

The Beanstalk

By Tara Meddaugh

A ten-minute play

EXCERPT

For the complete play, please visit:

<http://www.tameddaugh.com/the-beanstalk-10-minute-play>

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EXCERPT

Cast

JACK A boy, in his teens or early twenties.
BLACK CROW A middle-aged crow.

Setting

A giant beanstalk, up near the clouds.

AT RISE: JACK is on a beanstalk. He has been climbing for hours, but now he is not moving. He hangs on tightly. A BLACK CROW, wise and scholarly, flies by, then circles back to come closer to him.

JACK

Please don't poke my eyes out! Don't—Don't!

BLACK CROW

What an insulting insinuation! I won't stand to be demeaned!

(starts to fly off)

JACK

Wait! I haven't seen anyone in hours! Don't leave! I mean—unless you are going to poke my eyes out? Are you?

(BLACK CROW turns back and looks at Jack)

BLACK CROW

Do I look the sort of bird which might poke one's eyes out?

JACK

I...well, yes, you do. Rather.

(pause)

You're black. A crow? Or Raven?

BLACK CROW

Crow.

JACK

And, well, it's not a secret. Word has gotten around about those mean sisters. Everyone says it's black birds what poked their eyes out. So, I—I—I mean, you can understand my worrying about that.

BLACK CROW

And all black birds are the same to you?

JACK

No. No, they're not. You don't actually seem like those birds. You're talking, for one. I don't think those birds talked.

BLACK CROW

Well, then.

JACK

And I'm not like those girls. In fact, I'm not a girl at all.

BLACK CROW

Quite right.

(pause)

JACK

Well.

(pause)

BLACK CROW

Now that we've cleared that up, I suppose I'll be on my way then and allow you to...do...whatever it is that you...are trying to do.

JACK

Oh, right. Of course. You're busy. Why wouldn't you be? A nice black bird, flying in the sky. No doubt you have a worm to catch, to bring back to some nest or other such thing as birds do.

BLACK CROW

We do much more than that, I'll have you know.

(pause)

Although most of the time, we are looking for worms.

(JACK nods)

But I suppose I could do with a little break. The babies are rather demanding what with their incessant cheeping and asking for more regurgitated worms. A slightly more adult conversation might be agreeable.

(pause)

Perhaps I could stay for a bit. If you'd like.

JACK

I would!

BLACK CROW

Why it's not every day I see a young boy so high up.

JACK

Oh, it's not every day for me either.

BLACK CROW

Some days then?

JACK

No, sir. This is my first time.

BLACK CROW

Hm.

JACK

Yes.

BLACK CROW

You like it up here?

JACK

Well...in a way, yes. The air feels...cold, but...it makes me...excited? As though...I'm riding a wild horse...through the woods—out of control! I don't get to feel that much, and I can tell I'm on the start of some sort of adventure! But in another way...not so much. It's not—see—I want to be up, here, looking up, but...well, I'd also like the option of being...down there. Where my corn husk porridge is. And, well, I don't know if it's obvious or not, but, I'm a little bit stuck.

BLACK CROW

It is obvious.

(pause)

(JACK tries to smile)

JACK

See, I didn't...really...think I'd make it up this far. In fact, I didn't really think it through at all. Mother keeps telling me that's my problem, and I guess it is. I just...saw it, and I've always been a bit of a climber, Mother says. When I was nine months old, she found me sitting on top of the brown cow in the barn one morning.

BLACK CROW

This is your strength.

JACK

I never thought of climbing really as a strength. But... I am a good climber.

BLACK CROW

So why are you stuck? Why don't you climb onward, Climber?

JACK

Well...I suppose it's because...see, I rather miss Mother. And Turkey, and Brown Cow. And even Fence Post.

BLACK CROW

You miss a fence post?

JACK

Fence Post is sturdy. Always there. It surrounds my home.

BLACK BROW

So your adventure has come to a close.

JACK

I want to go home.

BLACK CROW

So go home.

JACK

It's not that simple.

(pause)

BLACK CROW

You're a cat in a tree.

JACK

(pause)

I am?

BLACK CROW

Do you know how we rid the cats from our trees after they've realized they can't climb back down?

JACK

No.

(pause)

BLACK CROW

We peck their eyes out!

JACK

Oh!

(loses footing on the beanstalk for a moment. BLACK CROW laughs.)

BLACK CROW

I wouldn't do that to you!

(JACK exhales)

But we must find your “bird pecking.” What makes you move. Have you tried the same method of return as what got you here?

JACK

I used no method. I just put one foot in front of the other, and then somehow—I was tasting the clouds!

BLACK CROW

Well, try one foot behind the other then.

JACK

I...it’s so far to the ground below.

BLACK CROW

Goodness, just close your eyes and try!

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For permission to perform, please email tmeddaugh@gmail.com

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT



Tara is a graduate of Carnegie Mellon University's MFA program in Dramatic Writing. Her work has been presented by The Director's Company, Theatre One, Fusion Theatre, One Armed Man, Oracle Theatre, Inc, the Bobik Theatre Ensemble, Woman Seeking..., the Acme Theatre Company, and various universities including Gardner-Webb and Colgate. Her plays have also showcased at the Artists of Tomorrow Festival in NYC, the Pittsburgh New Works Series and the Last Frontier Theatre Conference in Alaska and her monologues have been performed world-wide. Serial monologues she wrote were performed for two years by the internationally recognized receptionist-robot, Valerie, and she toured in a Children's Theatre Troupe, which she wrote for, co-directed, and performed in. She has taught Playwriting and Screenwriting to students in High School, college and adult education programs. She has also led Creative Dramatics Workshops for children and teenagers in underserved areas throughout New York and New Jersey and has a background in social work. She is a recipient of the Shubert Fellowship in Dramatic Writing, the New Works for Young Women [Actors] Award and is a member of the Dramatist's Guild. Tara has written a children's book, a novel, and writes and records music in the chick-core rap band, Girl Crusade. She lives in Westchester County, NY, with her husband and dramatic children.

For more information about Tara Meddaugh or her work,
visit her website at www.tameddaugh.com.