

The Price of Paradise

by

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WRITERS NOTES:

This script is designed to be played with in whatever way you choose.

Feel free to perform one scene or both, whatever you feel you have time for or want to do.

If you have smaller children for whom the lines are a struggle, then it's fine to improvise around the idea.

Or turn it into a puppet show!!

The important thing is to Have Fun!!

CAST:

Sam - Paradise Help Desk Assistant

Mother - Jack and Red's Mother

Jack - Jack and the Beanstalk

Red - Little Red Riding Hood

All characters can be any gender.

If you want to change Mother to Father or even The Woodcutter, that is fine.

The same performer can play Sam and Mother or they can be played by different performers.

SET AND PROPS:

The props should ideally be homemade and look like children's drawings. You might want to make them from cardboard.

Or you could use toys or things you have in the house.

SCENE 1:

A customer help desk with a sign above saying "Paradise - we're here to help!"

At the desk stands, Sam, very smiley and wearing a brightly coloured top with a name badge on and "here to help!" printed on the back.

Muzak plays and Sam is looking at things on their phone.

Jack enters, pushing a trolley on which is piled a chicken, a golden harp and several golden eggs. Jack arrives at the help desk and waits for Sam to look up. Sam is so involved in their phone that they do not notice Jack. Eventually Jack sees the bell on the desk and rings it. Sam looks up.

SAM: Oh, hello!

JACK: Hi.

Sam looks surprised to see someone, disappears behind the desk and reappears with a piece of paper which they read from.

SAM: Thanks for calling the Paradise help desk. My name's Sam. How can I help you?

JACK: I haven't called you. I'm standing right in front of you.

SAM: Oh yes, sorry. Thanks for visiting the Paradise help desk. My name's Sam. How can I help you?

JACK: Are you new?

SAM: Kind of. We don't get many visitors. I mean, who's going to complain about Paradise? That's why I took the job really. I thought it would be easy.

JACK: Me.

SAM: Sorry?

JACK: Me. I want to complain.

Sam laughs.

SAM: Sure!

JACK: No, seriously. I want to make a complaint.

SAM: Really?

JACK: Yes.

SAM: About Paradise?

JACK: Yes.

SAM: Right. Okay. Um.... Right. I just need to... Sorry. I've never had to do one of these before. I'll just have to find the right...

Sam disappears down behind the desk and there is the sound of rummaging in boxes, things being tipped out etc. Eventually Sam reappears with an A4 folder marked COMPLAINTS.

Here we go.

Sam opens the folder to find it is empty. There are some notes stuck onto the inside cover of the folder. Sam reads them aloud.

Right. All complaints must be filled out on the enclosed sheets... But... Sorry, there don't seem to be any sheets.

JACK: You are kidding?

SAM: Hang on though. I'm sure we can do something here. We are Paradise after all!

Sam disappears again behind the counter and reappears with a notebook and pen.

Right, we'll use this.

Sam checks the notes in the folder again.

Name and address please.

JACK: Jack. Mother's Cottage, The Woods. Storyland.

SAM: Right.

Sam checks the notes again.

What is the nature of your complaint?

JACK: Well, I went up to the Giant's castle this morning, as usual to steal the harp and the chicken and/

SAM: Sorry. Can I interrupt? Is that okay?

JACK: If you must.

SAM: It's just... Did you say steal?

JACK: Yes. And that's/

SAM: Sorry! Interrupting again. I do apologise. It's just stealing is not possible in Paradise.

JACK: Well, that's exactly the problem.

SAM: Sorry?

JACK: That's the problem. I went up there and the Giant just handed his stuff over to me.

SAM: Great!

JACK: No! Not great. And to make it worse. He offered me a hug!

SAM: Ahhh, yes. Paradise at its best!

JACK: No! It can't work like this.

SAM: But it's perfect.

JACK: It may be perfect in some places but it'll never work here in Storyland.

SAM: I don't understand.

JACK: If I can't steal from the Giant then the Giant won't chase me and I won't have to cut down the beanstalk and the Giant won't fall from the sky etc etc etc.

Sam has been wincing at all these things.

SAM: Then it sounds like Paradise has done its job then. "Removing all conflict and creating an anger and pain free world for all."

JACK: But don't you see??

SAM: Some people do find it difficult to adjust to the change.

The Chicken lays another golden egg.

But look at this way. You now have a guilt free lifetime supply of golden eggs. I don't suppose I could...?

JACK: Hands off my eggs! Look. I can see I'm going to have to start at the beginning. Once Upon a time...

Little Red Riding Hood enters carrying a basket. Red storms up to the desk, ignoring Jack and rings the bell several times whilst looking right into Sam's face.

SAM: Hi. Thanks for visiting the Paradise help desk. My name's Sam. How can I help you?

JACK: Red!! I was here first.

RED: But it's urgent. I need to make a complaint.

JACK: So do I.

Sam checks his notes for Jack's name.

SAM: Jack, as I've pointed out. You don't seem to have anything that actually qualifies as a complaint. Please step aside.

Sam looks at Red.

Okay. Thanks for visiting the Paradise help desk. My name's Sam. May I take your name and address?

RED: Little Red Riding Hood, Mother's Cottage, The Woods. Storyland.

SAM: *(to Jack)* Isn't that where you live?

JACK: Yes. Unfortunately.

RED: *(to Jack)* Shut up! *(To Sam)* Sorry! *(To Jack)* Stop being annoying or I'll tell Mum what you've got hidden under your bed!

JACK: You wouldn't!

RED: Not if you let me go first.

JACK: Fine.

Jack steps out of Red's way.

RED: Thank you.

JACK: Good luck!

Sam is looking a little nervous.

SAM: Okay. What is the nature of your complaint?

RED: I was walking through the woods the I met the Wolf. He showed me the flowers as usual and all was going swimmingly.

SAM: That's what we like to hear. Sorry. Interrupting again. Do carry on.

RED: When I got to Granny's house. The Wolf had made Granny a stew and was cleaning the house while Granny sat in bed.

SAM: That sounds perfect. So what's the problem?

RED: What's the problem?! *(To Jack)* Who is this idiot?

JACK: *(to Red)* I told you.

RED: *(to Sam)* If the Wolf doesn't eat Granny then he can't dress up in her clothes and I can't mistake him for her and then get eaten and then rescued by the woodcutter etc etc etc...

SAM: Was this the kind of stuff that went on before Paradise took over here?

JACK/RED: Yes.

SAM: That must have been very traumatic. Would you like me to call someone? We could book you both in for couple of days at a spa?

JACK: We just want our stories back.

RED: You too?

JACK: Yep. The Giant just gave me all this stuff.

RED: Whoa!

JACK: And offered me a hug.

Red Shudders.

RED: *(to Sam)* What's your name again?

SAM: Sam.

RED: Right Sam. We want you to call your manager right now or I am going to scream.

JACK: Yeah. And we'll call our Mum who will gladly come and chop you up with her axe.

SAM: Her axe?!

RED: Yeah, she's the woodcutter round here. She will slice you down the middle and fill you with stones.

Sam is staring at both of them, terrified.

SAM: I think we all need to calm down. Let's take a few deep breaths and have a think about our happy places. In... Out... In... Out... In... Out... Now, found those happy places?

Jack and Red nod.

Great! Would either of you like to share with the group?

RED: Washing the blood off the wolf's skin and hanging my new cape out to dry.

JACK: Running through the legs of the giant and watching him fall over his own feet!

SAM: No, no, no! Try again.

RED: Call your manager now! Or I scream.

SAM: I don't know how to. I fell asleep in the training session and I just thought I'd never need them. No one ever complained at my last placement.

Red and Jack start to scream.

RED/JACK: MMMMOOOOOTTTHHHHEEEEEERRRR!

Sam puts their hands over their ears.

Red and Jack both run off shouting / screaming.

Sam stands there alone, not knowing what to do.

It goes quiet. Sam nervously packs up the desk and sneaks off.

SCENE 2:

Jack and Red come on dragging their Mother who is carrying her axe.

MOTHER: What's going on? Where's the Giant? Where's the Wolf?

Jack and Red look around and realise that Sam has gone.

RED: Typical!

JACK: So Annoying!

MOTHER: What's this? Oh, a Paradise help desk. How nice.

RED: Nice? You know what Paradise means don't you?

MOTHER: "An imagined place or state of things where everything is perfect."

JACK: But what it actually means. Do you understand what you've done?

MOTHER: What I've done?

JACK: Yeah. You voted for it right?

MOTHER: But I thought you'd both be safer. No more Giants falling out of the sky and no more Wolves wandering around the woods. We'd all be safe to go about our happy endings without any of these horrible monsters getting in our way.

RED: Argghh! How are we supposed to learn? How are we supposed to get brave or clever or strong if we are just skipping about in the forest all day long. There can be no "Happily Ever After" if there is no "Suddenly" or "Unfortunately".

JACK: You've taken the Story out of Storyland. Now we just live in... Land. And that's rubbish!!

MOTHER: Oh!

Red and Jack grab Mother's axe. They chop the Paradise help desk to pieces and using pens etc from the desk they turn the sign into a banner which reads; "SAVE OUR STORIES!"

Red and Jack start chanting and march off waving their sign and chanting.

RED/JACK: SAVE OUR STORIES! SAVE OUR STORIES! SAVE OUR STORIES! SAVE OUR STORIES! SAVE OUR STORIES! SAVE OUR STORIES! SAVE OUR STORIES!

Mother calls after them.

MOTHER: Don't stray from the path! And be home in time for tea!

Mother looks around. She picks up Red's basket which is sitting on the floor and puts it onto Jack's trolley of stuff. She pats the chicken. She opens the basket and takes out an apple. She looks at it about to eat it.

From offstage we hear a wicked laugh

THE END!