



Bright Star Touring Theatre

# Once UPON A Time

## Study Guide



### About the show:

Lenny and Mabel are two Elizabethan traveling actors who are very excited to share two beloved fairy tales - *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Cinderella*. Through their high-energy and hysterical performance, the characters of Cinderella, her wicked step-sisters, the Prince, Jack, and the Giant (along with many others!) are brought to life on the stage.

The stories of *Cinderella* and *Jack and the Beanstalk* are very old. Believe it or not, the story of *Cinderella* has its origins in the first century BC in an ancient Greek/Egyptian text about a maiden named Rhodopis. While

washing her clothes in a stream, a bird steals Rhodopis's slipper and delivers it to Pharaoh's lap. Enchanted, he soon orders all the women in the kingdom to try on the slipper before finally discovering a perfect fit with Rhodopis. Indeed, virtually every culture has a folkloric tale with the key elements of the Cinderella story. Today's rendition has its roots in a French tale written over 300 years ago! It's in this version that the Fairy Godmother, the prince, & the mean sisters all come together to create the tale we find so familiar.

The first recorded version of *Jack and the Beanstalk* dates back to around 1730 in the British publication, *Christmas Entertainments*. Here a skit involving Jack Spriggins and an enchanted bean, bring the story to life. The next printed version of the story doesn't turn up again for another 70 years, until an 1807 version by Benjamin Tabart. While these early publications do suggest some cultural familiarity with the story it wasn't until 1890 when Joseph Jacobs' book *English Fairy Tales* was published that the story had much widespread success. We hope that our version of these stories - told with a handful of audience volunteers and just two actors - will quickly become one of your favorites!

### About Our Production:

This production is a touring show with Bright Star Theatre. During its run, this production may be seen by audiences in as many as 15 different states! Professional actors join Bright Star from across the United States to tour our shows. In a typical week, they'll perform in 10-13 venues for all kinds of audiences. Our actors travel in minivans, averaging 800-1000 miles of driving *per week*, and they have performed for as many as 10,000 people *in one week*! After the show, our actors are available for you to ask questions about this production and their lives as actors - it's one of the most exciting parts of the Bright Star experience - and we hope you'll have a chance to have your question answered!



# Words to Know:

Theatre is a form of storytelling that has been entertaining people for thousands of years. Theatre has its own kind of language. Here are some terms that actors, directors, and other “theatre people” use all the time!

**Audition:** A hopeful actor will either read, sing or dance (or sometimes all three!) in order for the director to decide which actor she wants to cast in a particular role.

**Director:** The director reads the script, and tells the actors where they should go and what they should do. Each director has a different way of telling a story from every other director, and this means that each play will be unique from every other play!

**Set:** All of the scenery on the stage is part of what is called the “set.” It helps to paint a picture of where the story takes place, so it is easier for the audience to follow the play. For *Once Upon a Time*, our actors use a backdrop, which is the colorful painted background.

**Costumes:** All of the clothes that are worn onstage by the actors are costumes. The hats, the wigs, the coats, and even the shoes are all part of the costumes!

**Props:** Anything that an actor carries during the show is a prop. Can you remember any of the props used by the actors in this play?

**Rehearsal:** Once the cast of the play is set, everyone on the show needs to practice to get ready for the show. This can take weeks, and that gives time for the sets and costumes to be built, and for the actors to learn their lines.

**Actors:** These are the people that you see on stage. They each have a character to play, and they spend a long time rehearsing before they perform. They have to learn where they should walk, when they should talk, and how their characters should act. It’s a lot of work!

**and of course -**

**Audience:** Perhaps the most important element in the show! The audience consists of the people who come out to watch the play. You were our audience for *Once Upon a Time*!

# Fairy Tale Checklist



A **fairy tale** is a fictional story that features magical characters (such as fairies, goblins, elves, trolls, witches, giants, and talking animals) and enchantments, and often involves a far-fetched sequence of events.  
[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

## So to be a fairy tale, a story must:

1. Be fictional.
2. Contain a “legendary deed.”
3. Contain magical creatures.

# Word Search!

Find these words from *Once Upon a Time* in the puzzle below!

BALL  
BEANS  
BEANSTALK  
CINDERELLA  
FAIRY TALE  
GIANT

JACK  
LENNY  
MABEL  
PRINCE  
SLIPPER  
STEPSISTER

A	A	S	L	K	G	Z	L	V	P	R	L	J	O	S
U	L	P	L	E	W	P	J	K	R	E	Z	O	B	N
Q	P	L	Q	I	B	E	L	H	I	T	S	L	W	A
Y	N	N	E	L	P	A	I	R	N	S	S	P	W	E
I	H	Q	O	R	T	P	M	B	C	I	Y	R	X	B
Q	G	O	A	S	E	G	E	E	E	S	E	G	N	C
O	E	U	N	N	I	D	X	R	Q	P	K	B	K	R
U	R	A	M	A	A	H	N	R	D	E	L	I	G	W
C	E	S	N	A	W	N	P	I	A	T	B	K	M	G
B	U	T	B	A	L	L	Z	H	C	S	C	G	S	M
H	D	T	S	S	U	H	Q	O	T	A	H	L	Z	C
F	A	I	R	Y	T	A	L	E	J	Q	N	T	C	V
K	A	X	W	E	I	K	J	A	X	L	Z	C	E	K
A	N	N	T	I	V	E	C	L	L	U	H	Z	M	Q
A	J	A	N	K	N	D	U	Y	D	T	O	U	D	I

# Classroom Activities:

## Create a *Once Upon a Time* Newscast!

*This activity incorporates creative thinking, writing, and performance!*

**1.** Break students into small groups. Have each group create a segment of a newscast about *Once Upon a Time*. The possibilities are endless and the more creative, the better the result! Ideas for segments could include: an interview with the giant from "Jack & the Beanstalk," a story detailing the design of glass slippers, an interview with Cinderella & the Prince after they are married - even the weather and commercials could be tackled!

**2.** Discuss all the things that make a play possible. Have each group think about how costumes, props, and the set could help bring their news segments to life. If there's time, try to create some of these props or costume pieces from everyday items!

**3.** Time for performance! Have each group perform their segment of the news. Before you begin the "newscast" have students warm up their voices with a fun tongue twister (actors do this all the time!) like:

"Bubble Bobble Bubble Bobble" -or-

"Purple Paper People"

Remind the other students about being good audience members while they watch their friends onstage!

## Design a Show!

*This activity incorporates creative thinking, writing, and visual art!*

**1.** Have students imagine that they have been asked to design a production of a fairy tale. Then, get out crayons or colored pencils and plenty of blank paper. Ask each student to choose a fairy tale (examples: "Little Red Riding Hood," "Hansel & Gretel," "Rapunzel," "The Three Little Pigs," etc).

**2.** Have students draw and color a backdrop, as well as costumes for their characters, and at least one prop that could be used in the show.

**3.** Ask students why they made their specific choices. Display the drawings in the classroom.

## Seeing the Play:

Attending the theatre is very different than going to the movies or watching television. For one thing, the actors are real people who can hear and see everything that's happening in the audience. It's important to know a few rules before seeing a play:

★ Please be quiet and respectful during the performance so that those around you can hear what's happening.

★ If something's funny, it's okay to laugh!

★ If you like the play, be sure to clap at the end.

What else can you add to the list?

## Questions for Discussion:

1. What do you think would have happened if Cinderella had never lost her shoe?
2. The stepsisters were very mean and bullied Cinderella. What kinds of things can you do if someone is bullying or being mean to you? (for example: ignore them, tell an adult, walk away.)
3. What if the giant had been able to follow Jack all the way down the vine? What would have happened?
4. How was the play different from other versions of the stories you have read or seen? How was it similar?
5. What are some other fairy tales you can think of that were not covered in the play today?

