

# **The Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe**

## **THE UNTOLD STORY**

By

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### **STORY**

Ever wondered what really happened to the Old Woman in the Shoe? We are often told the story through the nursery rhyme about how she had so many kids, questionable living conditions and who was basically a miserable old bat! But how did she get there? What happened to the father of the children? Whose shoe was it and how does the story find a happy ending?

Well all will be revealed in this untold tale.

### **CAST (10 - 18) DURATION: 25 mins**

NB: some roles double up (noted with "/" below) or could be separated for larger cast. E.g. in this script the cardboard cut-out children for Jenny's teaching class and Simone's cardboard cut-out sheep could be replaced with real actors.

Music (incidental) to be done live on a keyboard or piano

**NARRATOR 1 / CINDERELLA**

**NARRATOR 2 / WITCH 1**

**OLD WOMAN**

**FATHER**

**JENNY** (with children, cardboard/real)

**SIMONE** (with a small flock of sheep, cardboard/actors)

**STRONG ARM**

**PETER**

**CHILD 1**

**CHILD 2 / GIANT** (we always used the smallest cast member!)

**CHILD 3 / DOROTHY**

**CHILD 4 / WITCH 2**

**WITCH 3**

**GUARD**

**SERVANT**

**ACT ONE**

**Scene 1 - Forest**

*A BIG SHOE (3 dimensional or just painted on a backdrop) stands in the middle of the forest.*

*NARRATOR 1 & 2 come out with large story book.*

**NARRATOR 1:** Ahem! There once was an...

*OLD WOMAN enters stage from Shoe Door with walking stick.*

**OLD WOMAN:** Oh I am such an old woman!

**NARRATOR 2:** Who lived in a ...

**OLD WOMAN:** Shoe sweet shoe.

**NARRATOR 1:** She had so many...

*CHILDREN enter from all parts of the shoe. STRONG ARM and PETER dispute over the bow and arrow; they arm wrestle. SIMONE herds ONE CARDBOARD SHEEP, but frustrated because it's lame. JENNY unfolds her CARDBOARD CLASS and tells them off for complaining. CHILD 1-4 argue over tying giant shoe lace. Old woman shakes her head in grief.*

**NARRATOR 2:** She didn't know...

**OLD WOMAN:** What to do! Oh what to do!

*ALL CHILDREN line up as Old woman serves dinner.*

**NARRATOR 1:** She gave them some...

**CHILD 3:** Oh not broth again!?

*OLD WOMAN clips Child 3 over the ear.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Without any...

**PETER:** Hey Ma! Where's the bread?!

*STRONG ARM stomps on Peter's foot as others SHOOSH him. OLD WOMAN glares at him and picks up her walking stick.*

**NARRATOR 1:** She whipped them all...

*SLOW MOTION – OLD WOMAN strikes them with her cane and they all fall back "Nooooooooo".*

**NARRATOR 2:** And sent them all...

**OLD WOMAN:** To bed!!!!

*OLD WOMAN taps her cane on the ground and they immediately fall asleep snoring; then everyone freezes. CHILD 2 breaks from freeze and steps to the front.*

**CHILD 2:** Hey wait a minute! It wasn't always like that!

**NARRATOR 1:** Excuse me! But that's how the story has always been told!

**NARRATOR 2:** Now if you don't mind we're late for our story about the elves and the shoemaker...

**NARRATOR 1:** And after that, the Wizard of OZ,

**NARRATOR 2:** Puss in boots...

**NARRATOR 1:** Cinderella, you know she hates to be kept waiting.

**CHILD 2:** No,no,no! It's not good enough!

*NARRATORS are highly offended.*

**CHILD 2:** I don't mind if you work them into the story as well but everyone here needs to know the truth!

**NARRATOR 2:** But they can't handle the truth!

**CHILD 2:** (to audience) Would you all like to hear the rest of our story? About how we all came to live in this wretched shoe? (build audience reaction to convince Narrators)

**NARRATOR 1:** Oh all right then!

**NARRATOR 2:** If we must!

*NARRATORS turn back the pages of the large book and ALL CAST on stage whirls backwards in time.(starting to exit)*

**NARRATOR 2:** (referring to book) Aha.

*ALL CAST freeze.*

**NARRATOR 2:** (referring to book) No wait, a bit further.

*NARRATOR continues to turn back the pages of the large book as ALL CAST resume twirling until they exit.*

**NARRATOR 2:** (referring to book) Oh yes here we go. It all started back when life was good for the Old Woman and her children.

*A large sheet with a painted 'big farm house by the lake' rolls down from the top of the shoe. STRONGARM chops wood and CHILD 1-4 carry sticks to the OLD WOMAN stirring a large pot of stew, to keep the fire burning.*

**NARRATOR 1:** The children would help collect the wood and tend the vegetable garden to make a hearty meal.

*CHILD 3 & 4 carries a large basket of vegies.*

**CHILD 3:** Look mum, we've got carrots, potatoes.

**CHILD 4:** Broccoli, beans...

**OLD WOMAN:** Well done my dears.

*JENNY unfolds her cardboard children (or real ones) and calmly begins class.*

**NARRATOR 2:** The young ones had a good education.

**JENNY:** And today we'll learn to count.

*The cardboard kids jump up and down (with assistance of Jenny of course) Narrator's do the voices.*

**NARRATORS:** (in children voices) Thankyou Jenny!!! Hooray!!!!

*SIMONE has a whole heard of sheep happily following her.*

**NARRATOR 1:** And while Simone's flock produced the best fleece in the land.

**SIMONE:** With all this lovely wool we'll certainly be warm for winter.

*FATHER shows PETER how to use a bow and arrow.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Father was showing his second eldest Peter how to hunt.

*PETER lets the (pretend) arrow fly but it goes about two metres.*

**NARRATOR 1:** Yes life was good back then, until on this fateful night when everything would change.

*CHILDREN go to sleep as OLD WOMAN tucking them in while FATHER inspects his bow and arrow.*

THE REST OF THE SCENE IS TOLD IN RHYME TO HELP BUILD TENSION

**NARRATOR 2:** While all the children slept so sound, a strange earthly rumble was felt through the ground.

**OLD WOMAN:** Oh dear my good husband whatever could that be?

**FATHER:** (lying) Never mind my dear wife... it's just a fallen tree.

**NARRATOR 2:** So he sent her to bed, without fuss or care

*OLD WOMAN shuffles toward house. Father addresses audience.*

**FATHER:** I fear that there's much more to it out there

I've heard of a giant that roams in the wood

**NARRATOR 1:** So he packed up his bag as best as he could.

**NARRATOR 2:** He set off in the night his brave heart so strong

**FATHER:** (calls out to wife) I'm going for a walk dear! I shan't be too long! (exits)

RHYME ENDS

### Scene 2 - Woods

*Backdrop with painted dark woods thrown over the farmhouse. FATHER creeps around.*

**NARRATOR 1:** Now the woods were a very dark place indeed. In fact no-one dared to go wandering by themselves for fear of the grumpy old giant.

*FATHER starts to turn back.*

**NARRATOR 2:** But it was too late to turn back now!

*FATHER sighs and keeps walking.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Father knew his family would not be safe if the giant was heading in their direction. And before he had time to reconsider...

**NARRATORS / GIANT:** ROOOARRRRR!

**FATHER:** Show yourself Giant! I am Father, of many, many...many children, and I demand you speak of your trespassing and why you're making such a racket!

**NARRATOR 2:** And just then, the earth shook once more.

*MUSIC RUMBLE.*

**NARRATOR 1:** And who should appear but the biggest, the ugliest, the smelliest Giant that would ever walk these lands.

*GIANT enters (limping). Wearing one giant shoe, and one (giant) bare foot.*

**GIANT:** Fee fi fo fain. I can't rhyme when I'm in such pain!

*GIANT tries to rest.*

**FATHER:** Stand back Giant! I am armed!

**GIANT:** Where the blessed is that squeaky voice coming from? (notices father) Oh look at that. One of those little people. Go away pest before I use you to pick my teeth. Ohhh the pain!

**FATHER:** Oh for goodness sake what's the matter?

**GIANT:** Well, I was on one of my usual stampedes, eating a few cows and sheep for a midnight snack, when one of the cow's horns got stuck in my shoe. When I went to take it off, I tripped and fell down the ravine, and I can't find the shoe anywhere! And the horn's still stuck somewhere in my foot. Ohhh the agony!!!

**NARRATOR 2:** Now father thought of a plan. If he could help the giant, perhaps he could bargain with him to stay clear from the family.

**FATHER:** Sit still giant and I'll remove the horn.

*FATHER struggles to pull it out.*

**NARRATOR 1:** And so Father pulled with all his might until he finally removed the horn from the giant's smelly foot.

**FATHER:** There you go. Now what I'd like in return...

**GIANT:** Oh you clever little man.

**FATHER:** If you would so kindly listen to my request...

**GIANT:** (picking his teeth with the horn and sniffing it) Yes yes, what is it now?

**FATHER:** I would like you to stay clear of my family and our home so we may live in peace.

*GIANT building up a sneeze.*

**GIANT:** Ahh –ahh –ahh-chooooo!!!!

*FATHER looks off into the distance, distraught.*

**GIANT:** You mean that one?

**NARRATOR 2:** And so the Giant's sneeze flattened their lovely farm house.

**GIANT:** Not much of a home is it?

**FATHER:** What have you done?!

**GIANT:** Found a new slave I feel.

**FATHER:** But I helped you. What about your shoe? I can help you find it!

**GIANT:** No no no; you're a clever little fellow. You can make me new one. C'mon.

**NARRATOR 1:** And so Father became prisoner of the giant, all the while worrying for his family's safety.

**NARRATOR 2:** Which we better get back to so no-one here worries too much.

**NARRATOR 1:** (skips pages) Ah yes lets skip to that bit.

### Scene 3: Farm House

*Backdrop painted of destroyed home. The CHILDREN and OLD WOMAN all wander on stage, bruised and battered as if from the wreckage.*

**NARRATOR 1:** Back at the farmhouse, the wind from the Giant's sneeze did blow the house down.

**NARRATOR 2:** Enough to make any wolf jealous.

**NARRATOR 1:** Indeed. But of course everyone clambered out of the rubble, safe from harm, apart from a few scratches and bruises.

**SIMONE:** Mother what happened? All my poor sheep have run away in the storm.

**OLD WOMAN:** My dear Simone, I feel we are just victim to a terrible storm. Now help your brothers and sisters out, we must find new shelter.

*SIMONE exits as OLD WOMAN looks off into the distance.*

**NARRATOR 2:** But of course Mother knew very well, that it was no storm that flattened their beautiful home.

*PETER runs up to OLD WOMAN.*

**PETER:** Mother? Where's father?

**OLD WOMAN:** I'm afraid I do not know. But we must hurry. He will find us.

*They pack up and start to walk off. (heading back towards Narrator's side of stage)*

**NARRATOR 1:** And so the dear Old Woman and her many children, battled through fierce weather of pounding rain...

*NARRATOR squirts them with water spray bottle.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Merciless winds.

*NARRATOR 1 holds up a small fan towards them as NARRATOR 2 does vocal WIND FX.*

*OLD WOMAN and CHILDREN react as if it's a hurricane.*

**NARRATOR 1:** And general lack of direction.

*They all start arguing (adlib as well).*

**CHILD 1:** Aren't we going in a circle?

**CHILD 4:** Hey you stepped on my foot!

**STRONG ARM:** You're in my way!

**JENNY:** Look out for the little ones!

**OLD WOMAN:** Shhhh! We must be very quiet.

**NARRATOR 2:** And just when they were about to give up hope, they ran into...

**NARRATOR 1:** A little girl called Dorothy. Who had these lovely little red shoes.

**NARRATOR 2:** Dorothy?

*DOROTHY appears.*

**NARRATOR 1:** Well she (/he) did say we could work them into the story as well.

*NARRATOR 1 tosses stuffed Toto to Dorothy.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Very well. So they ran into...Dorothy.

**STRONG ARM:** Hark! Who goes there?

**DOROTHY:** Hello, my name's Dorothy. I believe you are looking for a home?

**OLD WOMAN:** Yes we are my dear. Our home has been destroyed and we have nowhere to live.

**DOROTHY:** Then I shall share a little secret with you that I learned from my friend the Good Witch. Now everyone repeat after me. Click your heels three times and say '*there's no place like home*'. Here we go.

*ALL repeat with audience participation.*

*DOROTHY disappears.*

**NARRATOR 1:** And what should happen next? Suddenly it appeared before them. A giant shoe, big enough for all of them to take shelter.

*The 3d shoe / painted backdrop revealed – the exact replica of the giant's shoe. CHILDREN and OLD WOMAN kneel in awe of the discovery.*

**NARRATOR 2:** Nice segue.

**NARRATOR 1:** Thank you.

**NARRATOR 2:** And so the Old Woman and her many children, helped each other make a bed in the somewhat cosy dwelling.

**PETER:** Oh yuk it stinks in there!

*CHILDREN all react the same.*

**NARRATOR 1:** Oh well, can't have it all. And as the children drifted off to sleep, the Old Woman grieved for her lost husband.

**OLD WOMAN:** Dear husband, whence shall you return to our family? I will stay here and look after our lovely children until you appear.

**NARRATOR 2:** And with these moving words, the Old Woman joined her children and went to sleep.

**NARRATOR 1:** Time had passed, in fact many days, weeks, months! Which brings us back to where we started.

*NARRATORS repeat rhyme with audience as the actors do the exact same blocking as the opening scene - but in supersonic speed.*

**NARRATOR 1&2:** (in rhyme) There was an old woman, who lived in a shoe  
she had so many children she didn't know what to do

she gave them some broth without any bread  
then whipped them all soundly and sent them to bed!

*Ends with the CHILDREN snoring asleep.*

**NARRATOR 2:** And so on that fateful night, while the old woman slept, unaware of what was going on, her children were still awake.

*CHILDREN snap awake.*

**NARRATOR 1:** About to hatch a cunning plan.