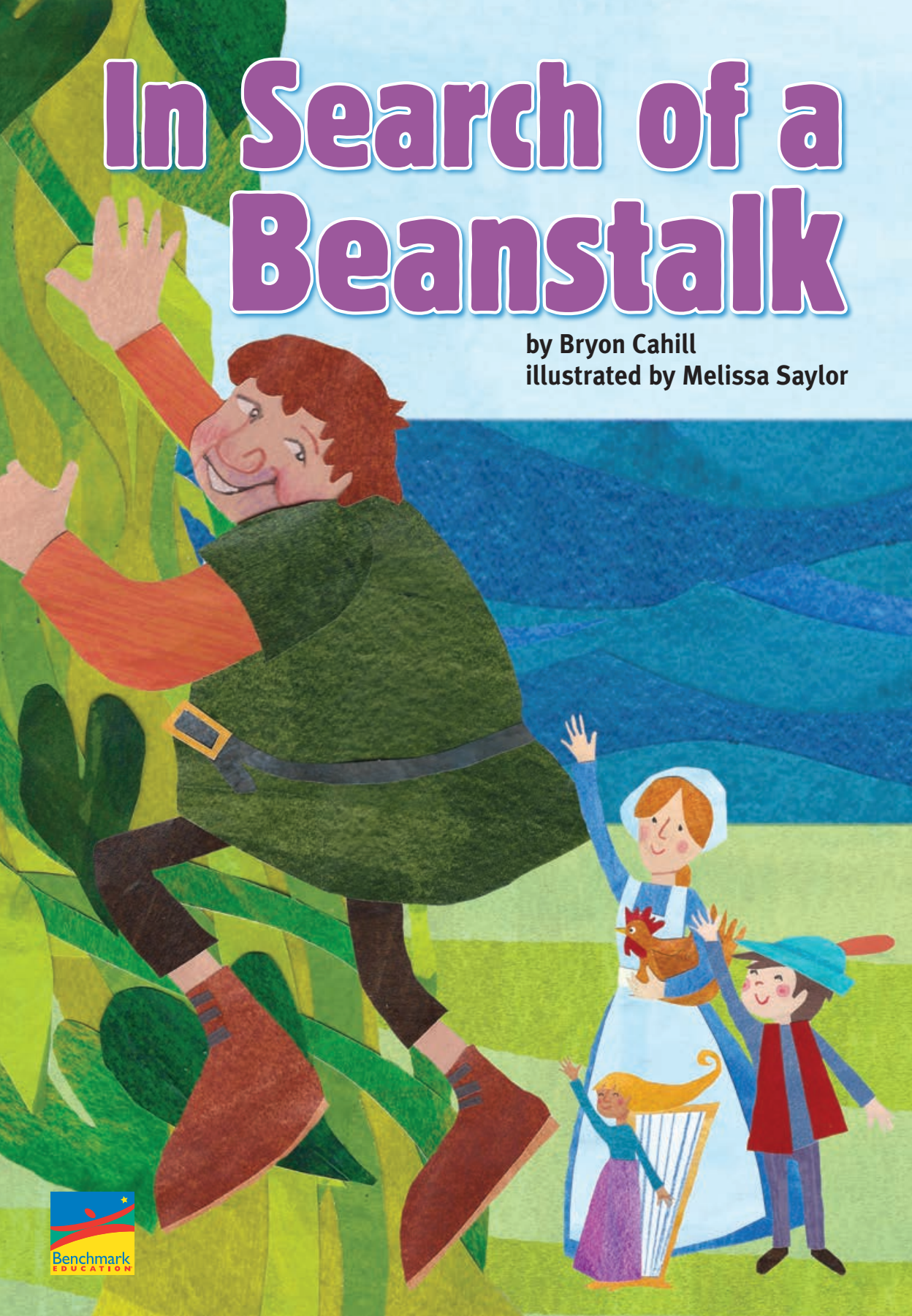


In Search of a Beanstalk

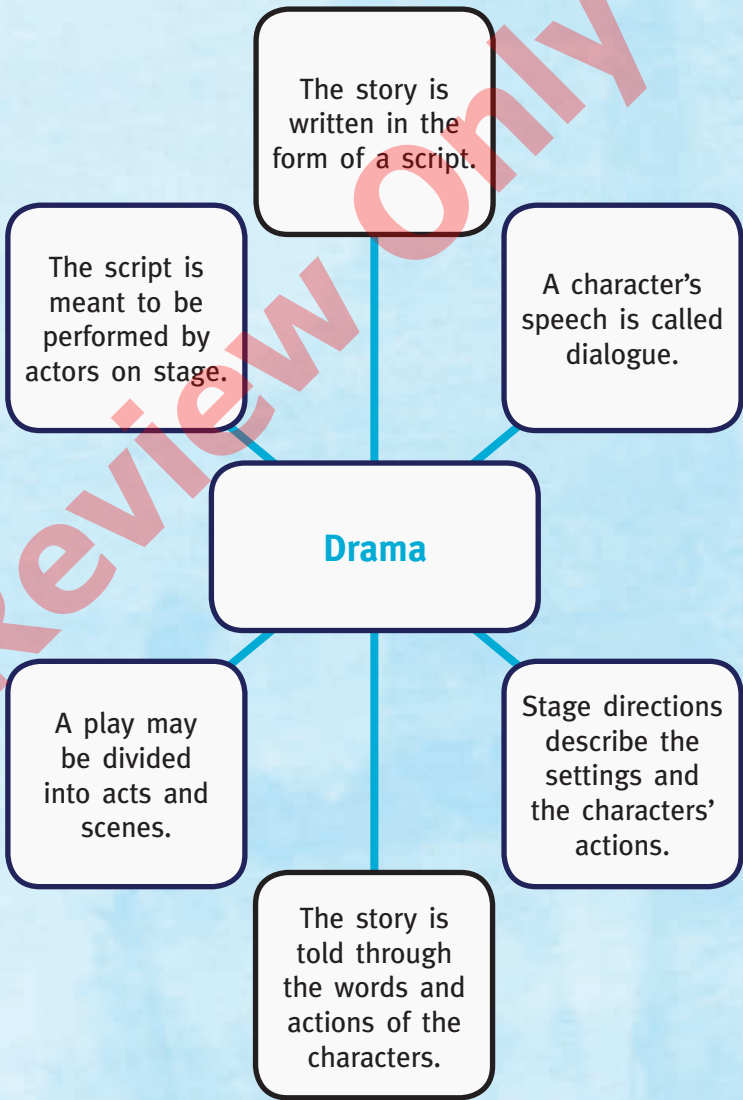
by Bryon Cahill

illustrated by Melissa Saylor



Drama

Look for the genre features noted below as you read this book. Use the features to help you understand the text.



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In Search of a Beanstalk

CAST OF CHARACTERS
in order of appearance



Villager 1



Villager 2



Jack's Mother



Jack



Giant



Harp



Hen



Old Man



Mouse

SETTING

Fairytaleland today and 200 years ago

Prologue

(Lights up. Two villagers stand in a field near a rundown home and barn. VILLAGER 1 is pointing to a spot on the ground.)

Villager 1: Isn't this the spot where Jack planted his magic beanstalk?

Villager 2: Yes. This is where Jack's famous beanstalk once grew. It must have been 200 years ago. As the story goes, Jack's family didn't have any money, so Jack's mother sent him to the market to sell the cow. But Jack didn't sell the cow. He met an old man on the road and agreed to trade his cow for three special beans. Jack's mother was really upset, so Jack threw the beans out of his bedroom window.

Villager 1: Then, overnight, a giant beanstalk grew way up into the sky, and Jack climbed up the beanstalk and met an angry giant.





Villager 2: That's right!

Villager 1: Didn't the giant also have a hen that laid golden eggs?

Villager 2: Yes, and he had a singing harp that would sing him to sleep. But Jack rescued them both from the giant. He grabbed the hen and harp and climbed as fast as he could down the beanstalk.

Villager 1: And when Jack got to the bottom, he chopped down the beanstalk, right? And the giant came tumbling out of the sky! I've always wondered what happened to the giant after that?

Villager 2: I'm glad you asked. Take a seat, and I'll tell you all about it. It starts with Jack standing over the fallen giant ... (*Lights fade slowly.*)

Act I

(Lights up on the same spot where the villagers stood, but 200 years earlier. The barn and house are now in good shape. JACK and JACK'S MOTHER stand over GIANT's huge body. A huge beanstalk is lying on the ground. HARP and HEN stand nearby.)

Jack's Mother: I knew you shouldn't have bought those beans. You were foolish, Jack! And you were almost eaten by a giant!

Jack: I'm fine, Mother. I escaped from the giant, and I took this singing harp and a hen that lays golden eggs. We'll be rich!



Jack's Mother: Golden eggs?! Singing harp?!
You stole them?!

Jack: They were prisoners. I rescued them!

Jack's Mother: Well, they don't belong to us, either.
If we keep them, we will be as bad as the giant.

Jack: (*sighing*) I guess you're right. But wait,
the giant is waking up!!

Giant: (*begins to wake and slowly stands up*)
Fee ... Fi ... Fo ... Fum ... ?

Jack's Mother: Run, Jack!

Jack: I can't outrun this giant!

Giant: (*scoops JACK off the ground*) Human,
you stole my harp and my hen! Then,
when I tried to get them back, you chopped
down the beanstalk! Not only was I hurt,
but now I can never return to my wife or our
castle! You have insulted me for the last time!
Watch as I destroy your puny farm!

(GIANT raises his foot angrily.)

Jack: Wait! I can explain!

Giant: What? There is nothing you can
say to change what you have done.



Jack: I am sorry that I took from you, Giant. Uh, Mr. Giant, sir. But you were keeping this hen and this harp against their wishes. I was simply ... rescuing them.

Giant: You lie! The harp played me many beautiful songs, and the hen laid delicious golden eggs. You stole them, and now I'm trapped here! Bring the harp in here.

Jack's Mother: Wait, Giant! I have an idea! Maybe we can plant another beanstalk and help you get back home.

Jack: Yes! We can plant another one! I just have to find the old man and get another special bean. We will get you home.



(GIANT lowers his foot, and the farm is safe.)

Giant: Very well. I will give you one chance.
Where is this old man?

Jack: I found him walking near a fallen tree on
the road into town. I can show you the way.

Jack's Mother: I'm coming, too. There's no way
I'm letting you out of my sight again, Jack.

Giant: I won't let the hen and the harp out of my
sight again, either. They must come as well!
Everybody climb on!

(GIANT reaches down and
puts JACK, JACK'S MOTHER,
HARP, and HEN in his shirt
pocket. Jack points toward
the road to town.
Lights fade to black.)



Act II

(Lights up on an empty road. JACK, JACK'S MOTHER, HARP, HEN, and GIANT stand next to an old fallen tree.)

Jack: This is where I met the old man who sold me the beans.

Jack's Mother: There's no one here.

Giant: I knew it! I am getting angry! You know what happens when I am angry!

Harp: Hold on! Look, Jack, a door in the tree! Maybe the old man lives inside?

Jack: Yes, he must!

Giant: I'll set you down, but no funny stuff.

(GIANT places JACK on the ground. JACK goes to the door and knocks three times.)

Jack: I hope he is home.

(The door opens and OLD MAN answers. JACK breathes a sigh of relief.)