



# Mother Goose

by Stephen Duckham

2026

PantoScripts Perusal

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## CAST (in order of appearance)

QUEEN OF GOOSELAND	
PRISCILLA	(Her daughter)
GRIZELDA GOLD-DIGGER	(Her estranged sister)
JACK GOOSE	(Mother Goose's Son)
JILL	(The Squire's Niece)
SQUIRE STONEYHEART	(A Town Dignitary)
MOTHER GOOSE	(Down on her luck, Dame)
BILLY GOOSE	(Her second Son)

MOUNTAIN BEAST  
PRIME MINISTER OF GOOSELAND

CHORUS OF VILLAGERS, SPIRITS OF THE BLUE GROTTO and PEOPLE OF GOOSELAND

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

## ACT ONE

SCENE 1	GOOSELAND
SCENE 2	THE VILLAGE OF GANDERVILLE
SCENE 3	OUTSIDE MOTHER GOOSE'S NEW HOUSE
SCENE 4	MOTHER GOOSE'S KITCHEN
SCENE 5	OUTSIDE MOTHER GOOSE'S NEW HOUSE
SCENE 6	THE GOLDEN BALLROOM
SCENE 7	OUTSIDE MOTHER GOOSE'S NEW HOUSE
SCENE 8	ON THE WAY TO THE MAGIC GROTTO
SCENE 9	THE MAGIC BLUE GROTTO

## ACT TWO

SCENE 1	THE VILLAGE OF GANDERVILLE
SCENE 2	ON THE WAY TO THE SNOW MOUNTAINS
SCENE 3	THE SNOW MOUNTAINS
SCENE 4	THE QUEEN OF GOOSELAND'S THRONE ROOM
SCENE 5	THE WAY HOME
SCENE 6	THE GOLDEN BALLROOM

CHARACTERS

MOTHER GOOSE	Although a typical pantomime Dame, this eponymous character is the most challenging for the actor playing her. A great flair for comedy is essential when interacting with other characters and the audience. The actor must also have the ability to play against type when desiring beauty, and giving away Priscilla; also contrition when begging forgiveness.
JACK GOOSE	Mother Goose's eldest son. Handsome, well-behaved and always putting his family first. A good singing voice is an advantage for this part.
JILL	The Squire's niece and in love with Jack. She should be kind and spirited, especially when standing up to her Uncle. Requires a good singing voice.
BILLY GOOSE	Mother Goose's younger son. Accident-prone and usually gets himself into various problems. A full-on comedy character, who must have a good rapport with the audience, especially when asking for their help to keep waking him up!
SQUIRE	Irascible and authoritative. He must switch from his main character to one of subservience when dealing with Grizelda.
QUEEN	Charming and kind, but maintains a regal air. In dealing with her evil sister, she never loses her composure, but always keeps the upper hand.
GRIZELDA	The Queen's younger sister. Jealous, envious and, as her full name suggests, a real 'golddigger'. Typical panto villainess, able to hold her own against a booing audience!
PRIME MINISTER	Cameo part in Act Two. Highly strung, easily flustered and camp! Can be part of the general company in Act One.
PRISCILLA	Someone very comfortable in a Goose costume!

## NOTES ON THE PRODUCTION

The scenery for this production can be as elaborate or as simple as your facilities allow. Suggestions for the scene plot are as follows:

## Act 1

- Scene 1            A small inset with black tabs to mask.
- Scene 2            A full set with backcloth or cyc. To one side is Mother Goose's cottage, and to the other is an Inn.
- Scene 3,5&7        A front cloth – or just use running tabs.
- Scene 4            A scene that need not be too big. Either a halfway cloth or flats with just the required furniture and props.
- Scene 6            An elaborate ballroom that can double as the final scene of the show.
- Scene 8            BlackTabs if another front cloth is not available.
- Scene 9            This scene can be either a woodland scene or rock pieces. As it is nighttime, the scene can be backed by black tabs or, if possible, a star cloth. Up stage centre should be a rostrum or platform that Mother Goose can stand on. Water effects are expensive and complicated, so if it is impractical to use one, a lighting effect or a silver slash curtain will work just as well.

Act 2

- Scene 1            Repeat of Act 1 Scene 2.
- Scene 2&5         A second front cloth, gauze or tabs can be used for this scene.
- Scene 3            This scene is purely for a dance routine and is very effective in portraying Jack's search for Gooseland. Ideally, it should be a half-stage set with snow-covered rock wings and a cloud cloth. The wings stay in position for the next scene, and the cloth flies out to reveal Gooseland and the Queen's throne. Alternatively, with a little alteration to the script, it can be played on the gauze – although this gives a limited amount of space for the dance sequence.
- Scene 4            Snow-covered rock wings and a cyc backing. A large, impressive throne dominates up stage centre. One of the rock pieces should have an opening for Grizelda to be imprisoned in, or she can just exit behind with possibly a smoke effect.
- Scene 6            Repeat the Golden Ballroom.

If stage and wing space are at a premium, then Mother Goose's car can be a cut-out, which she can carry on.

The kitchen scene can be as messy as the director (and actors) choose! It is sometimes advisable to have a floor covering around the table area. The radio explosion can be a sound effect or even a large balloon popping off stage.

The hot ash in the dustbin sequence is effective with a squirt from a smoke gun. Again, this is not necessary.

If a smoke gun or dry ice machine is available, this adds tremendously to the Magic Grotto scene.

If you have access to good sound equipment, then sound effects such as Mother Goose's car, Priscilla's egg-laying scene, the radio sequence and the Mountain Beast's roar add greatly to the show. However, these are not essential apart from the radio voice, which is better done by two actors on an off-stage microphone.

Finally Priscilla. If a full Goose costume is available and the size of the stage allows it, this is the best effect. The simpler way is to have an actor with a goose costume top, wings attached to the arms, white tights and yellow feet, and a headpiece with a little bonnet on for Act 1 and a small crown for Act 2. If the costume does not allow for 'egg laying', then a strategic positioning by the Chorus covers this, and the eggs can be rolled on from off stage.

The placing of the musical numbers and who sings them is suggested in the script, but it is up to the director to decide what to use. A word of advice: Pantomime audiences – particularly the younger members – like the story to keep moving, so don't make the musical sequences too long, especially the ballads.

I hope you enjoy doing this version of 'Mother Goose' and have a great success with your production.

*Stephen Duckham*

ACT ONE  
OVERTURE

SCENE 1 GOOSELAND

*[A light in the centre of the stage picks up PRISCILLA. Above her hangs the Golden Quill. Down stage right, the QUEEN OF GOOSELAND enters.]*

GOOSELAND UNDERSCORE

**QUEEN** My dear Priscilla. By the power vested in me as Queen of Gooseland and by the command of the Golden Quill, I am entrusting to you a task of the utmost importance. As the one special Golden Goose, your magical powers can help people who have fallen on hard times. *[PRISCILLA nods her head.]* There is one such family in the village of Ganderville. Will you leave here and help them? *[PRISCILLA thinks for a moment and then nods.]* I knew I was right to ask this. You are kind and unselfish. There is no time to lose, so prepare to leave at once.

*[GRIZELDA GOLDDIGGER enters down left.]*

**GRIZELDA** What's this? Sending your precious Golden Goose on a mercy mission?

**QUEEN** Grizelda Golddigger! You are not welcome here.

**GRIZELDA** Don't say you would turn your own sister away when she has come for a visit.

**QUEEN** I can no longer call you sister when you have destroyed all the trust I had in you.

**GRIZELDA** I can't think what you are talking about.

**QUEEN** Too many times you have tried to steal Priscilla for your own greedy ends.

**GRIZELDA** Can you blame me? That goose can create gold – and I love gold! Shining and shimmering all day and night. I would have everything made of gold. My house, my furniture – even the plates I eat off.

**QUEEN** And what good would it do you?

**GRIZELDA** When my friends visit, they would see the luxury that surrounds me.

**QUEEN** Friends?

**GRIZELDA** Yes. I have three thousand five hundred and twenty friends on Instagram. They all adore me.

**QUEEN** Adore you, or what they could get from you?

**GRIZELDA** *[Sneering.]* You're just jealous. Just because you are Queen and hold the power of the Golden Quill doesn't mean you can criticise me.

**QUEEN** I think deep down you are a very lonely person. *[SHE turns to PRISCILLA.]* Come, Priscilla, we must prepare for your journey. Goodbye Grizelda.

*[The black tabs close, cutting off the QUEEN and PRISCILLA.]*

**GRIZELDA**

Lonely? I'm not lonely. But I've always wanted that Golden Goose and the power that goes with it. *[SHE produces a golden rope with a noose at one end.]* All I have to do is catch the Goose, and then I could usurp my sister and claim the throne and the Golden Quill for myself. *[She ad-libs to a reaction from the audience.]* I'll pay a visit to Ganderville and see the Squire who owes me a favour. He can help me capture the Golden Goose. Then I *shall* have everything I ever wanted.

*[SHE roars with laughter and exits down left as the QUEEN enters down right.]*

**QUEEN**

Now, Priscilla, start your journey and bring some happiness and prosperity to a dear old woman called Mother Goose.

SCENE CHANGE 1 – 2

*[PRISCILLA is seen flying across the proscenium arch as the lights fade and the scene changes to.....*

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SCENE 2 THE VILLAGE OF GANDERVILLE

*[Stage right is Mother Goose's cottage with a practical door. Stage left is a village inn, also with a practical door and up stage left is an entrance big enough to get a panto car on. A dustbin stands upstage of MOTHER GOOSE'S cottage. It has no bottom to it and, if possible, smoke should be able to rise out of it. The CHORUS OF VILLAGERS is singing.]*

CHORUS NUMBER

*[During the number, JACK GOOSE enters.]*

**JACK** Hi everyone.

**ALL** Hello Jack.

**1st. MAN** How are you today?

**JACK** Well, I've fed the chickens, milked the cow, cleaned out the stable and ploughed the lower field. Now I'm ready to enjoy myself for the rest of the day.

*[HE sings the rest of the number with the CHORUS. At the end of the song, the 1<sup>st</sup> GIRL speaks to JACK.]*

**1st. GIRL** Jack, have you heard that the Squire is coming here today and that he intends to increase our rents?

**JACK** What?

**2nd. MAN** It's true. I've heard the same thing. He seems to have changed recently, ever since that strange woman arrived.

**2nd. GIRL** If we have to pay higher rents, we'll never have enough to live on.

**3rd. MAN** *[Looking off.]* Here comes his niece, Jill. See what she has to say about it?

*[JILL enters.]*

**JILL** Hello, everyone.

**ALL** Hello, Jill.

**JACK** *[Getting romantic.]* Hello Jill. How are you today?

**JILL** All the better for being here.

**4th. MAN** Go on, Jack, ask her.

**ALL** Yes - go on. etc.

**JILL** Ask me what?

**JACK** We've heard that your uncle, the Squire, is coming here today to put up our rents.

**JILL** Oh - I'm afraid it's true.

**ALL** What? But he can't. It's not right. etc.

**JILL** I've begged and begged him not to do it, but he won't listen to me. I don't know what the matter is with him lately. Since that mysterious woman came to see him, his whole character has changed. He shouts at everyone and keeps talking about making more money. I just can't understand it.

**SQUIRE** *[Off.]* Jill. Is that you?

**JACK** Look, here he comes.

*[The SQUIRE enters.]*

**SQUIRE** *[Gruffly.]* What are you doing mixing with these peasants?

**JILL** Uncle, they're my friends.

**SQUIRE** *[Sneering.]* Friends? You can't be friends with these rag-a-muffins. Remember who you are. *[HE looks at JACK.]* Who's that?

**JILL** It's Jack. Mother Goose's son.

**SQUIRE** Mother Goose, eh? She's on my list for a rent increase. *[HE takes out a scroll. It unrolls, and one end lands on his foot.]* Ow!

**JACK** But you can't put up our rent. We pay enough now. Any more and we'll go bankrupt.

**SQUIRE** *[Shouting and moving towards JACK.]* Good, then I'll throw you and your family out and get in some tenants who can pay.

**JILL** Uncle, you can't.

**SQUIRE** I can and I will.

**ALL** But it's just not fair. etc.

**SQUIRE** You might as well get used to the idea. You're all going to have your rent doubled. *[Gasps all round. He smiles sweetly.]* Correction. Sorry, I seem to have made a mistake. *[Suddenly bellowing again.]* Trebled!

**JACK** You can't do that.

**SQUIRE** Just try and stop me. *[As though making a speech.]* Now is not the winter of discounted rents! *[ALL moan.]* Now, clear off all of you. I'll be around later for your money. *[CHORUS start to exit. HE speaks to Jill.]* I'm just off to do a spot of peasant shooting!

**MAN** Don't you mean *pheasant*?

**SQUIRE** *[Face to face with the MAN.]* I know what I mean!

*[CHORUS exit.]*

**JILL** Uncle, what has come over you? You never used to be like this. Ever since that strange woman came to visit you, you've changed.

**SQUIRE** Nonsense. I don't know what you're talking about. I have a position to hold and a job to do. And part of that job is collecting the rents. *[HE starts to sound like GRIZELDA.]* I must have more money. Lots and lots of lovely money.

**JILL** *[Weeping.]* Oh uncle.

**SQUIRE** Don't start all that weeping. Remember how I took you in and gave you a good home after your parents died? I should have thought you would have been with me in this matter instead of siding with this peasant. *[HE exits.]*

**JILL** Jack, why is he like this?

**JACK** I don't know. But I do know this: one day I shall make my fortune and be able to give you everything you want. I'll show that uncle of yours that I am worthy of you.

**JILL** I don't care whether you're a prince or a pauper, I love you just as you are.

DUET - JACK & JILL

*[At the end of the song, there is a loud noise off stage of a car engine, car backfiring and a car horn. MOTHER GOOSE enters in a car. As always, SHE is wearing an outrageous dress and has a bonnet with a mass of feathers around the brim. SHE also has a shopping bag with her.]*

**M G** Help! Help! I can't stop! *[The car rolls across the stage and is stopped by JACK and JILL. If possible, the bonnet should pop open with a bang.]*

**JACK** Mother, what's happened?

**M G** The brakes broke. *[SHE gets out of the car.]* Ooooooh, my bottom gear will never be the same again. Thank you for stopping me my dears. Oh look - *[SHE adjusts her bust.]* I've had a nasty bump in a built-up area!

**JACK** Isn't it about time you took your driving test?

**M G** I did take it, but I failed for running over a rabbit.

**JILL** You can't fail for running over a rabbit.

**M G** You can if it's hanging in the butcher's window. Now, where's that good-for-nothing brother of yours? *[SHE calls.]* Billy! Billy, where are you? Have you seen him today?

**JACK** No mother. He was still in bed when I went down to plough the lower field.

**M G** That lazy so and so. I wanted him to help me unload the car.

**JILL** We'll do that for you, Mother Goose.

**M G** Oh, what good children you are. *[JACK and JILL take the parcels from the back of the car into the house, stage right. MOTHER GOOSE gets her shopping bag.]* Oh dear, what a day....*[SHE spots the audience and does a double-take.]* Oh hello. You are there. I thought you were just a pigment of my infatuation! Just arrived, have you? On a day trip? *[Local coach firm.]* special is it? Welcome to our little village. As you've probably guessed, I'm Mother Goose. I live here with my two sons, Back and Jilly - er, I mean Jack and Billy!

We're very happy, but we're very poor. [*"Ah!" from audience.*] Thank you. There will be a collection on the way out! I'm a widow, you know. My dear old husband left me twenty-five years ago. I sent him to the shops for a cabbage, and he never came back. [*SHE starts to get tearful.*] It was terrible. [*Then normal voice.*] I had to open a can of peas!! – Mind you, I do miss him. He was always full of good advice. It was him who said to me, 'Never take a laxative and sleeping pill on the same night!' [*Reaction with audience.*] Anyway, I've just been shopping, but I do hate it at this time of the year, don't you girls? There are crowds of people everywhere. All that pushing and shoving. I was in 'Toy Boys R Us' when a big, burly man picked me up and shouted, 'Where do you put the batteries?' I wouldn't have minded, but the assistant told him! Ooooh! But I do like a bargain. I'll buy anything that's marked down. Last week I came home with an escalator! What do you think of the hat? It's made out of real goose feathers. I picked it up for a *poultry* sum!

[*The CHORUS enter.*] Hello, all. How are you today?

**1st. BOY** Fine Mother Goose. How are you?

**M G** All the better for seeing you. [*To some of the younger Villagers.*] Ah, but you're all so young. When I was your age, your fathers used to come and call for me and take me to all those exotic places in town. The 'Pig and Whistle', the 'Butcher's Arms'. Yes, there was many a happy night spent in the butcher's arms. Playing darts or scrumming down with the local rugby team.

SONG - DAME AND CHORUS

[*At the end of the song, MOTHER GOOSE crosses to her house.*] Take the car to the garage, will you, my dears? Tell them I want my big end sorting out. I'm going to find that lazy son of mine. Billy.

[*Some of the younger CHORUS push the car off UL. MOTHER GOOSE exits into her house. BILLY peeps around the DR entrance.*]

**BILLY** Hi folks. Has she gone? [*HE crosses C.*] Thank goodness for that. She only wants me to do some chores around the house, and I've not stopped since I got up about half an hour ago. First, I had to have a wash, then I got dressed, and then I had my breakfast. I'm ready for a nap now. That's my problem. I'm always falling asleep, and my mum gets really mad with me. I say, do you think you could help me? If you see me dozing off, could you wake me up? Just shout out "Wake up, Billy". Could you do that? You know what we're going to do now, don't you? That's right, we're going to practice it. I'll pretend to doze off, and you shout. [*HE pretends to sleep. Audience shouts.*] Have you done it yet? That'll never wake me. You've got to be much louder. Let's try again. [*Repeat business.*] That's great. Thank you very much.

**M G** [*Off.*] Billy! Where are you?

**BILLY** Oh, heck, it's my mum. She's after me to do some chores. I'll have to hide - but where?

[*HE sees a dustbin up stage of the house and jumps into it. MOTHER GOOSE enters from the house carrying a dustpan.*]

**M G** Where is that boy? You know, I felt sure I heard his voice a minute ago. Have you seen him? [*Audience starts to shout. BILLY lifts the lid and "shushes" them. The dustbin has no bottom to enable BILLY to move about. There now follows the "it's behind you" routine.*] He's behind me? Where, over here? [*SHE crosses UR as BILLY in the bin runs UL.*] Oh, you mean over here. [*SHE crosses UL as BILLY runs back UR.*] He's not here. [*SHE crosses back to DC.*]

Oh, boys and girls, you're having me on. I must get on. I'm cleaning out the fireplace, and I've got to empty these hot ashes into the dustbin. *[SHE crosses to the bin, lifts the lid and tips the contents of the pan in. Smoke starts to rise from the bin.]*

**BILLY** Help! Help! I'm burning, I'm burning! *[At this moment, a CHORUS BOY enters from the pub stage left carrying a tray with a glass and a soda syphon on. In one move, MOTHER GOOSE takes the syphon and squirts it into the bin, puts the syphon back, picks up the glass and downs the contents in one, replaces the glass, and the BOY exits.]* Help! Help! I'm drowning, I'm drowning! *[MOTHER GOOSE takes him by the ear as HE climbs out of the bin.]*

**M G** I might have guessed it would be you. Where have you been? I've been looking for you all over the place, you lazy good-for-nothing. I need some help with the housework.

**BILLY** Don't worry, mum. I'll see to that for you.

**M G** You mean you'll help your poor old mum?

**BILLY** No, but I know a man who can.

**M G** Oh, you get worse. Now get in there and start work. I want the windows washed, the garden dug, the floors swept..... *[SHE continues listing household chores. BILLY falls asleep. Audience shouts out. BILLY wakes.]*

**BILLY** Thanks a lot.

**M G** ....I want you to defrost the dog and de-flea the fridge, and when you've done all that, I want you to put all the recycling out. *[To the audience.]* We're very green in Ganderville, you know.

**BILLY** Mum, that's an awful lot of work. Don't you think it would be a good idea to get in some hired help?

**M G** Hired help? Hired help? Do you know how much that would cost? Where am I going to get the money to pay for hired help? Haven't you heard that the Squire is coming for his rent today, and where do you think I'm going to get that from?

**BILLY** Don't you worry about the Squire. He can't keep putting the rents up. *[The SQUIRE enters. BILLY doesn't see him.]* When I see him, I'm going to give him a piece of my mind. I'll go up to him, and I'll show him a karate chop, and I'll say..... *[HE turns and sees the SQUIRE.]* Oh, hello Squire, pleased to meet you! *[HE dashes off.]*

**M G** Hello Squire, pleased to meet you. What good will that do? *[SHE turns and sees the SQUIRE.]* Oh, hello Squire, pleased to meet you!

**SQUIRE** Ah, Mother Goose. I've been looking everywhere for you.

**M G** *[To audience.]* Oh, I think I've clicked.

**SQUIRE** My dear lady, according to my records – *[HE unrolls his scroll, again dropping it on his foot.]* – oooow! – You owe three years' back rent, which, in case you haven't heard, has been trebled.

**M G** Trebled? You must be from *[Local council.]*

**SQUIRE** Where's the rent?

**M G** What won the 3.30 at Haydock Park?

**SQUIRE** I'm not interested in what won the 3.30 at Haydock Park.

**M G** You should be, your rent was on it.

**SQUIRE** This is your last warning. If you don't pay up by the end of the day, you and your family will be evicted, ousted, removed, [*HE crosses to the exit.*] transplanted, ejected, thrown out onto the street. [*HE exits. MOTHER GOOSE crosses to the exit.*]

**M G** Why you..... [*The SQUIRE returns.*]

**SQUIRE** Do I make myself perfectly plain?

**M G** I'll just pop a few things into a case. [*The SQUIRE exits. SHE crosses dramatically around the stage.*] Oh, he's resolute. He'll persecute. We'll be destitute. I'll be pros.....trate with grief! Oh, what's to become of us? We'll be ruined – ruined. [*To the audience.*] All together now – RUINED!!!

[*SHE exits into the house. The QUEEN enters down right.*]

UNDERScore

**QUEEN** Poor Mother Goose, life has been hard for you, so it's time for some good luck to come your way. That is why I have arranged for Priscilla to come and live here with the Goose family. Come along, Priscilla. Come and see your new home. [*PRISCILLA enters upstage and crosses down centre.*] Now pretend to be lost and looking for somewhere to stay. It's time to meet the Goose family. [*The QUEEN exits. PRISCILLA looks around and then crosses to Mother Goose's door and knocks with her beak.*]

**M G** [*Off.*] I'm out! [*PRISCILLA knocks again.*] Go away, I'm watching Coronation Street! [*SHE comments on a topical item. PRISCILLA knocks again and stands upstage of the door. MOTHER GOOSE enters.*] There's no one there. I'm sure I heard someone knocking. [*Audience reacts. PRISCILLA crosses down and nudges MOTHER GOOSE.*] Oh, what a big budgie! Whatever are you? [*PRISCILLA whispers.*] A goose? I'll bet you can eat more than three Shredded Wheat! A goose, eh? That's the same as my name. Pleased to meet you. [*BOTH curtsey to each other. Ratchet sound as MOTHER GOOSE rises.*] What's your name? [*PRISCILLA whispers.*] Polyfilla!! That's a funny name. [*PRISCILLA shakes her head.*] Oh, it's not Polyfilla. Sorry. [*PRISCILLA whispers again.*] Godzilla!! [*PRISCILLA stamps her foot and whispers again.*] Oh, Priscilla. What a pretty name. Tell me, what are you doing here in our village? [*PRISCILLA whispers.*] You're lost? [*PRISCILLA nods.*] Well I must try and find your mummy and daddy. [*PRISCILLA looks down sadly.*] No mummy or daddy? How sad. [*SHE starts to cry.*] And you've got nowhere in the world to stay? [*PRISCILLA shakes her head. MOTHER GOOSE cries even louder. PRISCILLA cries, and water shoots from her eyes.*] Oh, here, stop crying now and blow your nose. [*SHE takes out a large hanky and puts it to PRISCILLA'S beak. Loud noise. MOTHER GOOSE holds up the hanky – there is a large hole in it.*] What a shame. Nowhere to live. Shall I let her stay with me, boys and girls? [*Reaction.*] Well, that's settled then. You can stay here and become one of the family. [*PRISCILLA runs around dancing for joy.*] Now I must introduce you to everyone. Jack, Billy. Where are you? [*JACK and BILLY enter, followed by JILL and the CHORUS.*] Look, boys, I want you to meet my new friend.

**BILLY** Mother! We'll never get her in the oven!

**M G** You stupid boy. This is Priscilla. We're not going to eat her. She's going to be one of the family.

**JACK** Oh, mother, whoever heard of a goose for a sister?

**M G** Well, you've got a monkey for a brother.

**JILL** She is lovely, Mother Goose. Where is she from?

**M G** I don't know, but I bet she's starving. Billy, get that bucket of golden corn and give her something to eat.

**BILLY** OK. *[HE gets a bucket from UR and feeds PRISCILLA. SHE eats very quickly. ALL move in to watch her. BILLY turns the bucket upside down.]* My word. She must have been hungry. *[HE puts the bucket away. Suddenly, PRISCILLA starts quacking and running around the stage.]*

EGG LAYING MUSIC

**M G** What's happening? *[PRISCILLA ends DL and lays a golden egg. JILL picks it up.]*

**JILL** Look everyone, she's laid an egg.

**M G** What a clever girl. I'm a granny.

**BILLY** It looks a bit off to me. It's yellow.

**JACK** That's not yellow. It's gold.

**ALL** Gold! *[PRISCILLA quacks and runs around the stage again, ending up DR. SHE lays a larger egg. JACK picks it up.]*

**JACK** She's done it again!

**M G** Twins!

**JACK** This one's even larger. *[PRISCILLA quacks and runs around again, this time ending UL. SHE strains and strains. ALL go with the motion. There is a loud bang (or maroon), and SHE moves away to reveal the biggest egg.]*

**BILLY** *[Picking it up and staggering.]* Look at the size of it!

*[PRISCILLA walks slightly, knock-kneed, down stage.]*

**JACK** Mum, you do realise that with these golden eggs, our money troubles are over.

**JILL** Jack's right. You're rich beyond your wildest dreams.

**BILLY** Does that mean we can live happily ever after?

**JACK** Yes.

**BILLY** Well, that's the end of the story then. *[To the audience.]* We hope you enjoyed yourselves. Ta ta all!

**M G** No, we must celebrate and have a big party. Thanks to Priscilla, we shall never want for anything again! Three cheers for Priscilla.

**BILLY** May she never be egg-bound!

**M G** Hip hip –

**ALL** Hooray. Etc.

COMPANY NUMBER

*[At the end of the number, the lights fade, and the scene changes to.....]*

SCENE CHANGE 2 – 3

PantoScripts Perusal

SCENE 3 OUTSIDE MOTHER GOOSE'S NEW HOUSE

*[A front cloth scene. GRIZELDA enters DL carrying the rope.]*

**GRIZELDA** So, the magic bird has arrived and is now living with Mother Goose. That will work well with my plan. Now I will get my servant, the Squire, to carry out the next part. Come here, my sly, willing one. I have work for you.

*[SHE makes a pass and the SQUIRE enters R. in a trance.]* Listen to what I say and carry out my every wish.

**SQUIRE** I hear and obey, oh, mistress.

*[QUEEN enters DR. GRIZELDA hides the rope.]*

**QUEEN** Hold on there. Nothing this pathetic creature can do will help you get to Mother Goose. She is in my protection so long as Priscilla is with her. *[SHE starts to get carried away.]* No matter how much you try, how much you scheme, Mother Goose will never part with Priscilla. Haven't you realised yet that the powers of goodness will always triumph and evil will always be thwarted?

**GRIZELDA** Have you quite finished, Dame Judy Dench? With overacting like that, you ought to be at the *[Name of a rival theatre or company.]* Now, why don't you run along and play with the pixies and elves?

**QUEEN** Oh, you can sneer all you like, but I've only one thing more to say to you: "Hands off the goose!" *[SHE exits.]*

**GRIZELDA** Thank goodness for that. Now, where were we? *[Turning back to the SQUIRE.]* Ah, yes, I was just about to give you your instructions. You must acquire Mother Goose's confidence. Get in her good books; get her to trust you. Only then can I start to put the rest of my plan into action. But look, here she comes. Remember that you answer only to me and must obey my every command.

*[SHE makes a pass and exits. The SQUIRE comes out of his trance as MOTHER GOOSE enters R. Now rich, SHE is dressed outrageously in a fine outfit.]*

**SQUIRE** Ah, dear lady. How are you today?

**M G** None the better for seeing you – and don't think you're getting any more rent out of me. I'm fully paid up and no more in arrears of my arrears.

**SQUIRE** Quite so, quite so.

**M G** And besides, I now own my own 'des res'! What do you think of the place?

**SQUIRE** Magnificent. Quite magnificent. I was just admiring it when you came along. It must have cost a fortune.

**M G** It did. Mind you, I can afford it now. I've got a little nest egg, so to speak.

**SQUIRE** It must be wonderful to have money. *[MOTHER GOOSE stares at him as he pleads poverty.]* I mean, everyone thinks I'm well off because I'm the Squire. But things are so expensive these days. And the taxes!

There's land tax, property tax, and capital gains tax, not to mention VAT and PAYE! And I'm still paying off my student loan! Oh, it's a hard life.

**M G** Well, if you're down on your uppers, how would you like to make some easy money?

**SQUIRE** Easy money? I should say so.

**M G** Are you a betting man?

**SQUIRE** I've been known to have a little flutter.

**M G** There's no answer to that! Anyway, I'll bet you a fiver that I can prove that you're not here.

**SQUIRE** *[Aside.]* The woman's mad. All those eggs must have addled her brain. *[To her.]* Of course I'm here. I just saw myself getting off the number nine bus.

**M G** Is it a bet then?

**SQUIRE** Certainly. *[THEY both hold money out.]* All right, prove I'm not here.

**M G** Well, you're not in London, are you?

**SQUIRE** No, of course I'm not in London!

**M G** And you're not in Paris?

**SQUIRE** How observant. No, I'm not in Paris.

**M G** And you're not in Vienna?

**SQUIRE** I'm definitely not in Vienna.

**M G** Well, if you're in none of those places, I surmise you must be somewhere else.

**SQUIRE** The woman's so brilliant! Yes, I must be somewhere else.

**M G** And if you're somewhere else, you can't be here. *[SHE takes his money and exits R.]*

**SQUIRE** What? The nerve of it. I'll have to try that on some unsuspecting idiot and get my money back.

*[BILLY enters L.]*

**BILLY** Hello, Squire. What are you up to?

**SQUIRE** *[Looking Heavenward.]* Thank you! Ah, Billy, I've just been working out an absolutely marvellous way to make money. Do you want to have a go?

*[BILLY has fallen asleep. Audience reacts.]*

**BILLY** Thank you. *[To SQUIRE.]* Sorry, Squire, what were you saying?

**SQUIRE** I said I've just been working out an absolutely marvellous way to make money. Do you want to have a go?

**BILLY** Oh, yes please. I never get enough pocket money from my mother. What do I do?

**SQUIRE** Well, I will bet you ten pounds that I can prove you're not here.

*[BILLY stares at him. Then looks at himself and all around where he is standing. He then looks at the audience and taps his forehead as though miming "nutcase".]*

**BILLY** All right, Squire, here's my money. Now prove to me that I'm not here. *[THEY both hold money out.]*

**SQUIRE** Well, you're not in Oddington?

**BILLY** No, I'm not in Oddington.

**SQUIRE** And you're not in Dymchurch?

**BILLY** No, I'm not in Dymchurch.

**SQUIRE** And you're not in Little Hampton?

**BILLY** No, and I've no intentions of going to Little Hampton!

**SQUIRE** Well, if you're in none of those places, you must be somewhere else.

**BILLY** Of course, I must.

**SQUIRE** And if you're somewhere else, you're not here. *[Takes money.]* Thank you very much. *[HE exits L.]*

**BILLY** What a swindle. I've been diddled out of my dosh! I've got to get it back somehow. Ah, look who's coming.

*[MOTHER GOOSE enters R.]*

**M G** Billy, what are you doing stood standing there? Waiting for a cup of tea?

**BILLY** No, I'm waiting for a mug.

**M G** Well, you won't find any around here.

**BILLY** Oh, I shouldn't be too sure! How would you like to make me some easy money?

**M G** What?

**BILLY** I mean, how would you like to make some easy money?

**M G** *[Giving the audience a knowing look.]* Oh, I don't know. I hardly know what to do with all that I've got now.

**BILLY** That's not fair. I only want the chance to earn a bit more pocket money.

**M G** Oh, go on then. What do I do?

**BILLY** I will bet you twenty pounds that I can prove that you're not here.

**M G** *[To the audience.]* You know I've got that feeling of déjà vu! *[To BILLY.]* Go on then, prove I'm not here! *[THEY both hold money out.]*

**BILLY** Right here goes. Now you're not in er..... Upper Wallop?

**M G** No, I'm not in Upper Wallop!

**BILLY** And you're not in Lower Wallop?

**M G** No, Billy, I'm not in Lower Wallop!

**BILLY** And you're not in Middle Wallop?

**M G** I'm not in any Wallop!

**BILLY** Well, if you're not in any of those places, you must be somewhere else.

**M G** Of course I must.

**BILLY** And if you're somewhere else, you're not here.

**M G** Quite right!

*[SHE takes money and starts to exit.]*

**BILLY** Just a minute. That's my money. I've just won that. You're nicking my notes.

**M G** Don't be silly. How could I be nicking your notes? I'm not here.

*[SHE exits, followed by BILLY as the lights fade and the scene changes to.....*

SCENE CHANGE 3 – 4

SCENE 4. MOTHER GOOSE'S KITCHEN

*[There is a table centre with things for the baking scene underneath. A clothes horse stands to the right with BILLY asleep behind it. Up left is a work unit with a radio on it. Also, a goldfish bowl with water and a fish in it – (a piece of carrot will do) – and a vase of roses. The CHORUS is on as maids and servants doing a number.]*

CHORUS NUMBER

*[At the end of the number, JACK, JILL and PRISCILLA enter.]*

**JACK** Hi everyone. How are you enjoying working for my mother?

**1<sup>st</sup>. GIRL** It's great, Jack. She's so kind.

**2<sup>nd</sup>. GIRL** And we love seeing Priscilla every day.

**JILL** There you are, Priscilla, you've got a fan club. *[PRISCILLA walks around with pride.]*

**JACK** She's ready for her daily feed of golden corn.

**1<sup>st</sup>. MAN** We'll do that for you, Jack. We've finished tidying up in here.

**JACK** Thanks very much.

**2<sup>nd</sup>. MAN** This way, Priscilla. *[CHORUS and PRISCILLA exit.]*

**JILL** Oh, Jack, I'm so glad that everything has worked out well for your family. Your good fortune has helped the village. You know most of the people who used to work for my uncle have left him to come here.

**JACK** I bet that made him mad.

**JILL** I don't know. Some of the time, he's all sweetness and light and the other times he seems to walk around in a trance, getting very angry. I don't know what to make of him.

**JACK** Well, just so long as he doesn't try and stop me seeing you.

**JILL** Nothing will ever do that.

*[MOTHER GOOSE enters. SHE wears an apron.]*

**M G** Hello, you two. Have you come to help me with the preparations for tonight's party?

**JILL** Well, I would like to, but I'm afraid I'm a terrible cook.

**JACK** And I've got very warm hands. No good for baking!

**M G** Mmm. I wonder where they've been to get so warm! Go on with you both – I'll get that lazy brother of yours to give me a hand.

**JACK** Thanks, mum. See you later.

*[JACK and JILL exit.]*

**M G** Billy. Billy, where are you? *[There is a snore from behind the clothes horse. MOTHER GOOSE moves it to one side to reveal BILLY.]* Look at that. Asleep again! *[Audience reacts. BILLY wakes up.]*

**BILLY** Thanks very much. Hello mum, I was just seeing if the washing was dry.

**M G** The washing may be dry, but don't think I'm still wet behind the ears! Now come and help me get the food ready for tonight's party.

**BILLY** OK. What do I do first?

**M G** Get me all the ingredients.

*[BILLY exits and returns with a small box. During the following, MOTHER GOOSE gets the table ready with things from underneath.]*

**BILLY** I don't know, I've never seen anything like it.

**M G** What?

**BILLY** This lot. Eating away ten to the dozen.

**M G** Who are?

**BILLY** *[Showing her the box.]* These greedy ants!

**M G** I said ingredients, not greedy ants. *[SHE clips him around the ears.]* Now I need a little flour.

**BILLY** A little flower. *[HE gets a rose from the vase and holds it out in front of her.]*

**M G** That's very sweet of you, but what am I supposed to do with it?

**BILLY** You said you wanted a little flower.

**M G** I meant a bag of flour, not a rose.

**BILLY** It's not a rose, it's a hyacinth!

**M G** It's a rose.

**BILLY** It's a hyacinth!

**M G** Very well, clever clogs. Spell hyacinth.

**BILLY** Er.....It's a rose!

**M G** *[Grabbing the rose and hitting him with it.]* Stop wasting time and get me some water. *[MOTHER GOOSE gets flour from under the table and puts it in a mixing bowl. BILLY crosses to the goldfish bowl, takes out the carrot fish and brings the bowl to the table.]*

**BILLY** *[To the "fish".]* Sorry to disturb you.

**M G** Now we pour some of the water in. *[SHE takes the goldfish bowl and pours some water, then gives it back to BILLY, who puts the "fish" back in and returns it to the work unit.]*

**BILLY** *[To "fish".]* Thanks very much!

**M G** Now I need some eggs.

**BILLY** *[Picking up an egg from the work unit.]* Here you are. *[HE throws it to MOTHER GOOSE.]*

**M G** Billy, don't throw it. I was never any good at cricket! *[SHE catches the egg and puts it in the bowl as BILLY throws another one.]* Billy, stop it and bring the third one over here.

**BILLY** All right, mum. *[HE crosses to the table, trips and smashes the egg on the table.]*

**M G** Now look what you've done!

**BILLY** I'm sorry. I got carried away.

**M G** You'll be carried away unconscious if you're not careful.

**BILLY** I'm very, very, very, very sorry. I'll clear it up immediately if not sooner. *[HE wipes the egg off the table with one hand and puts all the mess in the other hand.]* Are you cross with me?

**M G** Cross? Of course I'm cross. You've made a right mess of my new Ikea kitchen.

**BILLY** But look, I've cleaned it all up. Would it help if I said I was very sorry?

**M G** I don't know about that.

**BILLY** Please.

**M G** Well..... I don't know.

**BILLY** Palsy walsy again?

**M G** All right. Palsy Walsy.

**BILLY** Shake on it! *[THEY shake. MOTHER GOOSE gets egg on her hands.]*

**M G** You little terror! Look at what a mess I'm in. Billy Goose, I'm going to get you for this! *[SHE starts to chase him around the kitchen.]*

**BILLY** Hey, keep away from me. *[HE picks up a blown egg from the unit.]* I've got another egg here. Want to catch?

**M G** Don't you dare throw it.

**BILLY** They call these "chucky eggs".

**M G** Why do they call them "chucky eggs"?

**BILLY** Because you can chuck 'em! *[HE throws the egg, which misses MOTHER GOOSE as she ducks and goes into the audience.]*

I'm terribly sorry, madam, but you should have kept your mouth shut!

**M G** Billy, stop all this. We're short now for the recipe. *[To the member of the audience.]* You couldn't cough it up for me, could you? *[THEY cross back to the table.]*

**BILLY** What next?

**M G** Beat it!

**BILLY** If that's what you want. *[HE starts to exit.]*

**M G** Where are you going?

**BILLY** You told me to 'beat it'.

**M G** I didn't mean beat it, you potty party preparer. I meant beat the mixture. Here, use this whisk.

**BILLY** Well, why didn't you say? *[HE takes the whisk and beats the mixture. It goes all over MOTHER GOOSE'S face.]*

**M G** Hey, look what you're doing. *[SHE hits him. HE drops the bowl behind the table and picks up an identical one with dough in it.]*

**BILLY** *[Slapping the dough onto the table.]* There we are. All done.

**M G** Now we have to knead the dough.

**BILLY** Do what?

**M G** Knead the dough.

**BILLY** If you say so. *[HE climbs onto the table and kneels on the dough.]*

**M G** What are you doing?

**BILLY** I'm kneading the dough!

**M G** Not like that. Really, you'll drive me out of my mind.

**BILLY** Well, you won't have far to go, will you?

**M G** *[Looking at her watch or the clock.]* Look at the time. There's a new cooking programme on the radio. Turn it on and see what the recipe is.

*[BILLY turns on the radio and FEMALE VOICE is heard.]*

**RADIO** Good morning, ladies.

**BILLY** I'm not a lady!

**RADIO** I wasn't talking to you.

**BILLY** What a cheek.

**RADIO** Today, I'm going to give you the recipe for sausage rolls.

**M G** Oh, splendid. Just what I need for tonight's party.

**BILLY** I don't like sausage rolls.

**RADIO** If Mother Goose wants sausage rolls, Mother Goose can have sausage rolls.

**M G** So there, Billy Goose. Now shut it and listen to the recipe.

**RADIO** You will need a large baking tray, lightly greased.

**M G** *[Getting a baking tray from under the table.]* Here we are. Now then, grease. *[SHE looks at BILLY.]* Ah, I know. *[SHE grabs his head and rubs his hair on the baking tray.]*

**BILLY** *[Protesting.]* Owwww!

**RADIO** Now, the next thing you need is two pounds of sausage meat.

**M G** It's in the larder. I'll get it while you clean up in here. *[SHE exits.]*

**RADIO** Yes, you clean up in here! This kitchen is a disgrace!

**BILLY** Cheek! *[HE hits the radio again, and there is a whistling sound.]* Oh dear, I've lost the station. *[HE fiddles with the radio until a MALE VOICE comes on.]* There we are.

**RADIO** Hello. This is Radio Five Live with a beginner's guide to football.

**BILLY** What?

*[MOTHER GOOSE re-enters with the sausage meat in a large ball. NB: You will need a real ball painted to represent sausage meat for the following scene.]*

**M G** Here's the sausage meat.

**RADIO** Now follow these instructions.

**M G** Good grief, what's happened to her voice?

**BILLY** *[In a panic.]* Must have a cold! *[To the radio.]* What now?

**RADIO** First, we have to warm up. Without a proper warm-up, you could suffer a severe injury like breaking a leg.

**M G** How can you break a leg making sausage rolls?

**BILLY** He's, I mean she's the expert.

**M G** I suppose you're right. Here goes then. *[THEY both do some physical warm-ups.]*

**RADIO** Now jog around and gently throw it to one another.

**BILLY** Come on. *[THEY run around throwing the sausage meat.]*

**M G** This can't be right!