

Poor Jack

this is a copy of the rehearsal text – no doubt things will change before the first performance so an updated version will be uploaded in due course

MOTHER SINGS A LULLABY AS SHE WORKS

MOTHER Hush little baby don't you cry
 Mother's going to sing you a lullaby
 Hush little child 'neath leaves so green
 Close your eyes it's time to dream

JACK JOINS IN WITH HIS OWN SONG

JACK Through the mists of time
 I hear a song of old
 Through the mists of time
 I hear a tale that's told
 A tale of a road that stretches before my eyes
 A tale of a road that leads me to the prize

MOTHER Hush little baby don't you cry
 Mother's going to sing you a lullaby
 Hush little child 'neath leaves so green
 Close your eyes it's time to dream

JACK Through the mists of time
 There's a lady dressed in green
 Through the mists of time she's calling
 Lady of Green calling out to me

MOTHER Will you be about your work then Jack.

JACK Of course I will then soon enough mother. Just a tiny bit of song
 that's bothering my brain. Can't seem to think what it should be
 now.

MOTHER There's the wood needs chopping right enough Jack. My bones
 are cold - as well as old.

JACK I'll be chopping that wood soon enough mother. You'll be
 warming your bones by a blazing fire. Can't seem quite to get it in
 my head.

MOTHER You're a strong lad Jack. Stronger than ever your father was.
There's a lot of wood you could be chopping now.

JACK There is indeed mother. I'm strong enough no doubt. Do you like
my tune, mother?

MOTHER I'm cold Jack.

JACK You could be dancing to my tune then mother. Soon be warming
of your bones.

MOTHER My bones are too old to be dancing Jack. A fire is what they
need.

JACK Why am I singing of a lady in green mother? Why does she just
buzz herself into my head?

MOTHER Jack.

JACK All of a sudden there she is. A lady in green quite out of the blue.

MOTHER Fire Jack.

JACK So what does she mean this lady of green?

MOTHER Jack

JACK You hear how long I hold that note there mother?

MOTHER Jack

JACK There's not many as can hold a note for that length of time.

MOTHER Jack

JACK That's a skill right enough

MOTHER Jack

JACK Mother

MOTHER It's time

JACK For the chopping of the wood

MOTHER No Jack

JACK For the lighting of the fire

MOTHER No Jack

JACK For the warming of your bones

MOTHER For you to go Jack

JACK For me to go?

MOTHER For you to go Jack. On the road Jack. You've a journey to make Jack and the time has come to make it.

JACK There's you to be looking after right enough.

MOTHER There'll always be me to be looking after Jack. And there'll always be those to look after me.

JACK Not like I do mother.

MOTHER That's true enough Jack. But I'll manage all the same.

JACK You want me to be going mother?

MOTHER It's time

JACK You want me to be going alone? Out on the road alone?

MOTHER It's what you have to do Jack. You're thinking all the time what's out there in the world. It's time for you to see.

JACK How can you be wanting me to leave you mother.

MOTHER It's not the leaving of me I want, Jack. It's the finding out, it's the going out in the big wide world. That's what I want for you Jack. That's what I want. Don't you want it Jack? Isn't that what you're after? Out in the big wide world?

JACK It's awful big, the big wide world. I can't see from here where it might be ending at all. There's a road rolling over a hill. And then another hill and another as far as the edge of the sky. Seems an awful long way to be sending me mother.

MOTHER It's time.

JACK So what happens now? You pack me a pie. Or two pies mother. You know I love your pies. Seven pies, one for each day of the week. You pack them pies up for me now. Pack them good and proper. And a pile of clothes I'll be needing to look my best. My finest shoes, shine them up for me mother, wrap them in newspaper for me mother. These boots will do for the walking.

MOTHER Travel light Jack. Take no more than what you'll be needing. One pair of boots will see you through. There's bread and meat in the

cupboard Jack. Be making yourself a sandwich. Take an apple from the tree.

JACK You want to me starve?

MOTHER You'll find food when you're hungry Jack. There's those who need a strong young man to be working for them. There's food for them that work.

JACK I'm off to see the world mother. I've no time to be working now.

MOTHER You'll see the world right enough Jack. It's work that makes the world go round.

JACK Is that right mother? How's that then?

MOTHER You made that sandwich Jack?

JACK Couldn't you mother? One last sandwich for Poor Jack?

MOTHER No

JACK No?

MOTHER No

JACK Oh

HE STARTS TO MAKE A SANDWICH

So how will I know mother?

MOTHER Know what Jack?

JACK What to do, what to say. How will I know if I've gone too far?

MOTHER What are you meaning Jack?

JACK Maybe I'll walk too far. Maybe I'll miss what I should be seeing mother. Maybe I'll come to the end of the road and the world will just run out. How will I know if you're not there to be telling me.

MOTHER Ask, Jack. There's plenty of travellers who walk the road. Ask them nice enough, polite enough, and they'll tell. You won't go too far.

JACK I've not made that sandwich like you do mother. It's all a bit lumpy and crumbling away here.

MOTHER It'll taste all the better that you made it Jack.

JACK I guess I'm ready then mother.

MOTHER I guess you are.

JACK I guess I say goodbye now mother.

MOTHER I guess you do.

JACK I guess I hug you now mother. Or you hug me. And perhaps you kiss me because you'll miss me. And you wipe away a tear and then I go mother. I never look back. I just go mother. Is that right mother?

MOTHER I guess that's right Jack.

THEY GO THROUGH THE RITUAL OF GOODBYE

JACK TRAVELS WITH A SONG

I'll set out on the road
And I'll follow the track
I've a journey to make
And I won't be coming back again

A world to explore
And a sky that is blue
We have said our goodbyes
And I won't be seeing you again

Goodbye mother goodbye
Don't cry mother don't cry
Goodbye mother goodbye mother goodbye

JACK Mother, I have to tell you.

MOTHER You're back.

JACK I have to be telling you Mother.

MOTHER Back already Jack.

JACK Not back Mother. I'm here to tell you. Who else am I tell if it's not my own dear mother?

MOTHER And so what is it then Jack that you're wanting to tell.

JACK I'm wanting to tell how I walked the road mother. How I walked the road for an hour and a day. How I slept the night in a ditch. How I walked the road for the best part of the next day too. How the sun beat on my back. How the birds whistled their tunes in my

ear. Then I'm wanting to tell, mother, how I saw in the distance a mist. A grey mist, there in the distance. And as I came closer to the mist, in the middle of the mist, I'm wanting to say how I saw a castle. A castle of grey. And my song came thumping in my head mother. My song of the Lady in Green.

MOTHER So you came to the castle then Jack?

JACK No mother, I never did. I came to the farm.

MOTHER You came to the farm.

JACK That's right mother, that's exactly what I did. How did you know that? I came to the farm.

MOTHER And this is what you've come back to tell me? All the way back.

JACK She stood there, mother, at the gate.

MOTHER So who's this standing there at the gate. The Lady in Green?

JACK No mother, of course not. It's the Farmer's-Wife, mother, standing there as fierce as you like.

MOTHER Standing there like this, Jack? This Farmer's-Wife?

JACK A little like that mother. But fiercer yet than that. Fiercer than you could ever look my dear gentle mother.

MOTHER Fiercer than this?

JACK That's fierce mother. That is cruelly fierce.

MOTHER And so what's she saying, this fierce Farmer's-Wife?

JACK What are you doing on the road, young man? That's what she's saying.

[FARMERSWIFE] What are you doing on the road, young man?

JACK Nastier she was growling than that.

[FARMERSWIFE] What are you doing on the road, young man?

JACK I'm making my way in the world, right enough. That's what I'm doing.

[FARMERSWIFE] Not working then. A strong young man like yourself and not working.

JACK I'm still a boy really. I'm not yet being a man.

[FARMERSWIFE] You look man enough to me.

JACK You think so?

[FARMERSWIFE] Man enough to work.

JACK I could do with the work if you've a bite to eat to be giving me. I finished my sandwich last night. And my apple for breakfast.

[FARMERSWIFE] There's no cooking without a fire.

JACK That's right enough.

[FARMERSWIFE] And no fire without firewood. So get chopping – let's see what you can do.

JACK And you'll be feeding me then?

[FARMERSWIFE] Let's see what you can do.

JACK And I chopped that wood, mother. I'm telling you I chopped that wood like you've never seen.

MOTHER No I have never seen, have I Jack. Never seen you chop the wood for me.

JACK Now that's not fair, mother. I've chopped the wood for you.

MOTHER Have you Jack?

JACK Sometimes I have. But I'm telling you mother, you never seen the like of the chopping I did. Till there's a pile, a stack that's reaching above my head. And the Farmer's-Wife, is she grateful?

[FARMERSWIFE] I suppose that'll do.

JACK That's exactly what she said.

[FARMERSWIFE] What are waiting for then young man? Fetch in some wood for the fire if it's supper you're after.

You're a worker then, I'll give you that. You've chopped more than those lazy sons of mine. More than those who came before you. More than my dear husband ever could when he was here.

JACK Where's he gone?

[FARMERSWIFE] Gone. Taken in the war.

JACK Like my father. He's gone too. In the war.

[FARMERSWIFE] There's a lot of men gone.
So you'll be staying then. There's work enough to keep you fed.

JACK I'm on the road. I've a journey to make. I'll not be staying.

[FARMERSWIFE] Your journey led you here.

JACK I've a mind to go to the castle.

[FARMERSWIFE] You've no business with the castle. Not a labouring boy like you.
The farm is where you belong.

JACK I've a mind to find out for myself. There's a song that keeps
thumping in my head. A Lady of Green.

[FARMERSWIFE] Eat your supper young man. I'll give you a bed for the night. We'll
see how you're minded in the morning.

JACK She gave me soup and bread, mother. But it's not the soup that
you might be making. It's a thin mean soup right enough. And a
slab of bread as black and as a hard as you like. Not like the
bread you be baking for me.

And then she showed me a bed just as hard as the bread. But a
bit more comfort than the ditch from the night before.

So I'm rested right enough when I'm up with the lark in the
morning.

[FARMERSWIFE] That'll be ten pieces of silver you're owing me for the bed.

JACK I chopped the wood.

[FARMERSWIFE] And that paid for your supper. Ten pieces of silver for the bed.

JACK You never said.

[FARMERSWIFE] You should have asked.

JACK I have no ten pieces of silver. I have no any pieces of silver. Or
brass or copper or any pieces at all.

[FARMERSWIFE] Then you'll be pulling the plough.

JACK I've a mind to be on my way. It's the castle I'm wanting to go to.

[FARMERSWIFE] Pull the plough.

JACK I don't find myself so tired after all. I've a mind to be playing a tune. And I'm sure right enough you've a mind to a dance.

[FARMERSWIFE] I'm sure right enough I've no mind at all for a dance. I've not had a mind for a dance since my husband was gone.

JACK Well I've a mind to play the tune.

HE PLAYS AND THEY SING at THE END OF WHICH SHE IS EXHAUSTED

[FARMERSWIFE] Well that's me done for sure. You've worn me out. Worn me quite out. Can't stagger another step. And won't for another day or two I'm thinking.

JACK I'll be taking my leave then. You'll want to be resting a day or two no doubt.

[FARMERSWIFE] No I'm needing you. You can't be leaving.

JACK I'm leaving right enough. I'm off to the castle is where I'm going. Of to the castle of grey in the middle of the mist. I have that song still thumping in my brain. The song of the lady in Green.

And so I left mother. I made my escape. My music came to the rescue.

MOTHER But you didn't go to the castle Jack.

JACK No but I will be mother. I had to tell you. That's why I'm back, to be telling you of all I've done.

MOTHER But what about you're journey Jack?

JACK I'll be back on my journey right enough mother. Perhaps next week when I've looked after you some more my dear old mother. And you've cooked me a pie. Cos that soup was awful thin and mean. And the bread awful black and hard.

MOTHER Jack.

JACK Mother?

MOTHER Your journey Jack. It's not for you to coming running home. You must follow the road. Follow the road to where it leads you.

JACK In time mother.

MOTHER Now Jack.

JACK Mother

MOTHER Jack

JACK Now

HE SETS OFF AGAIN WITH HIS TRAVELLING SONG

JACK Mother, I have to tell you.

MOTHER You're back.

JACK I have to be telling you Mother.

MOTHER Back again Jack.

JACK Not back Mother. I'm here to tell you. Who else am I tell if it's not my own dear mother?

MOTHER And so what is it then Jack that you're wanting to tell?

JACK I travelled the road again mother. This time I was knowing where I was going so the road flew by. The sun on my back, the birds in my ear. I came to the farm but I didn't stop. Then the mist. And in the middle of the mist, the castle of grey. With the song of the Lady of Green thumping louder in my brain. And all this in one day.

MOTHER So you came to the Castle, Jack.

JACK No mother I never did. I came to the castle gates as the night was beginning to fall.

Not a glimmer of light in the castle of grey.

But I saw a candle burning in the gatehouse.

MOTHER Ah the gatehouse, Jack. Not the castle the gatehouse.

JACK That's exactly right mother, how did you know that?

I saw a candle burning in the gatehouse. And so I knocked. A bold rat-a-tat-tat is what I knocked mother.

And there came to the door a woman. And old, old woman. Older even than you mother. Older than that mother. Stooped and bent but grand all the same mother. The tilt of her chin – she was grand right enough.

[OLD WOMAN] Good evening young man.

JACK That's what she said mother. But a little bit posher all the same.

[OLD WOMAN] Good evening young man. You're late.

JACK I'm late?

[OLD WOMAN] That's what I said. Come in.

JACK I was wanting to ask who lives in the castle.

[OLD WOMAN] Come in.

JACK I was thinking of making my way to the castle before the night is falling dark.

[OLD WOMAN] What a very strange way you have with words young man. Come in.

Have some cake.

JACK I think perhaps I had best be making my way.

[OLD WOMAN] If you are offered cake, young man, the polite thing to do is to eat it.

JACK I'm thanking you then right enough for this delicious cake that you're offering me now.

[OLD WOMAN] A simple thank you is quite enough Jack.

JACK Then thank you.

Jack.

You know my name.

[OLD WOMAN] Poor Jack.

JACK Not really that poor we're being. Just not having a lot of money. No money at all we're having really.

[OLD WOMAN] That's what poor means Jack. No money. I'm poor. I have no money. Though once upon a time I had riches enough.

JACK What happened?

[OLD WOMAN] War.

JACK My father went to the war.

[OLD WOMAN] Once upon a time I lived in the castle.

JACK Did you ever wear green?

[OLD WOMAN] Am I the Lady in Green?

JACK Well is that what you're being?

[OLD WOMAN] The Lady in the old song.

JACK It's a new song. It's a song I made up from the buzzing in my brain.

[OLD WOMAN] It's an old song Jack. A very old song. Have a biscuit.

JACK You wouldn't be having a hunk of bread and a lump of meat about the place would you. It's a long way I've walked and I'm finding I'm hungry right enough. Even hard black bread and a slurp of soup would go down well enough.

[OLD WOMAN] A biscuit is what you've been offered Jack.

JACK Then a biscuit is what it is. Thank you.

Why did you say I was late?

[OLD WOMAN] Because you are.

I've been waiting twenty years.

JACK I've not been on this earth for twenty years.

[OLD WOMAN] Others have come before you Jack. They'd heard the stories, heard the old songs. But I've been waiting for you.

JACK And what happened to them then, these others who've been coming before me.

[OLD WOMAN] Who came before me, Jack, is the simpler way to say it.

JACK These others who've been came before me. What happened to them?

[OLD WOMAN] Some got no farther than the farm, Jack. Their bodies couldn't stand the work. Exhausted them she did. But you're strong. Others couldn't find their way in the mist, Jack. The song wasn't strong enough to keep them on the road. The song sings loud in your head. And the rest –

JACK The rest? What is it happened to the rest?

[OLD WOMAN] What happened to the rest? They went through the castle gates, Jack. And they never came back.

JACK Is that right enough?

[OLD WOMAN] That's right. That's what happened. So what are you going to do Jack?

JACK Could I have another biscuit?

[OLD WOMAN] You've not been offered another biscuit.

JACK Do you think I could please be having one all the same. I'm need of a moment to think.

[OLD WOMAN] Are you?

JACK Yes I am. No I'm not. No. I know what it is that I need to be doing.

[OLD WOMAN] What it is that I need to do.

JACK That's just what I'm saying. I have that song that's pounding away so hard in my head that there's only one way I can go. And that's to the castle. It's to the castle of grey in the middle of the mist that I must be going right enough. And I don't even need that other biscuit.

MOTHER Then why are you here Jack? What's been happening then Jack. Why is it you're not at the castle of grey?

JACK I had to be telling you mother. Before I go into the mists I had to be telling you what I was up to. There's nobody else to tell.

MOTHER It's a long way to be coming back, just to be going all the way back again.

JACK There's young men have gone in that castle and never they've ever been seen again.

MOTHER Are you afraid, Jack? Is that what it is? Is that why you're back?

JACK I'm not afraid mother, of course I'm not afraid, but maybe this is the last time you'll be seeing me mother. Maybe. So that is why I had to be coming back.

MOTHER It wasn't for a pie?

JACK No mother, it wasn't for a pie. I'm too excited this time round to be thinking of a pie.

MOTHER Then you best be on your way Jack.

JACK I reckon right enough I best. Just wanted to let you know.

MOTHER I know. I know Jack. Goodbye.

HE SETS OFF ONCE MORE WITH HIS TRAVELLING SONG

MOTHER You're back then Jack. Once again you're back. Is it for good you're being back this time then is it Jack?

JACK No mother. It's not for good I'm back at all. I'm being back to say goodbye it is this time mother. I'm back to say goodbye.

MOTHER Goodbye is it Jack?

JACK It is mother. This time it's goodbye.

MOTHER And why is it now goodbye then this time is it Jack?

JACK I've a wife now mother. I have myself a wife. And so now it's time to say goodbye to me being a boy and all. It's time to say goodbye.

MOTHER Then it's goodbye Jack.

JACK It is mother. That's what it is. It's goodbye.

MOTHER Goodbye Jack.

JACK Goodbye mother. Goodbye.

MOTHER Goodbye.

 Jack.

JACK Mother.

MOTHER Will you not be telling me then how it is you have yourself a wife.

JACK Well of course I'll be telling you mother. And thank you for the asking.

 I'll be telling you how it was that I ran up that road again. The sun on my back, the birds in my ear. I'll be telling you how it was that I ran past the farm again and the Farmer's-Wife. How I ran so fast to the little house at the Castle gates.

 I'll be telling you all about those castle gates mother. Heavy iron gates, rust on their hinges right enough, to make a terrible scrape and a screech as I'm pushing against them to let me in. And a

terrible clang and a bang as they're swinging behind me. A terrible clang as they're shutting behind me.

Then I'm all in a lane, alone in a lane, with a mist that's wrapping itself around me, a mist that's hugging me tight in a cold embrace, hugging me hard when I've still a mile or so to make my way along the lane, the lonely lane.

And I'm telling you now how I reach the castle door. A door of grey in a wall of grey and all so grey in a mist of grey. And I'm telling you now how I can hear my heart how it's thumping in my chest. And how it is I'm giving that castle door a thumping with my fist. And the door's all of an-opening. And in I take a peek. But no-one. The door's all of an-opening all on its own. And then all of a sudden the door is all of a-closing all on its own. So I'm giving that castle door another thumping with my fist. And again the door is all of an-opening all on its own. But I'm not waiting this time, no. In I am. Into the castle I am.

And there I see this little hairy man. Littler than you can ever be mother. And hairy, such a hairy little man.

[HAIRY MAN]

And what can I do for you?

JACK

I'm here because I have to be.

[HAIRY MAN]

Is it work you're after.

JACK

If there's work to be done then I'm after doing it.

[HAIRY MAN]

You want to know if there's work to be done? There's work to be done all right. Who made you come?

JACK

It's no-one made come. I'm here because I want to be.

[HAIRY MAN]

Then you're brave enough. But others before have been brave enough. But brave enough isn't enough at all. You eaten today?

JACK

I'm not being hungry.

[HAIRY MAN]

It's dinner time, of course you're hungry. You'll have dinner with the master.

JACK

You're not the master?

[HAIRY MAN]

Me? Me the master? Little old me? I don't think so. Here's the master.

JACK

And then I was seeing him mother. I seed him there right enough. I was seeing this master all right. And this master, mother - well I

have to tell you – he was a monster. He was the most monstrous monster I would ever have imagined.

He were bigger than you could think, mother. Oh much huger than you could be putting yourself into, mother. Much huger than that. A giant he was. And ugly. Terrible face. Eyes going this way and that. Nose all squidged. Great broken teeth like all those crumbly castle bits on an old castle wall. Yeah that's it, mother, you got him right enough. But huger. So much huger.

[GIANT] So my little young fellow-me-lad. It'll be work you're after is it?

JACK It is. That's it. Work. That's what it is I'm after.

[GIANT] Well there's work enough. Oh there's plenty of work. In fact that's all there is. Work. Nothing but work. So I hope it's not anything else that you've a mind to find? I hope you've got no song just buzzing in your head.

JACK No, not at all. No song at all. Work. That's what I've a mind to find. Good honest work.

[GIANT] Honest. Ha. We'll see about honest.

Now you'll need your strength if you're going to work. So eat. There's your dinner, young fellow-me-lad. Let's see you eat.

JACK I was just saying to the little man -

[GIANT] The hairy man.

JACK That's it, the little hairy man - how I'm not really in the way of being hungry at all. Really.

[GIANT] Eat.

JACK Yes of course. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Well I tell you mother, you've never seen anything like it. What kind of a beast was it I was to eat? Great big bones, tough as old boots. It might have been a big hairy mammoth I was having a bite out of there. But I finished it.

[GIANT] You can eat. I'll give you that young fellow-me-lad. You can fill that belly of yours.

You'll want a sleep then tonight if you're to work tomorrow.

JACK I will, that's what I'll want.

[GIANT] The hairy man, he'll show you a bed.

JACK Oh he will, will he?

[HAIRY MAN] Yes indeed I will. I'll show you a bed right enough. You follow me.
So what do you think of that.

JACK That's a bed?

[HAIRY MAN] That's a bed. And a fine comfortable bed it is too.

JACK Is that a bed for everyone to sleep in? Me and you and the giant-monster too?

[HAIRY MAN] Don't be ridiculous. You might share a bed where you come but in this castle there's plenty of beds for us all. That's a bed for you – and only you.

JACKS It's bigger than my mother's house, that bed. I could be getting lost in that bed. I could be creeping under the blankets and never be finding my way out.

[HAIRY MAN] Good night. Sleep tight. Don't let the bed-bugs bite.

JACKS Bed-bugs. Now if the bed is as big as this what on earth size will the bed-bugs be being? And how big will they bite.

I couldn't hardly sleep with thinking about it, mother. How those bed-bugs might be taking a whole mouthful out my legs. Awful dreams I had of being eaten up by the bed-bugs, by the giant-monster, by something else maybe living in this castle grey in the middle of the mist.

MOTHER It's only a saying, Jack. Don't let the bed-bugs bite. I used to be saying it to you when you were little and all tucked up to go sleep.

JACK Did you?

MOTHER Don't you remember?

JACK That was long ago.

[GIANT] Come down for your breakfast, young fellow-me-lad.

JACK Another grey day. No sign of the sun.

[GIANT] You eat your fill, young fellow-me-lad because it's the last you'll eat for while.

JACK Is it?

[GIANT] It is. I've a task you for little fellow-me-lad. You want work, I'll give you work. You're off to the Green Room are you.

JACK Green?

[GIANT] Yes Green. The room is green. Why should that be of interest eh? You've heard tell of the Green Room perhaps have you?

JACK No never. Never heard of anything being green at all. I thought there was being nothing but grey in the castle. Never heard nothing of green.

[GIANT] There's a tapestry in that room young fellow-me-lad. You know what a tapestry is?

JACK No I don't think I do.

[GIANT] You don't have a tapestry in your home then?

JACK I don't know. Maybe I do but maybe I don't know what it is.

[GIANT] It's like a picture young fellow-me-lad, but it's all made of cloth and thread and careful sewing.

JACK My mother she's been sewing of pictures – rabbits and owls and a soldier that maybe was my father. Right above my bed they're hanging.

[GIANT] This tapestry, young fellow-me-lad, this tapestry covers all four walls in the Green Room. And the Green Room is a big room. And this tapestry, young fellow-me-lad, you're to unpick it. That's what you're to do – unpick the lot. Three days you got. The door'll be locked, you'll sleep in that room, no food till you've finished – those are the rules. Follow the little man.

JACK What happens if I can't do it?

[HAIRY MAN] Follow me please?

JACK But what happens if I can't.

[HAIRY MAN] This is the door.

JACK It's very dark. Can't see a thing.

[HAIRY MAN] Here's a candle to work by.

JACK It's very big.

[HAIRY MAN] Very. It has a long story to tell.

JACK A story?

[HAIRY MAN] The story of the castle.

JACK There it is then, the castle, all shining and new. But there isn't any mist. And it's all golden – it's not being grey at all.

[HAIRY MAN] The castle wasn't always grey.

JACK A castle golden in the early morning sun. And this must be being the master. A handsome man.

[HAIRY MAN] He was indeed. A handsome man.

JACK You were knowing him then?

[HAIRY MAN] Oh I knew him all right. I knew him well.

JACK And these are then his children are they not?

[HAIRY MAN] Indeed they are.

JACK His son and his daughter. She's dressed in green. His daughter there, she's dressed in green.

[HAIRY MAN] And why shouldn't she be? Why she should not be dressed in green.

JACK No reason of course. It's a fine colour to be dressed in right enough. What happened?

[HAIRY MAN] Look further.

JACK She's there again. She's quite the young lady now. A Lady in Green.

[HAIRY MAN] That's that what they called her in the song.

JACK What song will that be then?

[HAIRY MAN] Maybe your mother sang you the song when you were a baby.

JACK Maybe she did but I don't think so. I don't know anything about a song.

[HAIRY MAN] The song that's buzzing in your head.

JACK There'll not be a song that's buzzing in my head. No song of a Lady in Green at any rate. So how is it being that it's a castle of gold?

[HAIRY MAN] That's how it was in the early days. A castle of gold.

JACK So what happened.

[HAIRY MAN] Look further.

JACK Soldiers. All around the castle. War.

[HAIRY MAN] Twenty years ago.

JACK And then a mist and the castle is grey.

[HAIRY MAN] For twenty years.

JACK My father may be being one of those soldiers.

[HAIRY MAN] This is the story of the castle. And all who lived in her.

JACK Maybe it's my father's story too.

[HAIRY MAN] And it's all to be undone. Unpicked by you.

JACK And why then is it all to be undone – why then am I to unpick all?

[HAIRY MAN] The master must sell off the cloth, sell off the thread. There's no money here at all. How else are we going to eat?

JACK Seems hard to be unpicking the stories.

[HAIRY MAN] Three days.

JACK And so the little man left me mother. The little hairy man, he was leaving me in the dark with nothing but a candle. And me to unpick the stories. And I'll tell you what, those stories they didn't want me to be the unpicking of them.. No not at all. I'm doing the best can be done with my fingers and my teeth, I'm trying to be pulling out of the thread, biting through the twine. But every time I make a start I look around, the stories back together again. These old stories, mother, they're so awful hard to untangle.

[GIANT] So young fellow-me-lad.

JACK You're giving a fright right enough. I never heard you come in.

[GIANT] Have you found anything then? Have you seen anything at all in here?

JACK I've seen the stories.

[GIANT] Nothing else? You've not seen nothing else?

JACK What is it you want me to be seeing?

[GIANT] Ah, you can't trick me. There's nothing. Nothing I want you to see.

JACK So with him gone I set to, to start seeing what it is I'm not to see.

 And right in the corner, in the darkest corner, there's a chest. A chest been made of wood. And I tell you what mother, this chest, it's a long chest right enough, a chest like they put my Grandfather in when they buried him in the church.

 So is it this then I'm not to see?

[LADY IN GREEN] Unpick it from the middle Jack, and your task will soon be done.

JACK I'm hearing this voice.

[LADY IN GREEN] From the middle Jack.

JACK I'm hearing this voice like it could be from the chest. Or it could be buzzing my head.

[LADY IN GREEN] Unpick it from the middle Jack.

JACK But I can't make out what it's saying.

[LADY IN GREEN] From the middle Jack. Unpick it from the middle.

JACK No. Still can't make it out.

[LADY IN GREEN] The tapestry Jack. Start in the middle.

JACK Something about riddle maybe. Or fiddle. Hey diddle-diddle, the cat and the fiddle.

[LADY IN GREEN] Middle, Jack. The middle. Start in the middle.

JACK Then I heard it proper at last.

[LADY IN GREEN] The middle Jack.

JACK The middle.

[LADY IN GREEN] Start in the middle.

JACK Start in the middle. Start what in the middle? How you can be starting in the middle. When you start you start at the start. You begin at the beginning. You can't begin in the middle.

[LADY IN GREEN] The tapestry Jack. Unpick it from the middle.

JACK Got you. Why weren't you telling me that before.

 And I'm gone to the middle. And I'm lifting up my candle. And I'm looking at the picture. And I'm telling you what, mother, it's a soldier there in the middle. But it's not just any soldier, mother. It's same soldier as you've sewed in a picture that's hung above my bed. That soldier, he's my father. And he's in the middle. And when I start to pull at his picture. When I'm starting to pull the thread, all of an instant it's pulling out in my hands and the picture it soon is all starting to unravel and untangle as easy as you like.

[GIANT] You're doing you work most wonderful well, young fellow-me –lad. Most strangely wonderful well. There wouldn't be someone you seen to help you now, would there?

JACK There's no-one I see to help me at all. Who would it be I might have been seeing then?

[GIANT] Oh no, you're not going to trick me. Well you haven't finished yet.

JACK So with him gone I'm wondering who it is I'm not to see. And I'm wondering if that voice is from the chest or just a buzzing in my head.

[LADY IN GREEN] The chest is locked Jack. You can't open the chest without a key.

JACK So the chest is being locked then.

[LADY IN GREEN] Look on the shelf Jack. You'll find the key to unlock the chest.

JACK Perhaps on the shelf there'll be a key. And there is right enough. Perhaps this is being the key to unlock the chest. And it is right enough.

 You're in green. You're sure enough that lady in Green. Look, here you are in the picture and you're looking exactly the same.

[LADY IN GREEN] I've been locked in this chest these last twenty years Jack.

JACK Are you then being a ghost?

[LADY IN GREEN] No Jack. I'm no ghost. I'm human enough as you are Jack.

JACK Haven't you been a little hungry in there? Or in need of a little drink now and then?

[LADY IN GREEN] I've been waiting a long time Jack. But you're here at last.

JACK Is it me you've been waiting for?

[LADY IN GREEN] You're a brave man Jack. That giant-monster, he's under an enchantment and a spell. It wasn't always he was a monster. And the little man.

JACK The hairy man.

[LADY IN GREEN] The little hairy man. He's my father.

JACK That little hairy man?

[LADY IN GREEN] He wasn't also so little Jack. He's under an enchantment too,

JACK Was he always so hairy?

[LADY IN GREEN] No Jack. You've seen his picture. There in the tapestry. He was the master when the castle was golden.

JACK He was handsome. And tall.

[LADY IN GREEN] He was.

JACK And not the least bit hairy.

[LADY IN GREEN] These things happen Jack. And now you must lock me back up in the chest.

JACK Is that what I must be doing?

[LADY IN GREEN] It is Jack, it is what you must be doing. Because you still have your task to fulfil.

JACK So I soon was locking her back up mother. Locking her back in the chest.

And the tapestry soon was all unpicked. A heap of thread and cloth in the middle of the room.

[GIANT] Well then, young fellow-me-lad, you have unpicked those stories something beautiful, haven't you now. I'm sure you have seen something or someone to help you.

So then there's only one more thing to be done young fellow. One more task to be done.

You've seen the moat around the castle walls.

JACK The moat that's full of water.

[GIANT] Yes little man, the moat that's full of water. You're to dive into that water do you see. You're to dive deep down to the bottom of the moat and you're to bring back two gold rings.

JACK That's not going to be possible, right enough. How am I going to find two gold rings in all that mud at the bottom of the moat?

[GIANT] How indeed are you going to find them, little fellow-me-lad? How indeed?

JACK And what happens if I don't?

[GIANT] The little hairy man will show you the way.

JACK Will he now?

[HAIRY MAN] Yes I will. Follow me.

JACK Is it that always you were little?

[HAIRY MAN] What kind of question is that to ask?

JACK And is it that always you were hairy?

[HAIRY MAN] And why shouldn't I have been?

JACK I was just having a wonder.

[HAIRY MAN] And what is that makes you wonder, I wonder.

JACK Nothing at all. It was just a wonder.

[HAIRY MAN] Here's the moat. A moat that should have kept the soldiers out. But it didn't. And at that time the rings were lost. They were thrown in the moat. And when the rings of gold came buried in the mud then the castle of gold was gold no more. And so it became the castle of grey.

JACK And if I find those rings then, will the castle be becoming once more the castle of gold?

[HAIRY MAN] How are you going to find those rings? Twenty years in the mud of the moat.

JACK How indeed? How am I going to be finding those rings indeed?

[HAIRY MAN] Not by talking.

JACK So I dived in the moat.

 And I'm telling you mother, I was diving as deep as you like. And I'm holding my breath till my lungs are fit to busting. And I'm hearing these songs all buzzing in my ears. All the songs I've ever known and I've ever sung and I've ever danced. And still

there's not a bottom to this moat because of it being the deepest moat that ever there was. And then I'm up towards the air above because I can't hold out no longer and I'm not knowing if I'm going to make it but I do. And I'm gasping. And I'm spluttering. And I'm thinking I've just about had it and there's no going down again because what's the point. Then there's this swan.

[SWAN] Follow me Jack. I'll show you where those rings of gold are lying.

JACK And so I'm following the swan. And we're diving down to the bottom of the moat. And this time my lungs they're strong. You remember I sang that note so long. I was telling you then it was a skill. And so it is. And so my lungs are holding good as we dive. And we're reaching the bottom. And my hands they're scrabbling in the mud. And the rings are there. The golden rings are there. And it's back up we're going as fast as you like.

[SWAN] And now Jack, back you go to the giant. You show him the rings - you give him the rings in his hand. But you say nothing that you've seen no-one, nor that you've spoke to no-one. Go.

JACK But I was stepping first into the Green Room because I was wanting first to tell the Lady in Green, to show the Lady in Green. And so I'm taking the key and I'm unlocking of the chest.

[LADY IN GREEN] Jack, you're a brave boy. Take these rings to the monster, you give him the rings in his hand. But you say nothing that you've seen no-one, nor that you've spoke to no-one. And don't look for me here again Jack. Because you'll find me somewhere else. Now go.

JACK And I come to the Giant-Monster. I show him the rings, and I give him the rings of gold in his hand. Here you are then. These are what you been sending me to find and here I'm giving them to you.

[GIANT] These two rings Jack - young fellow-me-lad - these two rings they've caused an awful lot of blood. Your father went to war, Jack, because of these two rings. But you found them Jack. You won the day, Jack. The castle's yours Jack. You'll be Poor Jack no longer Jack. The castle's yours, and it's a castle of gold you'll have Jack.

JACK And I'm telling you mother, that was the last we were seeing of the mist. The sun was shining mother, shining as bright as you like right enough.

And I was wanting to tell the little hairy man of my fortune. I was wanting to tell him still he could living in the castle now that it was a golden castle once again. But when I looked he wasn't there. He wasn't the little hairy man anymore. He was tall. He was like I

was seeing him in the picture, in the tapestry, he was as tall as you like. And smooth too. He wasn't being hairy at all.

[FATHER] Thank you Jack. It was a long time waiting. A rather hairy time waiting. But thank you Jack.

JACK And then I'm looking through the castle mother. Rooms of gold, from one room to another, and they're shining bright with the sun through the windows and I'm wondering where the giant-monster has taken himself off to. Then there's this young man. I know have been seeing him in the picture too. And I'm knowing who he is. He's the brother of the Lady in Green. I'm knowing for sure that he is.

[BROTHER] Thank you Jack. It was a long time waiting. It was a monster of a long time waiting. A giant of a long time waiting. But thank you Jack.

JACK And I'm telling you mother, The food ion that castle. Tables full of it. Finest fruit and vegetables and chicken and duck and fish and bread and pies mother. Not like your pies mother. But pies. One for every day of the week.

And then she was there mother. This what I came back to tell you. She was there. The Lady in Green.

[LADY IN GREEN] You've broken our enchantment Jack. It's you that's broken our spell. The castle is golden Jack. The sun shines. We're to be married Jack. You and I. We're to be wed.

JACK So I've come back to be telling you mother. I've come back to be asking for you blessing. And I've come back to be telling you that I won't be coming back no more mother. Except perhaps just once in a while mother, to tell you how happy I am mother. But I'm off in the big wide world mother, if that's all right with you.

MOTHER Off you go Jack. You've tired me out with that story of yours. Off you go Jack. Back you go Jack. Your Lady of Green has always been buzzing in your head. Back you go Jack before she grows tired of waiting. Run.