

The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales

Based on the book by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith
Adapted for the stage by William Massolia



SYNOPSIS

Jack has a problem. He's successfully grown an enormous beanstalk, scaled to the top, and stolen a golden harp and gold-laying goose from the sleeping giant. However, the giant has now awoken and Jack has scurried back down the beanstalk in the hopes of chopping it down before the giant can catch him. Jack could possibly even make a clean escape if only the Little Red Hen would quit harping on and on about all the lazy animals who refuse to help her with her wheat.

As the hungry giant catches up to Jack, Jack is forced to find ways to divert the giant's attention in order to avoid becoming an afternoon snack. When he is unable to find a suitable hiding place, Jack convinces the giant that a good story or two would be the perfect way to begin a meal.

And so it happens that Jack begins telling his own versions of some very familiar stories. With each tale the giant becomes more and more dissatisfied, and Jack becomes more and more determined to make it up to the giant by spinning a new yarn.

The giant (and the audience as well) is treated to some new treatments of some old favorites, such as a tortoise racing a hair-growing hare, Cinderumplestiltskin, Little Red Running Shorts, and a couple of princesses who kiss frogs and sleep on peas. Jack must not only tell tales as fast as he can for as long as he can to avoid being eaten, but he must also overcome the disturbances caused by that pesky, bread-obsessed Red Hen and a very smelly hero made of cheese.

The Stinky Cheese Man & Other Fairly Stupid Tales, both as a book and stage play, shares with its audience the joys of making stories your own and creating new possibilities for the familiar.

Curriculum Connections

Reading, Writing, Language Arts, Story Telling

Levels

Recommended for ages 4 – 9; Grades: Pre-K - 4
Study Guides and additional materials provided.
Classroom workshops available for an additional fee.



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RECOGNITION

INSTITUTION AWARDS

Caldecott Medal – American Library Association,
1993, Honor Book

New York Times Best Illustrated Book Award

Children's Book Award – Short list

CHILDREN'S CHOICE AWARDS

Colorado Children's Book Award, 1994, Picture Book

Georgia Children's Book Award, 1997, Grades K-4

Maine Student Book Award, 1994, Grades 4-8

North Carolina Children's Book Award, 1994,
Picture Book

North Dakota Flicker Tale Children's Book Award,
1994, Preschool through Grade 3

Ohio Buckeye Children's Book Award, 1995, K-2

Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice Award, 1994,
Grades 3-8

Rhode Island Children's Book Award, 1994, Grades 3-6

Texas Bluebonnet Award, 1995, Grades 3-6

Wisconsin WEMA Golden Archer Award,
1997, Intermediate

VENUES

Griffin Theatre has performed
"THE STINKY CHEESE MAN" at:

Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall – Sarasota, Florida

Ruth Eckert Hall - Clearwater, Florida

Coral Springs Center for the Arts – Coral Springs, Florida

The Grand Theatre – Wausau, Wisconsin

Metropolis Center for the Performing Arts –
Arlington Heights, Illinois

Clowes Memorial Hall of Butler University –
Indianapolis, Indiana

The Peace Center – Greenville, South Carolina

The Barn Theatre – Kalamazoo, Michigan

Centralia Cultural Center – Centralia, Illinois

Viterbo University – La Crosse, Wisconsin

Schauer Arts Center – Hartford, Wisconsin



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CRITICAL ACCLAIM

From ChicagoParent.com

October 5, 2006 By **Alena Murguia**

The plots centers around Jack (of Beanstalk fame) who tries to use stories, friends and one annoying Little Red Hen to avoid being eaten by the Giant (played entirely on stilts by the talented Kevin Kingston). The original book was written by Jon Scieszka and all of his stories are subversive twists on classic fairytales like *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Rumpelstiltskin*.

Over the course of 45 minutes, actors play multiple parts bringing these stories to life. Terrific actors and great costuming make each character so unique that it took my 5-year-old a while to catch on that it was the same person. Nicholas Ward is so wonderful as the Stinky Cheese Man that his terrific turns as a conniving frog and wily wolf come as a great surprise.

Jack gets the kids in the audience involved physically and verbally. We loved watching him climb through rows of people attempting to hide, especially when "helpful" audience members blew his cover with the giant. My niece was definitely impressed at the actors' abilities to respond to the audience even though she doesn't know the term "improvisation." One brave little girl even joined the cast for a turn as Goldilocks. You have to give the actors big credit for coaxing her to do their bidding.

From steadstyle.com

The Stinky Cheese Man gives your funny bone a hearty nudge

October 2, 2006 By **Joe Stead**

If the child you love or the child inside you craves something insatiably silly, look to Griffin Theatre's wacky production of *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* to give your funny bone a hearty nudge. Co-Authors Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith took many of our famed fairy tale characters (Jack in the Beanstalk, the Little Red Hen, Cinderella and the Princess and the Pea, among others) and turned them inside out in an outrageously irreverent 1989 revision. It may not give the little tykes much to think about, but William Massolia's bright and fast-paced stage adaptation should give them permission to chuckle out loud.

Big cheers to Griffin Theatre for the continued devotion to exposing youngsters to the wonders of live theatre.

From Northeastern IL University Independent Paper

October 6, 2006 By **Lenny Ocasio**

Everyone's read a fairy tale in some form or another. You know the ones that start with once upon a time and end with happily ever after. *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* at the Griffin Theatre has all the highly familiar tales but with a twist to them. It's based on a book of the same name but believe me when I say it's not necessary.

We start with Jack (the one with the beanstalk not the candlestick jumper), played by Steve Wilson, as he tries to escape being the giant's lunch. Jack from time to time is interrupted by the bothersome Little Red Hen, played by Cathleen Bentley, and the exasperating Stinky Cheese Man, played by Nicholas Ward. Jack, in a fit of desperation, persuades the giant to listen to a few of Jack's collection of fairly stupid tales before eating him. The giant, played by Kevin Kingston, decides that it couldn't hurt to delay his meal for a few minutes and so Jack begins.

He starts with the *Princess and the Frog* which has a princess with her own theme song, played by Vergia Siovan. The giant of course is disappointed with the story but let's Jack tell a few more. If you're familiar with *Arabian Nights* and *Scherazade* then you can tell how this is going. Jack goes through of a number of tales each with its own weird twist and some odd characters popping in from time to time.

Cinderella, Snow White, the Three Little Pigs, the Tortoise and the Hare, and Goldilocks are mentioned as is Aladdin. My favorite stories were the *Princess and the Pea* with the rock n' roll princess and the slightly whiny prince and there was also Little Red Running Shorts, played by Marsha Harmon, with the misunderstood Wolf who strangely enough had a British accent.

The entire play was wonderful. The costumes were simple but they allowed your imagination to fill in the blanks. It made the audience an active and involved part of the play. The actors looked like they were having a lot of fun putting on this production. The play had lessons to learn like the very important: Don't talk to strangers, especially if they offer to sell you some magic beans.

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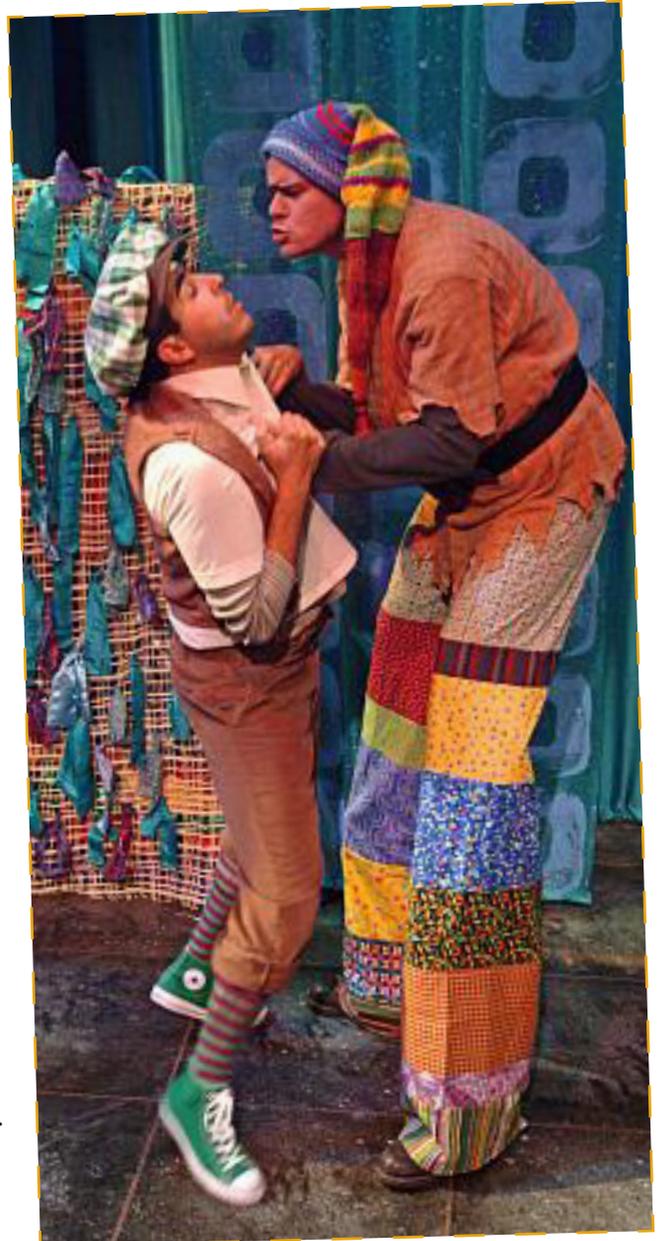
CLASSROOM WORKSHOPS AND RESIDENCIES

The focus of the Griffin Theatre Company's workshops and residencies are to introduce students to the creative process, the basics of theatre arts and can be designed specifically to augment and enhance a teacher's classroom curriculum.

Workshops are designed to promote creative thinking, stimulate imagination, develop critical thinking skills, promote language development, heighten listening skills, foster group cooperation and peer respect, increase awareness and empathy of others, reinforce positive self-concept, and give students a fresh and innovative way to learn.

Workshops begin with a collection of theatre games and exercises that encourage and enhance creative thinking, problem solving, spatial awareness, and trust. Such techniques help to create a group that is supportive, energetic, and focused.

The Griffin Theatre workshops and residencies are first and foremost designed to educate but, they are fun too. Workshops and residencies can be conducted in conjunction with Griffin Theatre performances or can be scheduled independently. One workshop can last anywhere from forty-five minutes to two hours. Residencies with teaching artists can last from two days to two weeks.



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ABOUT

GRIFFIN

theatre company



MISSION

The mission of the Griffin Theatre Company is to create extraordinary and meaningful theatrical experiences for both children and adults by building bridges of understanding between generations that instill in its audience an appreciation of the performing arts. The Griffin achieves this mission and vision through artistic collaboration, produces literary adaptations, original work and classic plays that challenge and inspire, with wit, style and compassion for the audience. The company is supported by an ensemble of Artist in Residence with a range of disciplines include acting, designing, directing and production.

HISTORY

The Griffin Theatre Company originated in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood in a factory loft the company renovated. In July 1992, the Griffin relocated to Andersonville and renovated the historic Calo Theater. Five years ago the Griffin vacated its space in Andersonville after thirteen years and is completing its negotiations on its agreement with the city of Chicago to purchase an abandon police station in the Edgewater neighborhood of Chicago. The Griffin plans to renovate and transform the building into a state of the art theatre facility that will become its permanent home.

Over the last twenty-two years the Griffin has provided a wide range of work including world and mid-west premieres of acclaimed scripts, critically lauded productions of Shakespeare and original adaptations of novels. Each year the main-stage offers 3 full-length productions and 1 children's production. Many of the Griffin's 100 plus productions have appeared on Chicago area critics "Best of the Year" lists. These productions included, *Time and the Conway*, *Angus*, *Thongs and Full-Frontal Snogging*, *Ash Can Alley*, *Shakespeare's Dog*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Art*

of Success, *Women and Wallace*, *The Downside*, *Be More Chill*, *Loving Little Egypt*, *Independence*, *Letters Home* and most recently, *Journey's End*. The Griffin is the recipient of 35 Joseph Jefferson Award nominations for theatre excellence in Chicago. The company produced the west coast premiere of *Riding the Dolphin* in Los Angeles in 1996 and its world premiere production of *Henry and the Second Gunman* was optioned by Miramax Films. The Griffin also tours its hit adult production of *Letters Home*. This past fall the Griffin performed the production at Connecticut's prestigious and fabled Westport Country Playhouse.

Children's programming at the Griffin brings young people original productions of award-winning children's literature. Productions over the last twenty years have included the world premieres of *The Whipping Boy*, *Sleeping Ugly*, *Frindle*, *Catherine Called Birdy*, *Romeo and Juliet are Alive and Well and Living in Maple Bend*, *There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom* and *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*. The Griffin's national touring company brings its two most popular productions—*The Stinky Cheese Man & Other Fairly Stupid Tales* and *Frindle* to young people throughout the United States each year. Tours have included such prestigious venues as Cleveland Playhouse Square, Kravis Center for the Performing Arts in West Palm Beach Florida, Tennessee Performing Arts Center in Nashville and the Vilar Performing Arts Center in Beaver Creek, Colorado. Last year the Griffin Theatre had the pleasure to perform its touring productions for over 100,000 young people and adults.



(773)769-2228

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