The Wishing Table, The Gold Donkey, and the Cudgel in the Sack

Adapted by Jake Lewis

CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

NARRATOR 1

NARRATOR 2

TAILOR

SON 1

SON 2

SON 3

GOAT

MR. IKEA

INNKEEPER

MILLER

DONKEY

WOODTURNER

JAKE LEWIS

FOX

BEAR

BEE

*Scene 1*

**NARRATOR 1**: Greetings! Today you are going to be treated to a story called “The Wishing Table, The Gold Donkey, and the Cudgel in the Sack.”

**NARRATOR 2:** *(To NARRATOR 1.)* That’s a terrible title. How would that fit on a marquee? And, I mean, what’s a cudgel?

**NARRATOR 1:** *(To NARRATOR 2.)* I think it’s some kind of pastry. Mmm….

**NARRATOR 2:** *(To NARRATOR 1.)* But in a sack? That’d get jelly all over the inside of it. You wouldn’t be able to enjoy eating it.

**NARRATOR 1:** Well, as for the title, I kinda’ like it. Tells you right off what to expect.

**NARRATOR 2:** Unless you don’t know what a cudgel is.

**NARRATOR 1:** Regardless, this is a fairy tale unlike no other.

**NARRATOR 2**: Literally. You have never heard a fairy tale like this before.

**NARRATOR 1**: And if you have, we guarantee you get your money back!

**NARRATOR 2**: Unless you haven’t paid to see this, in which case, contact the author of this play, Jake Lewis, whose words we’re just reading.

**NARRATOR 1**: You’ll have to find that out on your own, by the way. But he’s on the Internet.

**NARRATOR 2:** We should also disclose there are no actual fairies in this tale.

**NARRATOR 1:** So why is it called a fairy tale?

**NARRATOR 2:** Again, contact Mr. Lewis on that. I just read the lines.

**NARRATOR 1:** Fair.

**NARRATOR 2**: So let me introduce you to the tailor and his three sons.

*TAILOR and SONS 1-3 wave at the audience.*

**TAILOR**: I’m a tailor, who, ironically is named Taylor.

**NARRATOR 1:** That’s not actually irony.

**NARRATOR 2:** Yeah, it’s just a coincidence.

**TAILOR:** *(Ignoring them.)* Which means I make clothes.

**SON 1**: Weird, because we never have anything nice to wear.

**TAILOR**: *(To SON 1.)* Don’t be an ungrateful brat! At least you have clothes and aren’t running around naked!

**SON 2**: Yeah, I do not want to see that.

**SON 3**: Cudgel in a sack!

**NARRATOR 2:** Anyways, these three brothers and their dad had a pet goat.

*GOAT trots on.*

**GOAT**: Bah. Bah.

**NARRATOR 1**: That’s the goat if you couldn’t tell.

**GOAT**: Hey! I got a name, you know! It’s Bradley.

**TAILOR**: And we do not find it strange at all that the goat talks.

**SON 1**: Nope.

**SON 2**: Totally normal.

**SON 3**: Cudgel in a sack!

**NARRATOR 1**: One day–

**NARRATOR 2**: A Tuesday, actually.

**NARRATOR 1**: Ok. One Tuesday–

**NARRATOR 2:** Whoops, sorry, it was actually a Thursday.

**NARRATOR 1**: It doesn’t matter what stinkin’ day it was, ok?!

**TAILOR**: Jeesh. Someone has a case of the Mondays!

**NARRATOR 2:** Nope, got it, it was definitely a Wednesday. Sorry. Hump Day!

**NARRATOR 1**: On some day of the week, the tailor said to his sons…

**TAILOR**: Sons…

**SON 1**: Hey.

**SON 2**: Sup?

**SON 3**: Cudgel in a sack!

**TAILOR**: I’m busy doing tailoring things–

**SON 1**: *(Sarcastically.)* Sure looks that way.

**TAILOR**: And this goat–

**GOAT**: Bradley!

**TAILOR**: –is hungry. Can you take him to the field over there that he loves oh-so-very much?

**SON 1**: You mean the field that is full of lush green grass?

**SON 2**: The field that does not have any rocks or weeds in it at all?

**SON 3**: Cudgel in a sack!

**TAILOR**: Yes, that one that you can’t see from the house.

**SONS**: Sure.

**NARRATOR 2:** So the three sons take the go–, sorry, Bradley–

**GOAT**: Thank you.

**NARRATOR 1**: To the field that is just out of sight from the tailor’s house and is full of lush green grass and has no rocks or weeds in it. The one he loves oh-so-very much.

**NARRATOR 2**: Why does everyone keep saying that the field is really far and has lush green grass with no rocks or weeds in it?

**GOAT**: And that I love oh-so-very much.

**NARRATOR 2**: Right. Why not just say the field he likes? Who cares about those other details?

**NARRATOR 1:** Oh, Narrator 2! You clearly don’t know what foreshadowing is!

**GOAT**: And you call yourself a narrator! Even I know what foreshadowing is! And I’m a goat!

**NARRATOR 2**: Ok, Mr. Smartypants. What’s foreshadowing?

**GOAT**: For the record, I’m not wearing pants, and I’ll keep it that way. Better for unrestricted movement. But foreshadowing is when an author, like your esteemed playwright, Jake Lewis, gives you a hint about something that may happen later in the story. For instance, if these here sons take me out to the field that I love oh-so-very much, the one with the lush green grass and no rocks or weeds in it, just out of sight from the tailor’s shop, and I eat until I’m stuffed, but then I come home and tell the tailor that I was fed nothing but rocks and weeds, you’d be like, “Oh! Now I get why the author said that earlier!”

**NARRATOR 2**: I knew that.

**GOAT**: Right.

**NARRATOR 1**: So Bradley did just that. And the tailor got mad. I mean, like super ticked off. Picture someone being angry, and like, multiply it by 34.

**TAILOR**: You did what?!?

**SON 1**: Bradley is lying! He’s a naughty goat!

**SON 2**: I wonder if we’ll ever get revenge on him someday before the end of this play?

**SON 3:** Cudgel in a sack!

**TAILOR**: Don’t you dare call my beloved Bradley a liar!

**SON 1**: Beloved? You didn’t even know his name until a few minutes ago!

**TAILOR**: Doesn’t matter! He’s my goat – the greatest of all time!

**GOAT**: Eat your heart out, Tom Brady.

**NARRATOR 2**: So the tailor kicked out his sons and told them never to come back.

**TAILOR**: Be gone!

**NARRATOR 1**: Wow.

**NARRATOR 2**: That’s pretty harsh.

**NARRATOR 1**: You’re telling me.

**NARRATOR 2**: Yes. I am telling you.

**NARRATOR 1**: But there’s more to the story!

**NARRATOR 2**: *(like the suspenseful sound effect)* Bum-bum-BUM!!!!

*TAILOR, SONS, and GOAT exit.*

*Scene 2*

**NARRATOR 1**: Many years passed–

**NARRATOR 2**: Whoa, whoa, whoa! Slow your roll! We’re suddenly jumping forward in time several years?

**NARRATOR 1**: Yes. Not a lot happened in the years between when the sons got kicked out and when we rejoin their story.

**NARRATOR 2**: What do you mean?!? They were homeless! Living on the streets of some nondescript post-Arthurian village! Not to mention, they probably were emotionally scarred from their father choosing to believe a talking goat–

**GOAT**: *(from offstage)* Bradley!

**NARRATOR 2**: …over his own children!

**NARRATOR 1:** I see your point, Narrator 2, but in fairy tales, we don’t really concern ourselves with the mental health of our characters. Remember, these stories are written for children, and children just want to get right to the action.

**NARRATOR 2**: I just want to go on record and say that I am not happy with this writer, Jake Lewis.

**NARRATOR 1**: Don’t blame him. He’s just writing this play based on an old Brothers Grimm fairy tale. Now, as I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted, several years had passed, and the sons had grown from boys into men. See?

*SONS wave. They look exactly the same as before.*

**NARRATOR 2**: Oh yeah. They do look older.

**NARRATOR 1**: Son #1 had spent the past few years being an apprentice to a carpenter named Mr. Ikea.

**MR. IKEA:** *(in a Swedish accent)* Halla. I Mr. Ikea am.

**NARRATOR 2**: Ooh, he does good stuff. I think I own his bedroom set.

**MR. IKEA:** Yah. Because you are a goot boy und a wery hart verker, I vant to give you a table that eest wery full of magics. Ok, bye bye. *(Exits.)*

**NARRATOR 2:** Did he say he wants to give him a magic table?

**NARRATOR 1**: Indeed! And when the son said out loud, “Table, set yourself!” the table would produce a big meal!

**NARRATOR 2:** I’m going to stop you right there. How does one even make a magic table? Was Mr. Ikea a wizard or something?

**NARRATOR 1:** You’ve seen his work. You tell me.

**NARRATOR 2:** Good point. Proceed.

**NARRATOR 1:** So the son decided to walk home to his father, the tailor and show how he had done well even though he’d been called a liar, and basically an animal abuser, and kicked out.

**NARRATOR 2**: Hold the phone. I have several questions.

**NARRATOR 1**: You’re making this play much longer than it has any right to be.

**NARRATOR 2**: First, if the son says “Table, set yourself!” and it’s going to go POOF! and have a Golden Corral appear, shouldn’t the magic words be “Table, make food!” or something like that?

**NARRATOR 1**: You’re overthinking it.

**NARRATOR 2**: And that’s not to mention, this guy is lugging his table home from work? Just has this table strapped to his back, traveling down Route 66 with it?

**NARRATOR 1**: It’s a magic table! Maybe it’s really light!

**NARRATOR 2**: Oh. Yeah. Good point. Ok, keep going.

**NARRATOR 1:** On the way home to his father, Son #1 stopped at an inn, run by a very greedy innkeeper.

**NARRATOR 2:** What’s his name?

**NARRATOR 1:** Who, the innkeeper?

**NARRATOR 2:** No, Son #1.

**NARRATOR 1:** I don’t know. I didn’t write this thing.

**NARRATOR 2:** I think it’s disrespectful, that’s all. This playwright, Jake Lewis, really is not very good. At. All.

**NARRATOR 1:** If it weren’t for him, you’d be unemployed. You actually wouldn’t even exist.

**NARRATOR 2:** At least I’d be standing up for my principles.

**NARRATOR 1:** Fine. Son #1 is Steve, Son #2 is Gary, and Son #3 is Jeff.

**SON 3:** *(From offstage.)* Cudgel in a sack!

**NARRATOR 2:** Are you saying that just to shut me up and get on with the play?

**NARRATOR 1:** Yes. Absolutely.

**NARRATOR 2:** Wow. Ok. I see how it is.

**INNKEEPER:** Welcome to The Grimm Inn! I hope you don’t mind, but we don’t have a table if you were thinking of eating here tonight.

**NARRATOR 2:** So this hotel doesn’t own a single table? How does it stay in business in such a competitive market?

**NARRATOR 1:** It’s a good thing that Son #1–

**NARRATOR 2:** Steve.

**NARRATOR 1:** That Steve had a magic table then!

**NARRATOR 2:** That’s ironic!

**NARRATOR 1:** Nope, that’s also a coincidence.

**NARRATOR 2:** I apologize, Mr. English Teacher.

**NARRATOR 1:** So Steve used his magic table…

**SON 1:** Table, set yourself!

**NARRATOR 1:** And everyone at the inn had a big ol’ feast thanks to the son’s gift…

**NARRATOR 2:** I feel a “but” coming on.

**NARRATOR 1:** The next day, Steve woke up, as one does…

**NARRATOR 2:** But?

**NARRATOR 1:** And he got all the way to his father’s house…

**NARRATOR 2:** But?!?

**NARRATOR 1:** And showed his father the magical table…

**NARRATOR 2:** BUT?!?

**SON 1:** Table, set yourself!

**NARRATOR 1:** *(Pausing to drive NARRATOR 2 nuts.)* But nothing happened!

**TAILOR:** Uhh…what’s supposed to happen?

**NARRATOR 2:** Why wasn’t the table working?

**NARRATOR 1:** *(Drawn out like it’s a big shock.)* Because…the innkeeper…had switched the magic table with a non-magic table!

**NARRATOR 2:** No!

**INNKEEPER:** Yes!

**NARRATOR 2:** But why?!?

**INNKEEPER:** Because!

**NARRATOR 2:** Ah hah! Clever!

**NARRATOR 1:** And so, Steve is kicked out again.

*INNKEEPER, SON 1, and TAILOR exit.*

*Scene 3*

*SON 2 enters.*

**NARRATOR 1:** Meanwhile, Son #2–

**NARRATOR 2:** Gary.

**NARRATOR 1:** Right. Gary. Gary has been apprenticing for a miller since he was kicked out of his father’s home.

**NARRATOR 2:** Why does he get a name but the innkeeper doesn’t?

**NARRATOR 1:** Who?

**NARRATOR 2:** Mr. Miller.

**NARRATOR 1:** The name wasn’t Miller. That’s the job title. As in, one who mills. And it’s a woman, by the way.

*MILLER enters with SON 2 and DONKEY.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Ooh, my bad.

**MILLER:** Assuming a successful businessperson is a man. Pfft.

**NARRATOR 2:** No! I swear I didn’t mean it like that!

**NARRATOR 1:** Just like Steve, the miller was very impressed with Gary’s work, so she gave him a magic donkey that could produce gold out of its mouth at the command “Bricklebrit!”

*DONKEY grotesquely hocks up a piece of gold.*

*Beat.*

**NARRATOR 2:** I have so many questions.

**SON 2:** I think I’m going to go home to my Father’s house and show him this amazing creature!

**DONKEY:** I don’t feel so good.

*INNKEEPER returns.*

**NARRATOR 1:** He, too, stops at the same inn his brother did on his way home.

**NARRATOR 2:** How ironic!

**NARRATOR 1:** *(Makes a game show buzzer noise.)* BZZT! Still not ironic. And just like his brother, he shows off the magical donkey’s ability.

**DONKEY:** *(To NARRATOR 1.)* Do I really have to? Again?

**SON 2:** Bricklebrit!

*DONKEY regurgitates another piece of gold.*

**DONKEY:** *(Panting.)* Please. I beg you. Stop.

**NARRATOR 1:** So the son goes to sleep at the inn, and when he wakes up the next morning–

*DONKEY is led offstage by INNKEEPER, both returning a moment later, only*

*now the donkey is wearing a hat, or glasses, or some other very small change.*

**NARRATOR 2:** The magic donkey has been switched with a regular donkey?

**NARRATOR 1:** Sensing a pattern, eh?

*TAILOR enters.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Let me see if I can figure out the rest. Gary brings what he thinks is the magic donkey home to his Father’s, and when he says the magic word–

**SON 2:** Bricklebrit!

*DONKEY spits. DONKEY is impressed with himself. No one else is.*

**NARRATOR 2:** No gold.

**NARRATOR 1:** Nailed it.

**NARRATOR 2:** And now, to create more dramatic tension, we follow Jeff’s time since leaving home. What was his magic item?

*SON 3 enters. They all look at him, expecting him to say “Cudgel in a sack.” He*

*doesn’t.*

**SON 3:** What? Did I miss something?

**NARRATOR 1:** He is given a cudgel in a sack!

**NARRATOR 2:** Ahhh….Now it all makes sense!

*WOODTURNER enters.*

**NARRATOR 1:** He spent his time working for a woodturner.

**NARRATOR 2:** What’s a woodturner?

**NARRATOR 1:** Not sure. Someone who turns wood?

**NARRATOR 2:** That’s a real gig?

**NARRATOR 1:** So…when Jeff showed many years of faithful service, he, you guessed it, was given his magical gift.

*WOODTURNER gives SON 3 a sack.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Where’s the cudgel?

**NARRATOR 1:** It’s in the sack.

**NARRATOR 2:** But I still don’t know what a cudgel is. I thought if I could see it…

**NARRATOR 1:** Google it. This cudgel was also magical. When someone said, “Cudgel in the sack!” it would leap up and start beating people senselessly!

**NARRATOR 2:** That seems violent.

**NARRATOR 1:** *(Gleefully.)* Oh, it was!

**NARRATOR 2:** Why do you even need the sack if the cudgel is the magical item?

**NARRATOR 1:** Good question!

**NARRATOR 2:** True.

**NARRATOR 1:** Just like his brothers, this son visits the same inn.

*INNKEEPER enters.*

**NARRATOR 2:** This inn sure does brisk business. I hope they’re getting frequent guest points.

**NARRATOR 1:** But this son does not show off his cudgel’s magic.

**NARRATOR 2:** Why not? The innkeeper deserves to get clobbered by the vindictive pastry after stealing the magic table and donkey!

**NARRATOR 1:** Ah, but just you wait! Because when this third son was sleeping at night, the Innkeeper snuck into his room, and tried to find the magic cudgel!

*SON 3 lays down with the cudgel in a sack and the INNKEEPER creeps about.*

**NARRATOR 2:** How did the innkeeper know it was magical if Jeff didn’t tell him?

**NARRATOR 1:** Exactly.

**NARRATOR 2:** I keep forgetting that.

**NARRATOR 1:** But you see, Jeff suffered from insomnia, so he wasn’t really asleep. Further, he kept the cudgel in the sack snuggled up right next to him in bed.

**NARRATOR 2:** A little weird, but ok.

**NARRATOR 1:** You think that’s weird? Check out some other Grimm’s fairy tales. This is tame, my friend. So, at this point, Jeff said the magic phrase!

*SON 3 does not speak.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Psst! Jeff! It’s your big moment!

**SON 3:** Oh, sorry! Always forget my one line when I need it! *(Clears throat.)* Cudgel in the sack!

*The sack begins beating the innkeeper in a cartoonish way. (SON 3 is wielding*

*it, but the actor’s expression makes it appear as though he’s not really controlling*

*it.)*

**INNKEEPER:** *(Giggling uncontrollably.)* Stop! I am sorry! I’ll give back what I stole from your brothers! Just stop hurting me!

**NARRATOR 1:** And so, the magical table and donkey were shipped to the tailor’s house on the innkeeper’s dime, and their magical abilities were shown to the sons’ skeptical father, the tailor named Taylor.

*SONS 1, 2, 3 enter with their magical item, along with TAILOR.*

**SON 1:** Table, set yourself!

*The table magically appears covered in food. (A sheet could be pulled off.)*

**SON 2:** Bricklebrit!

**DONKEY:** Oh God, not again!

*DONKEY convulses and barfs up some gold, then passes out.*

**SON 3:** *(Eyes NARRATORS to make sure this is when he says the line.)* Cudgel in a sack!

*NARRATORS applaud. SON 3 looks proud, but only briefly, because…*

*The cudgel knocks out everyone, except SON 3 and NARRATORS.*

**SON 3:** Oops. *(Exits.)*

**NARRATOR 1:** And there you have it!

*All the characters get up and exit – bruised, battered, annoyed. DONKEY*

*remains out cold.*

**NARRATOR 2:** That’s the end?

**NARRATOR 1:** Pretty much.

**NARRATOR 2:** But…the donkey….I think he’s dead.

**NARRATOR 1:** *(Inspecting DONKEY.)* No, he’ll be OK….

**NARRATOR 2:** That’s…that’s…a terrible story.

**NARRATOR 1:** Why? Taylor the tailor kicked out his sons, who all used their magical items for greedy purposes. Except for Son #3, that is, who used it to get revenge on the innkeeper for his thievery, his father for his cruelty, and his brothers for their greed.

**DONKEY:** Not to mention mistreatment of animals!

**NARRATOR 1:** See? He’s cool.

*DONKEY collapses again. He is dragged offstage.*

**NARRATOR 2:** I guess, but it’s basically saying that revenge and violence are justified. I must tell you, this playwright, Jake Lewis, really missed the mark here. I feel kind of dirty being a part of this.

*JAKE LEWIS enters.*

**JAKE LEWIS:** Ok, enough! I will not allow my characters to badmouth me!

**NARRATOR 2:** Who are you?

**JAKE LEWIS:** I’m Jake Lewis, your creator! That’s who!

**NARRATOR 2:** *(Aside to NARRATOR 1.)* Ego, much?

**JAKE LEWIS:** Why does a story need a happy ending?

**NARRATOR 2:** Because it’s for kids!

**JAKE LEWIS:** Actually, the Brothers Grimm’s stories were originally written for adults. It’s culture!

**NARRATOR 2:** Even so, it’s teaching a bad message!

**JAKE LEWIS:** Well, if you must know, there is an epilogue to the story.

**NARRATOR 2:** Oh? Maybe that’ll tie things up better.

**NARRATOR 1:** Don’t count on it.

*Epilogue*

**JAKE LEWIS:** You remember the goat, Bradley?

**NARRATOR 2:** Yeah, it’s only been 10 minutes since we saw him.

**JAKE LEWIS:** Well, he went off to hide in a cave. He hid in the very back of it, where it was super dark, and all you could see were his glowing eyes.

*GOAT gets up and walks off to a darkened cave as lights dim.*

**JAKE LEWIS:** While he was inside, a fox came by, since it was his home, after all…

*FOX enters.*

**NARRATOR 1:** What does the fox say?

**JAKE LEWIS:** Nothing. He just sees the shining eyes and gets scared, and runs off!

**NARRATOR 2:** And then?

**JAKE LEWIS:** The fox finds a bear, who he brings back to the cave to help get the scary goat out of his home.

*FOX reenters with BEAR.*

**NARRATOR 2:** And then?

**JAKE LEWIS:** But the bear is scared too! So they both run off!

**NARRATOR 2:** And then?

**JAKE LEWIS:** I’m getting to it! They find a bee, who they bring back to the cave.

*BEE enters.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Things always happen in threes, so I’m going to speed this up and assume that it stings the goat.

*JAKE LEWIS appears disappointed he wasn’t able to deliver this part.*

**JAKE LEWIS:** Yep. And the goat runs off.

*BEE stings GOAT who runs off stage, bleating.*

**JAKE LEWIS:** And the goat has never been found since! The end! *(Makes a big “ta da” gesture/jazz hands.)*

*NARRATORS 1 and 2 look at each other.*

**NARRATOR 2:** That was a tad…anticlimactic.

**NARRATOR 1:** Yeah, that didn’t make the ending any better. Sorry.

**JAKE LEWIS:** Well, don’t blame me! Blame the Brothers Grimm! You just can’t please some people… *(Exits.)*

**NARRATOR 2:** So…

**NARRATOR 1:** …yeah….

**NARRATOR 2:** Did you find it strange how Steve said, “Table! Set yourself!” and Jeff said “Cudgel in the sack!” but Gary said a single, made-up word, “Bricklebrit!”?

**NARRATOR 1:** How ironic.

*Beat.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Cool. See you around.

*They exit.*

*After a few moments of nothing happening, GOAT re-enters.*

**GOAT:** *(To the audience.)* And that is why I’m the greatest of all time! Holla at ya’ boy! *(Trots off.)*

*Lights out.*

*THE END*