

Lazy Jack
(An English Folk Tale)

A Reader's Theatre Adaptation
Retold by Adam C. Sharp

Characters:

Narrator

Jack

Mother

Farmer 1

Cow Keeper

Farmer 2

Baker

Tomcat

Butcher

Father

Daughter

Donkey

NARRATOR: Once upon a time there was a boy named Jack who lived with his mother. They were very poor. The mother worked hard making clothes but Jack, well he did not work hard at all.

MOTHER: Jack.

JACK: Yes, mother?

MOTHER: All you do is lie in the sun all day and watch the sky.

JACK: Yes, mother.

NARRATOR: One day, his mother finally made a decision.

MOTHER: Jack.

JACK: Yes, mother.

MOTHER: You will no longer have any food until you work for it.

JACK: But, why?

MOTHER: Because, I say so.

JACK: But-

MOTHER: Jack.

JACK: But-

MOTHER: I have made my decision.

JACK: Fine. I will find work tomorrow.

NARRATOR: And, tomorrow came. And, Jack went to a nearby farmer for work.

JACK: (As he walks and guides the audience on his journey) Do you want to come with me? (To audience) Okay, then. Da-di-di-da-da, da-di-di-da-da, da-di-di-da-da.

FARMER: Hello there.

JACK: Hello, can I help you plow today?

FARMER: Sure.

NARRATOR: And, for his hard work he was given a penny. But, as Jack made his way home.

JACK: (With audience) Da-di-di-da-da, da-di-di-da-da, da-di-di-da-da.

NARRATOR: He lost the penny in a brook.

MOTHER: Jack.

NARRATOR: His mother said.

JACK: Yes, mother?

MOTHER: You ninny. You should have put the penny in your pocket.

JACK: I'll do so another time.

NARRATOR: The next day, Jack went out again for work, but this time to a cow keeper.

JACK: (To audience) Let's go make some milk. Moo-moo-moo, Moo-moo-moo, Moo-moo-moo.

COW KEEPER: You can milk my cow for the day and I'll pay you with a jar of milk for your day's work.

JACK: Okay.

NARRATOR: And, so Jack put the jar of milk in the pocket of his jacket.

JACK: (With audience) Moo-moo-moo, Moo-moo-moo, Moo-moo-moo.

NARRATOR: But, the milk spilled out everywhere.

MOTHER: Jack.

NARRATOR: His mother said.

JACK: Yes, mother?

MOTHER: You doubleduper. You should have carried the jar of milk on your head.

JACK: I'll do so next time.

NARRATOR: The following day, Jack went to another farmer to help make some cheese.

JACK: (To audience) Cheeeeese-cheese-cheese-cheese.
Let's go make some cheeeeese-cheese-cheese-cheese.

FARMER 2: Hello.

NARRATOR: Said the farmer.

JACK: Can I help make some cream cheese for you?

FARMER: Okay. And, I'll pay you with some cheese to
take home for yourself.

JACK: Mmmm. Sounds good.

NARRATOR: So, Jack did the day's work and took the
cheese.

JACK: (To audience) I like cream cheese.

NARRATOR: He placed it on his head and began his way
home.

JACK: (To audience) Cheeeeese-cheese-cheese-cheese.
I'm going home with some cheeeeese-cheese-cheese-
cheese.

NARRATOR: But, the cheese melted in the hot sun then
spilled on the ground.

ALL: Ewww!

NARRATOR: And, some was tangled in his hair.

JACK: Oh, no.

ALL: Ewww!

NARRATOR: When he finally made his way home his mother said to him.

MOTHER: Jack.

JACK: (Displeased) Yes. Mother.

MOTHER: You slippy-sloppy-sap. You have the cheese all in your hair.

JACK: I know.

ALL: Ewww!

MOTHER: You should have carried it carefully in your hands.

JACK: I'll do so another time.

NARRATOR: The next day, after he washed the cheese out of his hair, he went to see the Baker for some work.

JACK: (To audience) Ah, the baker, this will be fun. La-di-da-da-da, la-di-da-da-da.

BAKER: Hello, can I help you?

NARRATOR: Said the Baker.

JACK: I'm here for some work.

BAKER: Okay. You can help me make some bread.

JACK: Okay.

NARRATOR: And, so he did. And, what do you think he was given for his work? A tomcat. Yep, a tomcat.

TOMCAT: (Sweet) Meow.

BAKER: That's all I have to give.

TOMCAT: (Sweet) Meow.

JACK: Okay. I'll take it.

NARRATOR: So, Jack carried it home with his hands.

JACK: I have myself a kitty. La-di-da-da-da, la-di-da-da-da.

TOMCAT: (Less sweet) Meow.

NARRATOR: But-

JACK: La-di-da-da-da. Ouch! La-di-da-da-da. Ouch!
Ouch!

TOMCAT: (Mean) Meow, meow. Hiss, hiss, hiss.

NARRATOR: But-

JACK: (To NARRATOR) Go on with it already. I'm getting scratched here from this wild animal.

TOMCAT: Hiss, hiss, hiss.

NARRATOR: Sorry. The cat scratched him too much and he had to let it go.

JACK: Thanks.

TOMCAT: (Stern) Meow.

MOTHER: Jack. You nimbly-knumbscull.

NARRATOR: Said Jack's Mother.

MOTHER: You should have tied it to a string and dragged it behind you.

JACK: You're telling me. I'll do so another time.

NARRATOR: The next day, Jack went to the Butcher this time.

JACK: (To audience) I do like my meat. Okay. Meety-meet-meet-meet, meety-meet-meet-meet, meety-meet-meet-meet.

BUTCHER: What can I do you for today?

NARRATOR: Said the Butcher.

JACK: Actually, I need some work.

BUTCHER: Good. And, I'll give you a pound of beef.

JACK: Sounds good to me.

NARRATOR: Jack worked hard and was given the beef at the end of the workday.

JACK: (To audience) This will taste good. Meety-meet-meet-meet, meety-meet-meet-meet, meety-meet-meet-meet.

NARRATOR: Jack tied it to a string as his mother suggested before.

JACK: (To audience) Meety-meet-meet-meet, meety-meet-meet-meet, meety-meet-meet-meet.

NARRATOR: But, the beef spoiled from sliding on the ground.

MOTHER: Jack!

NARRATOR: His mother said.

JACK: Yes, mother?

MOTHER: You ninnyhammer. You should have carried the meat on your shoulders.

JACK: Oh. Well, I'll do so another time.

NARRATOR: His mother had lost her patience and simply fed him cabbage.

JACK: Just cabbage. Aw, man.

NARRATOR: That's right. Just cabbage.

MOTHER: Tomorrow, you will go find work and do it right this time.

JACK: Yes, mother.

NARRATOR: Now, let me take a moment to introduce to you a very rich man with a very sad daughter who could not speak or hear.

DAUGHTER: (Shrugs)

FATHER: Anyone?

NARRATOR: Said the father.

FATHER: Can anyone help my daughter? I was told that she could only speak and hear again if she laughs. The first man who can make my daughter laugh will be her husband.

NARRATOR: Now, Jack went to work for another farmer and for his work he was given a donkey.

JACK: (To audience) Okay. Do-do-dah, do-do-dah, do-do-dah.

NARRATOR: Jack remembered what his mother said and he carried it on his shoulders.

DONKEY: Hee-haw.

JACK: This is heavy.

DONKEY: Hee-haw.

JACK: Do. do. dah. This is heavy. Do. do. dah.

NARRATOR: As strong as Jack was, he couldn't help but stagger. The daughter of the rich father happened to be looking out the window-

DAUGHTER: (Laughs and continues.)

NARRATOR: -as Jack was walking by with the donkey.

DONKEY: Hee-haw DAUGHTER: JACK: Do.
 Hee-haw (Laughs) do.
 Hee-haw dah.

NARRATOR: The donkey's legs wiggling about as Jack carried it made her laugh so hard she was cured.

DAUGHTER: That is so funny. That is sooooo funny!
(laughs)

FATHER: She can hear! She can speak!

NARRATOR: The father then stayed true to his promise and married them at once.

JACK: Hi.

DAUGHTER: Hi.

NARRATOR: And, Jack gained all the wealth he needed.

JACK: Hey! That's great. I'm a rich man!

NARRATOR: Yes. You are. And, the mother was happy. The moral of the story is, you never know what choices you can make and what is in store for the future. So-

ALL: Keep your mind open to your own possibilities.