

Once Upon A Time

A play by Schawn Starfeldt including
Fractured Fairy Tales by Jan Peterson Ewen
and songs by Mark Burrows

Characters

Narrator 1

Bo Peep

Narrator 2

Mary

Narrator 3

Old King Cole *-like his way*

Jack

Fiddler One

Jill

Fiddler Two

Nurse - helpful and kind

Bowl Carrier

Doctor John - disheveled, oversleeps

Pipe Holder

King's Assistant

Humpty Dumpty

Eggs (3)

General

King's man (3)

King

Servant (could be Nar 2)

SCENE 1 - Once Upon A Time

(Three Narrators are center stage.)

Narrator 1:

As you lay down to rest or to sleep,
You might read a tale like Little Bo Peep.
You might read a rhyme that will set you aright
And give you sweet dreams as you sleep all night.

ALL: Sweet dreams!

Narrator 2:

But have you ever thought of the folks in the story?
Have you ever thought of the guts and the glory
Of the characters trapped in your short little verse?
You might find their story's a little bit worse!

ALL: A little bit worse?

Narrator 3:

Or you might find their story's a little bit better!
(to Nar. 2) Let's not make our audience think they should never
Read nursery rhymes or tales that are old.
Let's give them a glimpse! *(to audience)* Now on with the show!

All: On with the show!

All sing: *Mama Goose is Ready*

*Mama goose is ready, come along.
Mama goose is ready, come along.
Time to get down, and sing our song.*

*Shrug your shoulders and boogie down.
Shrug your shoulders and boogie down.
Shrug your shoulders and boogie down.
Shrug your shoulders and boogie down.
Wave your hands high and turn around.*

*Come and join the party, you belong.
Come and join the party, you belong
Time to get down, and sing our song.*

*Shrug your shoulders and boogie down.
Shrug your shoulders and boogie down.
Shrug your shoulders and boogie down.
Shrug your shoulders and boogie down.
Wave your hands high and turn around.*

SCENE 2 - Jack and Jill: Is the Doctor In?

Narrator 1:

So let's peek in on our first nursery rhyme.
Someone's hurt, but we're just in time.
Let's see what happened to our young friend Jack.
Enjoy the show! I'll be right back.

Jill: Is the doctor in?

Nurse: Oh dear! What happened to you?

Jill: We just had a little accident. Come on, Jack, just a little farther.

Jack: (*Confused*) Is it time for dinner?

Nurse: Come over here young man. Have a seat. There you go.

Jack: Thank you, sir. Is the movie about to start?

Jill: (*as if she is talking to a very young child*) No, Jack. This is the nurse. We are at the doctor's office. You took a fall when we went up the hill to fetch a pail of water. Don't you remember?

Jack: Of course I like September. It's one of my favorite seasons.

Jill: You see he's been like this ever since he hit his head.

Jack: Did you say I have to go to bed?

Nurse: No, Jack, you don't need to go to bed. Dr. John will be here in just a minute to see you.

Jack: Ok. You are a nice lady.

Nurse: Well, thank you Jack. I think you are nice, too. Would you like a drink of water?

Jack: No thanks, but you know what I would like?

Nurse: What?

Jack: A nice cold drink of water.

Nurse: All right. I'll get you one. Stay right here. *(As the nurse exits to get water, Jill moves to her)*

Jill: What do you think? Is he going to be alright?

Nurse: We will have to see what Dr. John says. That must've been quite a fall. He seems very confused. What happened, exactly? *(Jack stands up and starts to wander)*

Jill: Well, you see, Jack had a really full schedule today: get water, jump over a candlestick, sit in a corner and test the pies, and play for the king. I told him I'd help him out. We got a bucket from his mom and headed up the steep hill to the well. Believe me, that trail is treacherous!

Nurse: I know what you mean! I've come close to falling there myself on several occasions! I'd better get his drink. *(Nurse exits. Jill notices Jack exiting stage as the ensemble calls out.)*

All: *(ad lib)* Jack is getting a way! Look at Jack. Jack is leaving

Jill: Come back here, Jack! *(She directs him to a seat. Nurse comes in with a glass.)*

Nurse: Here's your water. Let's sit down again, all right?

Jack: Oh, thank you grandmother. You always bring the coldest milk for your cookies. Do you have any cookies?

Jill: No, Jack, you asked for water, and this is not your grandmother. This is the nurse. The nice lady, remember? And I'm your friend, Jill. Do you remember me? Do you remember falling down the hill?

Nurse: *(Concerned)* Jack can you tell me what day it is?

Jack: Of course I can! *(Pauses to think.)* It's my birthday! Can I open my presents now?

Jill: No, Jack. It's not your birthday there's no presents.

Jack: *(Looking sad.)* Oh, is there cake?

Jill: Sorry, no cake either.

Jack: You two certainly don't throw a very good birthday party. *(As he says this, a disheveled, tired doctor wearing pajamas under his white coat walks across the stage.)*

Nurse: *(Excited and relieved)* The doctor is here. Come with me, Jack. We want to help you out! We will get you fixed up, right as rain.

Jack: What?

Nurse: You'll be up to par in no time!

Jill: What?

Nurse: Fit as a fiddle.

Jack: That's awesome! I like fiddles! Hey, Diddle Diddle! Can I have a new fiddle for my birthday? *(All exit.)*

SCENE 3 - Humpty Dumpty

Narrator 2:

Not everyone is as lucky as Jack
He had a nice friend, and that's a fact.

ALL: That's a fact!

Some other tales don't end quite that well
Do you remember when Old Humpty fell?

ALL: Poor Humpty!

(There is a big wall upstage and there are a group of eggs playing outside the wall. They accidentally throw the ball over the wall.)

Egg 1: Oh dear, what will we do now?

Egg 2: Well, one of us will have to climb over the wall and get the ball.

Egg 3: Humpty Dumpty will do it

Humpty Dumpty: Why do I have to do it?

Egg 1: Because you are the bravest egg of all eggs.

Egg 2: You are our hero!

Egg 3: Don't tell us you are scared.

All: Scaredy Egg! Scaredy Egg!

Humpty Dumpty: Alright, alright I'll do it.

(Humpty Dumpty starts to climb the wall. He is shaking because he is so scared. He gets to the top but he is too frightened to move.)

Humpty Dumpty: I can't move. What shall I do?

(General enters)

General: What is going on here?

(All the eggs run off.)

Humpty Dumpty: I climbed the wall because we threw the ball over the wall and I wanted to get back for all my egg friends but now I'm stuck and I can't get down.

General: I'll get something and help you get down. *(exits)*

Bo Peep: *(crossing stage)* Here, little sheep! Here, little sheep! Oh, sheeeeeep! Where are you? *(Stopping to look at Humpty)* Oh wow! An egg on a wall, how odd. Hello, egg.

Humpty Dumpty: Hello. Can you help me?

Bo Peep: *(to audience)* a talking egg. How very odd. *(To Humpty)* I don't know if I can help you, but I think you can help me! From your vantage point, can you see any sheep?

Humpty Dumpty: *(Looking)* I don't think so.

Bo Peep: Not even small a fleck of white on the green hills over there?

Humpty Dumpty: Well, maybe. *(Standing up tall to look, leaning to one side)* I can see a well at the top of the hill. Maybe there is a sheep.

Bo Peep: Oh thank you! *(Running off)*

Humpty Dumpty: *(Starting to tip off the wall.)* Wait! *(General runs in with a step stool just as Humpty Dumpty starts to wobble and falls to the ground.)*

Humpty Dumpty: *(lying on the floor)* Help me! I'm broken.

General: Don't worry, I'll call all the King's men to come and help put you back together again.

General: *(gets out his phones and dials the King's men)* Please come quick, a giant egg has fallen off a wall.

(King's men come galloping in on their horses. They look at Humpty Dumpty on the ground.)

King's Man 1: Oh dear, this looks very bad.

King's Man 2: I don't think we are going to be able to fix him.

King's Man 3: Don't give up! We can try.

King's Man 1: Look everybody where do you think this goes? *(He holds up an arm.)*

King's Man 2: I think that might be his leg. *(They circle him so the audience can't see while they are working on him. Some exclamations "Try this", "Oh no!", "That's not working." They face the audience with Humpty behind them.)*

King's Man 3: We tried our best but there is nothing we can do.

(They all put their heads down. Trumpet blows and the King's servant enters.)

Servant (or Narrator 2): The king is coming. Everyone, bow. *(They all bow as the King enters.)*

King: I'm so hungry. What is for dinner tonight, servant?

Servant, King's Horses, King's Men: Lots and lots of scrambled egg. *(All exit except Humpty. Narrators enter.)*

Narrator 3: Wait! We can't just leave him! That would be mean. *(to Nar. 2) Go get the doc from the very first scene! (Nar. 2 exits)*

Narrator 1: I'll help you. Let's take him straight to the nurse. *(to Nar. 3) Can you continue on with this verse?*

SCENE 4 - Diddle Diddle Hand Jive

Narrator 3: Humpty Dumpty fell off a wall
Jack and Jill both took a fall.
Doctor John got turned around
But, friends help out! That's what we've found!

All sing: *Diddle Diddle Hand Jive*

*Diddle, diddle, dumpling, **doctor John**,
Went to bed with his britches on.
One shoe off and one shoe on,
Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John.
When my son John gets turned around,
Thinks "in" is out and "up" is down.*

*Diddle, diddle, dumpling, **doctor John**,
Went to **work** with his PJ on.
One shoe off and one shoe on,
Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John.
When my son John gets turned around,
Thinks "in" is out and "up" is down.*

*Diddle, diddle, dumpling, **doctor John**,
Went to swim with his mittens on.
One shoe off and one shoe on,
Diddle, diddle, dumpling, my son John.
When my son John gets turned around,
Thinks "in" is out and "up" is down.*

SCENE 5 - Little Bo Peep: Lost and Found

Narrator 1:

We can learn lessons from these little rhymes.

Narrator 2:

We hear the story and think of the times

That we have been in a similar place.

We might think of a struggle or hardship we face.

Narrator 3:

And we can gain courage, you know that it's true.

Let's listen and learn a thing or two.

(Bo Peep enters, searching for a flock of sheep she has lost. Mary enters from the opposite side of the stage, looking for a place to hide, and ducks behind a bush.)

Bo Peep: Fluffy! Snowball! Woolley! Here, sheep, sheep, sheep!

Mary: Shhhh! Can't you see I'm trying to hide here? Go away! Go away!
(peeking out)

Bo Peep: Oh, I'm so sorry. I'm just trying to find my sheep. Excuse me, who exactly are you hiding from? There's no one here but you and me.

Mary: *(coming out from hiding behind a bush)* Oh please, could you just look somewhere else for your sheep? They're obviously not here. And if

my little lamb hears you, she will come running, and, in case you haven't noticed, I am trying to hide from her.

Bo Peep: Your lamb? Why would you want to hide from your little lamb?

Mary: It's a long story. Let's just say she follows me everywhere I go and I've had enough of it.

Bo Peep: Oh, I see *(pause, exasperated)* No, actually I don't see. I've looked everywhere for my flock and I don't know where to find them. I would give anything to see them again.

Mary: Oh, just leave them alone and they will come home.

Bo Peep: Maybe they just don't want to come home. Maybe they don't like me anymore *(crying)*.

Mary: I'm sure they like you. Do you feed them everyday? *(Bo Peep nods yes, sniffing)* Then they like you. *(Mary tries to comfort Bo Peep.)* My name is Mary. What's yours?

Bo Peep: Bo Peep. *(still crying)*

Mary: Why don't you tell me about your sheep, Bo Peep? Maybe I can help. How many are missing? *(She slowly raises four fingers in answer to Mary's question.)* Now we're getting somewhere. Four missing sheep. What are their names?

Bo Peep: Well, there's Woolly and Snowball and Fluffy. And last but not least, there's Leonardo. Everywhere the others go, Leonardo is sure to follow.

Mary: Yeah, sheep will tend to do that. I'm sorry that you lost them. But they always come home again, right?

Bo Peep: Yes, yes, they do. Wagging their stubby little tails behind them.

Mary: That's funny I can't seem to lose anything, at least when it comes to my sheep.

Bo Peep: What do you mean?

Mary: Well, I have this really cute lamb you see. She's adorable, and I love her, but I get so frustrated because she follows me everywhere I go. To the store, to the library, to the park. She even followed me to school this morning which as you may know is against the rules. So, I told my lamb to go home, but she just waited for me.

Bo peep: *(Surprised)* She waited for you? And she didn't run away or get lost?

Mary: No, she never runs away. And boy, I get into trouble because of that lamb. And worse than that, the other kids laugh at me because I always have a lamb. It was so embarrassing, I ran away from her as fast as I could. *(Looks back to see if the lamb has found her yet.)*

Bo Peep: I wish my sheep would follow me everywhere I go. It would be much easier.

Mary: Oh, no you don't! Believe me! It sounds good, but it's nothing but a headache.

Bo Peep: But I think it's so sweet that your little lamb wants to be with you all the time. It's so much easier than chasing your sheep all over the countryside every day, like I do.

Mary: *(Having a change of heart)* I guess that's true I never have to chase after her. *(Smiles and sighs)* Maybe I better get going. My lamb is probably looking all over for me.

Bo Peep: I better get going, too. It'll be dark soon. I've got to get home to get their dinner. Thanks for reminding me they always come home!

Mary: It was nothing. Thanks for your help, too.

Bo Peep: You're welcome.

Mary: *(Starts to leave and then turns back)*. Oh, one more thing to consider: microchips. You might look into getting microchips for your sheep, that way, even if they do wander, you'll always get them back again. Bye! *(They exit opposite ways.)*

All Sing: Little Bo

*Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep. Baa, baa, baa.
She can't tell where to find them. Baa, baa, baa.
Leave them alone and they'll come home. Baa, baa, baa.
Wagging their tails behind them. Baa, baa, baa.
With a wag to the left
And a wag to the right
Those wandering cheap
Were quite a sight!
Little Bo Peep has lost her sheep. Baa, baa, baa.*

*Little Bo Peep got back her sheep. Baa, baa, baa.
They'd been out all night dancing. Baa, baa, baa.
They taught their best moves to Bo Peep. Baa, baa, baa.
Wagging their tails behind them. Baa, baa, baa.
With a wag to the left
And a wag to the right
Those wandering cheap
Were quite a sight!
Little Bo Peep got back her sheep. Baa, baa, baa.*

Baa, baa, baa. Baa, baa, baa.

SCENE 6 - Old King Cole: He Called for His Fiddlers...Two

Narrator 1:

We have one more kingly rhyme

Narrator 2:

Why do kings appear all the time?

Narrator 3:

Most of these tales come from England
Where kings and queens ruled the land.

Narrator 1:

So let's see the story of one king more.
It's a tale unlike any you've seen before!

(The Pipe Holder and the Bowl Carrier are sitting and waiting patiently to be called for by Old King Cole. Fiddler One enters, out of breath and checks his watch. He sees that the Pipe Holder and the Bowl Carrier are still waiting to be called by the king, and he breathes a sigh of relief.)

Fiddler One: Oh! I thought I was going to be late.

(Fiddler Two rushes onto the stage, also out of breath. He sees Fiddler One and crosses to him quickly.)

Fiddler Two: I made it! Boy, that traffic was a mess.

Fiddler One: you're telling me! It took over an hour to get here. But the king hasn't called the pipe holder or the bowl carrier yet, so we still have some time. Where is Jack?

Fiddler Two: I don't know. I thought he was coming with you.

Fiddler One: no! I thought he was coming with you! Fiddler to: he must be taking the bus.

Fiddler One: but he has all the equipment. He has our fiddles. We can't perform with just the two of us and no fiddles.

Fiddler Two: What are we going to do? I told you we shouldn't let Jack be responsible for the fiddles.

Fiddler One: Don't panic. I'm sure he'll be here any minute. *(The king's assistant enters with a clipboard in hand.)*

King's Assistant: The king has called for his pipe. *(The Pipe Holder holds a tray with the pipe high in a royal manner and follows the king's assistant off stage.)*

Fiddler Two: Oh no! He's called for his pipe. We don't have much time. Maybe we should call Jack.

Fiddler One: How do you suggest we do that?

Fiddler two: I don't know. *(He stops and considers this for a moment and then starts calling out loudly.)* Jack! Jack! Jack!

Fiddler One: Will you stop that? He's not going to hear you.

King's Assistant: *(Rushes on stage.)* What's all the racket out here? The king is getting very upset. Bowl Carrier, you're up! He's calling for you. *(The Bowl Carrier crosses to the same exit as the Pipe Holder. The King's Assistant starts to follow. Fiddler One stops the King's Assistant.)*

Fiddler One: Excuse me, sir.

King's Assistant: yes?

Fiddler One: We have a little problem. You see we are the fiddlers here to play for Old King Cole.

King's Assistant: You're up next. You better get ready.

Fiddler Two: Well, you see, it's actually kind of funny, but there are only two of us here. Our third fiddler hasn't gotten here yet.

King's Assistant: so? *(Fiddler One and Two start to laugh trying to make light of the situation.)*

Fiddler One: Well, we can't play because our third fiddler has all the fiddles.

Fiddler Two: And he isn't here yet. So, you can see we are fiddle-less. *(The fiddlers laugh again. The assistant is not laughing with them.)*

Fiddler One: Do you think the king would be willing to wait a few minutes until our third fiddler gets here with the instruments?

King's Assistant: Let me tell you something. Do you know what would happen to me if the pipe did not arrive when the king called? *(Drags a hand across his neck.)* Do you know what would happen if the bowl did not arrive when the king called? *(Does the same motion.)* Do you know what would happen if the entertainment did not arrive when the king called? *(Fiddler One and Fiddler Two copy the same motion)* Very good! You are quick learners. I'll be back for you in a minute, and you better have some entertainment for the king. People think he's a merry old soul, but that's just his public face. Wait until you see his private face. *(Exits.)*

Fiddler Two: *(Starts pacing frantically.)* What are we going to do? What are we going to do?

Fiddler One: Calm down! We have to think what else can we do besides play fiddle music?

Fiddler Two: Nothing! I can't do anything except fiddle. I've no talent except fiddling.

Old king Cole: *(from offstage)* Where are my fiddlers? I want my fiddlers!

Fiddler Two: *(running around frantically)* He's coming! The king is coming! And we're going to be *(Freezes then makes the cutting motion across his neck.)*

Old King Cole: *(Enters gruffly carrying his pipe and his bowl followed by the King's Assistant.)* Play for me, fiddlers! I want to be entertained.

(Old king Cole takes a seat on his throne. The King's Assistant stands next to him. The Fiddlers look at each other and walk forward tentatively.)

Fiddler One: Well, your honor, your majesty, your royal highest-ness. *(Bows deeply. Fiddler Two follows his lead and bows as well. Fiddler One starts winging it.)* We thought we would do something different for you tonight.

Fiddler Two: That's right! We want to do something a little different for you tonight.

Old King Cole: *(Suspiciously.)* Like what?

Fiddler One: *(Stalling)* Well, we thought... we'd let you choose.

Fiddler Two: That's right! You choose!

Old King Cole: Me? choose? Well, that's novel. All right. *(Thinks about it, then comes up with an idea)* I would like to hear you recite

Fiddler Two: Recite?

Old King Cole: Yes, recite. You can recite, can't you?

Fiddler One: Of course we can recite. We love to recite. One of our favorite things to do is reciting. We recite all the time! What would you like to hear?

Old King Cole: What about something from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

Fiddler One: Romeo and Juliet?

Fiddler Two: Romeo and Juliet?

Old King Cole: *(giving them a mean look)* You do know Romeo and Juliet, don't you?

Fiddler One: of course we know Romeo and Juliet. Who doesn't know Romeo and Juliet?

Fiddler Two: *(Whispering to Fiddler One.)* I don't know Romeo and Juliet

Fiddler One: Just follow my lead. *(Fiddler One grabs a large scarf sitting on a nearby chair and covers his head, dressing as Juliet. He steps up to a sturdy chair and begins to recite.)* Oh, Romeo! Romeo! Wherefore art thou, Romeo? Deny thy father and refuse thy name. Or, if that will, be but sworn my love, and I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Fiddler Two: *(starts to clap)* Oh, that was marvelous! I had no idea you could act!

Fiddler One: Stop clapping and start playing Romeo.

Fiddler Two: Oh..oh, OK *(stand below Fiddler One who is still on the chair and thinks for a moment)*. Hey, Juliet. It's me, your Romeo down here. Come down! Let's go out and get something to eat and maybe catch a movie.

Fiddler One: *(Whispering)* That's not how it goes!

Fiddler Two: *(Whispering louder)* I told you I don't know the play. I'm making it up.

Fiddler One: *(Jumps off the chair.)* Oh where, oh where is my Romeo? Oh, look! he's dead

Fiddler Two: *(Shocked. Whispers to Fiddler One)* I am?

Fiddler One: *(Whispers back to Fiddler Two)* You are. *(Fiddler Two dramatically drops to the floor. Fiddler One kneels next to him.)* Oh, my sweet Romeo! I shall be brief. *(Fiddler One dies. They lie there for a minute. Then they jump to their feet and take a few bows)*

Old King Cole: *(claps as they bow, but is confused about what he seen)* I don't remember the story going quite like that.

Fiddler One: Well, that was the new revised version.

Old King Cole: I think I prefer the old version

Fiddler Two: *(grabbing Fiddler One and trying to leave)* Thanks for coming and we will see you the next time you call. *(The Fiddlers start to leave. Old King Cole stands and roars.)*

Old King Cole: Come back here! I still want to be entertained! *(comes up with a new idea)* What about some opera?

Fiddler One: Oh no, we can't do an opera. we don't know any. *(King's Assistant makes the throat motion. The fiddlers both freeze. They swallow.)* Opera is our favorite, isn't it? In fact, my friend here is an opera singer. *(Fiddler One puts his hand on Fiddlers Two's shoulder and pats him solidly.)*

Old King Cole: He is?

Fiddler Two: *(To Fiddler One.)* I am?

Fiddler One: No, don't be so modest, friend. Come on, now. Sing for the king. Sing your favorite aria I'll back you up. *(The Fiddlers begin a fake ad lib melodic aria.)*

Fiddler Two: *(Clears his throat. Clasps his hands in front of his chest and starts to sing.)* Oh my heart is weary and cold.

Fiddler One: *(sings and responds to Fiddler Two)* Weary and cold

Fiddler Two: and I don't know where I'm going.

Fiddler One: where am I going?

Fiddler Two: (*becoming more dramatic as he gains courage.*) The leaves are falling all around me, round and round about me.

Fiddler One: Round and round. Round and round.

Fiddler Two: (*even more dramatically*) I must go and find my love.

Fiddler One: Where is your love? Where is your love?

Fiddler Two My love, my love is gone!

Fiddler One: (*copying the actions*) Your love is gone!

Fiddler Two: I shall sail across the ocean.

Fiddler One: You shall sail, sail, sail.

Fiddler Two: I shall sail across the sea.

Fiddler One: You shall sail, sail, sail.

Fiddler Two: (*the big finale*). And... I... Shall... Never... Return...!

Fiddler One: Never return! *(The fiddlers end the aria dramatically with dramatic poses! Old King Cole stands and applauds. He's obviously moved by the performance.)*

Old King Cole: Bravo! Bravo! That was fantastic! What talent! You moved me to tears. I want you to come back tomorrow night to perform the entire opera for me, from beginning to end. And I'm going to invite some of my friends. Assistant, send out the invites! I want all the neighborhood kings and all the king's men to come, all the eggs, and my doctor and nurse friends, and my friends that have sheep! Let's invite everyone! We will make a party out of it, a huge party!

(Jack comes running on with a bandage around his head.)

Jack: Sorry I'm late guys. I took a nasty spill down the hill this morning. You wouldn't believe how long I had to wait in the ER!

Fiddler One: You forgot the fiddles.

Jack: Oh man, I'm so sorry.

Fiddler Two: That's ok. We have a way you can make it up to us. Are you familiar with the opera?

SCENE 7 - The Finale

Narrator 1:

These old nursery rhymes are kind of silly
But they can be fun, I mean, really!

Narrator 2:

So thank you for coming to see our show

ALL: Thank you!

Narrator 3:

It's been a blast! We hope you know
We hope you've had a super great time
And learned some ideas from these rhymes.

All sing: *Mama Goose is Ready*