG:** But why?
- CHILD:** Don't you like us anymore? Is that it, huh? You don't like us?
- MOTHER GOOSE:** No, child, that's not it.
- OLD WOMAN:** Then why?
- MOTHER GOOSE:** You're not the only ones who are stuck here doing
- 25 the same thing, year after year, generation after generation. Do you have any idea how old I am?
- CHILD:** Twenty-nine?
- MOTHER GOOSE:** Bless you, child, but a bit older than that. Centuries older. And I have never been anywhere. Ever. The owl and the pussycat went to sea. Some go to market. Some go to Babylon. Even the cow jumped over the moon. But me, I'm stuck here just like you. A prisoner of my own making. I just wanted to see the world. Or at least St. Ives.
- ST. IVES GUY:** You've never been to St. Ives?
- 30 **MOTHER GOOSE:** Never. Is it nice?
- ST. IVES GUY:** Eh.
- BO PEEP:** But don't you fly on a gander whenever you want to wander?
- SIMPLE SIMON:** Arrrgh! I swear I am going to beat my head on a rock.
- JACK:** You mean crown.

- 1 **SIMPLE SIMON:** Why would I beat my head on a crown?  
**JACK:** No, your crown on a rock.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** What are you talking about? Are you out of your crown?
- 5 **MOTHER GOOSE:** Yes, I fly on my gander. But I never get far. After all this time, I'd just like to see some of the great big wonderful world. There's so much more than just our little slice of the planet. I would've done anything to see it.  
**GEORGIE:** You don't get to see your world?
- 10 **MOTHER GOOSE:** No. I'm always here. For generations it's always the same old story.  
**OLD MACDONALD:** Over and over and over.  
**MOTHER GOOSE:** And now I see you all hate the world I created for you.
- 15 **JACK:** Wait. We hate the world?  
**JILL:** Yes, don't you remember?  
**JACK:** Not much.  
**MOTHER GOOSE:** I just wanted to get away.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** By going with me?
- 20 **MOTHER GOOSE:** Yes.  
**PETER'S WIFE:** Oh, that's sweet. Isn't it, honey? (*Hugs PETER PETER'S arm.*)  
**PETER PETER:** Yeah, okay, fine. Sweet.  
**MOTHER HUBBARD:** So I guess that solves the mystery of what happened to Mother Goose. (*ALL nod and ad-lib agreement.*)
- 25 **SIMPLE SIMON:** Wait. Wait, I have a question. You're not his seventh wife?  
**MOTHER GOOSE:** No, dear. I was just pretending.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** And you got six wives waiting outside?
- 30 **ST. IVES GUY:** With six sacks. And each sack still has seven cats—  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** Yeah, yeah. I got an A in calculus. But if there are six wives outside, and she's not your seventh wife, then what happened to your last wife?  
**GEORGIE:** Hey, yeah. That is a good question.
- 35 **HUMPTY DUMPTY:** What happened to your seventh wife?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** I um... I don't know.  
**BO PEEP:** You don't know what happened to your wife?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** I have seven. Seven! It's hard to keep track.  
**LAMB:** (*To MARY.*) I would never feel that way about you.

- 1 **MARY LAMB:** Dwayne, please.  
**LAMB:** Just sayin'.  
**OLD MACDONALD:** Is somebody here your wife? (*EVERYONE turns and looks at the OLD WOMAN.*)
- 5 **OLD WOMAN:** Don't look at me. I've never been married.  
**GEORGIE:** But you have all dem kids.  
**OLD WOMAN:** I know. It's hard to believe we were written for children. G rating and everything. (*Now EVERYONE looks to MOTHER HUBBARD.*)
- 10 **MOTHER HUBBARD:** I don't do husbands. I'm more of a dog person.  
**DOG:** True dat.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** So your seventh wife is missing.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Um... I guess.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** (*To MOTHER GOOSE.*) What happened to his wife?
- 15 **MOTHER GOOSE:** I... I... I don't know.  
**GEORGIE:** You must know something.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** You posed as his wife. What did you do to her? (*Now the CAST starts crowding in on MOTHER GOOSE.*)  
**MOTHER GOOSE:** (*Tries to back away, but can't.*) I didn't do anything.
- 20 **JILL:** You said you'd do anything to get away from here.  
**JACK:** Yeah, you did say that.  
**MOTHER GOOSE:** That you remember?  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** Did you hurt her?  
**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** Did she have a great fall?
- 25 **FREIDA:** Did it involve a carving knife?  
**DOG:** Or starvation?  
**MOTHER GOOSE:** I didn't do anything.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** What did you do with my wife? (*Now EVERYONE is crowding in, hurling questions and accusations. Just when it's about to become a mob—*)
- 30 **JOE:** Stop! Stop! Leave her alone! (*EVERYONE stops and turns on JOE.*) She didn't do anything to your wife. (*MUSIC STING as JOE pulls off her fedora.*) I am your wife.  
**CAST:** What?!
- 35 **DOG:** Okay, that's just weird. Too strange to be true. That plot twist came out of the blue.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** I agree. Good rhyme, though.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Wait a minute. You're my wife?  
**CHILD:** Mommy, what's happening?

- 1 **OLD WOMAN:** I'm not sure, honey.  
**CHILD:** The story's all mixy-whixy and swirly-whirly.  
**OLD WOMAN:** And everything used to be so simple.  
**PETER PETER:** Wait. *(To JOE.)* You're his wife?
- 5 **JOE:** Yes.  
**PETER PETER:** *(To ST. IVES GUY.)* Couldn't keep her, huh?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** *(Crosses to JOE.)* Honey?  
**JOE:** Oh, don't honey me.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Why would you do this?
- 10 **JOE:** What's my name? Huh? What's my name?  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Brenda?  
**JOE:** No.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** Cheryl? Bonnie?  
**JOE:** No. No, it's Josephine! See, this is what it's like. You don't even
- 15 know my name.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** I've always just thought of you as Seven.  
**JOE:** Seven? That's not even a name!  
**ST. IVES GUY:** But it's easy to remember.  
**JOE:** That's no excuse.
- 20 **MOTHER GOOSE:** She's right, dear. I think I made a mistake with all the Jacks.  
**JACK:** Hey. I'm Jack.  
**JACK HORNER:** But not the greatest Jack.  
**MOTHER GOOSE:** And all the Marys.
- 25 **MARY LAMB:** Yeah, there are a lot of us.  
**MARY CONTRARY:** No, there aren't.  
**DOG:** Try not having a name.  
**OLD WOMAN:** Exactly. Old Woman? Seriously? Old Woman? I'm 39.  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** *(Scoffs.)* Pffft.
- 30 **OLD WOMAN:** What?  
**SIMPLE SIMON:** Nothing. You totally look 39.  
**MOTHER GOOSE:** I thought it would be easier to keep track. But I think now maybe I was wrong. I think everyone deserves better. Maybe you all shouldn't have to do what's written.
- 35 **JOE:** Exactly. I got tired of going to St. Ives and back and forth and back. I mean how many times can you eat at the same restaurants and hit the same gift shops? I wanted more.  
**ST. IVES GUY:** We could go someplace else. I hear Bermuda's nice.



1 **MARY CONTRARY:** No, it's not.

**JOE:** It's not just about going someplace. It's about who I want to be.

**ST. IVES GUY:** And who do you want to be?

**JOE:** Me. Joe August. I like being a cop. I like solving mysteries, and I

5 think I'm pretty good at it. That's what I want to be.

**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** I want to be a chef.

**FREIDA:** I'd like to get off the farm.

**MOTHER GOOSE:** Maybe you could. Maybe it's time you all started telling your own stories. *(General excited agreement from the CAST.)*

10 **JOE:** That's what we did. *(Points to MOTHER GOOSE.)* See, when she wanted to see the world, or at least St. Ives, we agreed to switch places. It was a brilliant plan. That way we could do what we wanted.

**SIMPLE SIMON:** Wait a second. Wait. Hold on. I'm confused.

**CHILD:** Me, too.

15 **SIMPLE SIMON:** If you knew she was Mother Goose all along, then why did you start to investigate her disappearance in the first place? *(MUSIC STING. The OTHERS ooh and ahh, suddenly wondering the same thing.)*

**JOE:** I don't know.

20 **SIMPLE SIMON:** It doesn't make sense.

**JOE:** You're right. It doesn't. *(Thinking hard now, trying to unravel this new mystery.)* I just did what I had to do.

**JACK:** Like we all have to.

**JILL:** 'Cause we're part of Mother Goose's stories.

25 **JOE:** Yes. But I was following a new story.

**MOTHER GOOSE:** A new story?

**JOE:** Yes. Doing what I had to do. What the new story told me to do.

**HUMPTY DUMPTY:** Do you know what that means?

**MOTHER GOOSE:** That means somebody has been editing MY stories.

30 **GEORGIE:** You mean there's somebody else out there?

**MOTHER GOOSE:** Yes. Somebody else is changing our stories.

**SIMPLE SIMON:** Making us do what he or she wants us to do.

**MOTHER GOOSE:** But who could do such a thing? *(Now the CHARACTERS are all eyeing EACH OTHER suspiciously, trying to*

35 *distance themselves from each other.)*

**JOE:** *(To the AUDIENCE.)* It was a mystery. But don't worry. I'm all over it. *(MUSIC STING. She puts on her fedora again.)* I'll solve it. After all, it's what I do. My name is August. Joe August. *(MUSIC STING.)* And I'm a cop. *(MUSIC STING. BLACKOUT.)*

END OF PLAY

## **PRODUCTION NOTES**

### **PROPERTIES ONSTAGE**

Chairs and a desk.

### **PROPERTIES BROUGHT ON**

Tin can on a string, short wall, green and yellow basket with a letter in it (STAGEHAND)

Pie tin, prune on thumb (JACK HORNER)

Crutches (HUMPTY DUMPTY)

Tablet and pen (JOE)

### **COSTUMES**

Costumes can be as simple or as complex as your budget will allow. We encourage imagination. You can go with black pants and shirts and simple pieces to suggest each character. For example, a bonnet and staff for BO PEEP. An apron for MOTHER HUBBARD. Dog ears and tail for the DOG. Or you can go full-on costumes. Or any combination in between. It's up to you.

The script calls for these specific costumes and personal props:

JOE wears a trench coat and fedora.

HUMPTY DUMPTY may be covered in bandages.

MRS. ST. IVES wears a large hat.

### **LIGHTING AND SOUND**

Again we are of the mind, "Keep it simple." If you can afford the time, space and budget to amp up the lighting, then by all means, go for it. Light changes help with the transitions into and out of the flashbacks as well as a mystical dreamlike sound when in flashbacks. A "Dragnet"-like music sting is suggested throughout the script.

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