

TOM THUMB

**SCRIPT BY
DAVID BARRETT**

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Suggested songs are from the Chester Songpack (Songpack, Butler, Chester Music), Beatles Fakebook and Great Women! Great Songs!
Available from www.musicroom.com

Dramatis Personae

Jack, The Woodcutter

Mabel, His Wife

The Children:

Tom

Dick

Harry

Bill

Ben

Pete

Zak

Villager 1

Villager 2

4 Crows

Ogre

Ogre's Wife

The King

The Chamberlain

The Captain of the Guard

The Children's Army

Musician

Herald

Suggested Songs

- 1 Try to Remember the Kind of September
- 2 A Winter's Tale
- 3 Blowin' in the Wind
- 4 Raindrops Keep Falling on my Head
- 5 What Shall We Do With the Drunken Ogre
- 6 These Boots Were Made for Walking
(from Great Women! Great Songs!)
- 7 Money Can't Buy Me Love
(from The Beatles Fake Book)
- 8 Oh When the Kids (Saints)
- 9 On Top of the World

The above are all from The Songpack, Butler, Chester Music, except for songs 6 and 7.

The song books may be purchased from: www.musicroom.com

Scene 1, In the Village Outside Tom's Cottage

The villagers are very miserable. The crops have failed and they are hungry. The children are dressed in rags and have dirty faces. Tom is curled up inside a big bucket on one side and cannot be seen by the audience or cast. One side of the stage is the interior of the cottage.

SONG 1 Try to Remember the Kind of September

(At the end of the song most of the villagers drift upstage and carry on with menial tasks such as carving wood, hanging washing and bartering goods. The children play simple games with sticks and nuts. Enter Jack, the woodcutter.)

JACK Ah, there you are, wife.

MABEL Well, Jack, how much money did you take at market. You should have got a fair price for those hard-wood faggots. Good quality they were.

JACK *(Dejected)* Not a farthing, Mabel. They did not sell.

MABEL What? What do you mean, 'they did not sell'?

JACK They were damp and rotten, that's what. There must be a leak in the shed roof.

BEN I told you, father, there is a hole big enough for Tom to climb through in that shed roof. You wouldn't listen to me.

ZAK That's because he climbed onto the roof and fell through.

JACK Speaking of Tom, where is the boy?

BILL We haven't seen him since dinner.

DICK That was two days ago! We didn't eat yesterday.

MABEL You can't expect to eat every day. We simply don't have the money to buy food.

JACK And there's a limit to the number of wild berries we can gather. It's more important to gather wood to sell.

HARRY I'm so hungry, Ma. Will we be eating today?

MABEL Well, all you'll have is turnip stew. I was relying on your father bringing some meat home from the market.

PETE But we had turnip stew last time we ate.

ZAK And the time before.

JACK Enough! If you boys worked a little harder we might be able to buy food. Now, let's all go and find Tom and then we can go and collect some more wood from the forest.

BEN I'm frightened of the forest. Wild bears and wolves live there.

DICK Don't be such a wimp, Ben.

BILL Perhaps we could kill a bear and eat it.

ZAK Perhaps pigs might fly.

MABEL Come on, let's go and find Tom. He can help repair the damage he caused to the roof.

PETE He's probably hiding again like he normally does.

HARRY Let's check all the usual places first.
(Exit Jack, Mabel and the boys. Tom pops his head out of the bucket to check all is clear.)

TOM Hello! Did you hear that. What a cheek; I get blamed for everything. It's just 'cause I'm the youngest – and the smallest. They think I'm stupid but I'm smarter than all of them put together. One day I'll show them – you'll see. It's really miserable living here; never enough to eat, the rain comes through the roof, there are no blankets on my bed and I'm always cold and hungry. And now that winter is coming things will get even worse.

SONG 2 A Winter's Tale (Tom and Chorus)
(The villagers join in the chorus. After the song, enter Jack, Mabel and the boys.)

JACK Ah, there you are Tom Thumb. Where have you been?

TOM Oh, just here and there, nowhere in particular.

MABEL I'll give you nowhere in particular. *(She grabs him by the ear.)* Get into that house. It's time you were in bed.

TOM Why? I'm not tired.

MABEL Don't you answer me back, boy, or you'll be straight to bed with no supper.

TOM *(Aside)* Oh great, just like every other day.

MABEL What?

TOM I said I'm going to behave.

MABEL Good.
(They all enter the house. Exit villagers.)

JACK Now wash your hands ready for supper.

PETE *(Looking in the bucket)* There isn't any water.

JACK Then sit down at the table.
(They sit at a long table, the boys along the sides and the parents at each end.)

MABEL Who's going to say grace?

BEN Grace!

MABEL Ben, don't be naughty.

BILL I will, I'll say it.

JACK Very well, go ahead.

BILL For the little we are about to receive may the Lord make us truly thankful, even though it is only turnip stew again.

OTHERS Amen!
(Jack serves a spoonful to each person.)

TOM Is that all I get.

ZAK You're only small, that's all you need.

TOM If I'm not fed properly I'll never grow big, will I!

BEN You'll never grow big anyway.

JACK That's enough talking. Get on with your meal.

PETE Meal is a slight exaggeration, I think.

MABEL Now we have a hard day ahead of us. We will need to collect double the normal amount of wood to make up for the disaster at the market.
(The boys groan.)

JACK Now, to bed – all of you.

TOM Please father, let me go at the top end. I keep falling out of the bottom.

JACK You will go where you are told, boy.

HARRY Why can't we have a bed each. It's too squashed all in the one bed.

JACK There's not room for more than one bed. You know that.

MABEL Shoo, shoo! Into bed. *(She shoes them off.)*
(Exit boys, grumbling and pushing one-another)

JACK Now, Mabel, you and I must have a serious talk.
MABEL It's not true. You can't believe idle village gossip.
JACK What on earth are you talking about, Mabel?
MABEL Oh, nothing, Jack.
(Tom enters, out of sight of his father and mother, and eavesdrops.)
JACK The truth is that we simply cannot afford to feed seven boys anymore.
MABEL But we can't let them starve either.
JACK Precisely. But I have an alternative suggestion. We must take them into the forest and leave them there to fend for themselves.
(Tom looks shocked and wipes away a tear with the back of his hand.)
MABEL Jack, how could you suggest such a thing?
JACK What alternative do we have? They will starve if we leave them here.
MABEL But...but...but...
JACK It is for the best, dear.
MABEL My heart will be broken in two.
(Tom sniffs violently.)
JACK What was that?
MABEL Just the wind, dear.
JACK Then we have our decision. The answer is blowing in the wind.

SONG 3 Blowin' in the Wind (Jack, Mabel and Chorus)

(The chorus enter and join in the song. During the song Tom weeps. He exits at the end with the chorus.)
JACK We'll get up very early in the morning and tell the boys we are all going to collect wood from the forest. When they are busy we'll sneak away and leave them. It is best that way.
MABEL But they'll never find their way home.
JACK Yes, that's the idea, Mabel.
MABEL Oh no, we can't, we can't.
JACK We must, Mabel, and we shall. Now, let's get to bed.
MABEL Not before I've kissed my little ones goodnight for the last time.
(Exit Jack and Mabel.) End of Scene

CROW 2 Have you looked in the mirror lately?

CROW 3 Hey, it's an audience. They must be waiting to watch a play or something.

CROW 4 Oh great! We do love an audience.

CROW 1 Hey, shall we tell them some of our crow jokes?

CROW 2 Oh not again, please. We've heard those a million times.

CROW 1 They haven't though.

CROW 2 Make it quick.

CROW 1 What is a crow's favourite sport?

CROW 3 I don't think they know.

CROW 1 Crowquet.

(Crows 1,3 and 4 guffaw with laughter after each joke but Crow 2 is not impressed.)

CROW 4 I bet you didn't know that crows come from Crowatia!

CROW 3 Did you know you can tell a crow is insane when it's a-raven.

CROW 1 What sort of crow sticks to a wall when it hits it?

CROW 4 A velcrow.

CROW 3 Do you know where a crow goes to buy a pint of beer.

CROW 2 Of course we know. You tell us this joke every day.

CROW 1 A crow bar!

(More laughter)

CROW 2 Look, when you've quite finished we have some bread-crumbs to eat up here.

CROW 1 I'm not hungry any more.

CROW 4 Look, if we eat these crumbs those poor children will not be able to find their way home, will they?

CROW 3 But we have no choice. We have to eat them.

CROW 2 Why's that then?

CROW 3 The director says it's in the script and if we don't do it then the plot won't work out.

CROW 2 Come on, then. Let's get on with it.

(As they exit Crow 1 hangs back.)

CROW 1 I bet you don't know what a giant's favourite perfume is. Ogre cologne!

(He guffaws with laughter and exits.)
(Enter Jack, Mabel and the boys. Tom is still hanging back.)

JACK This is the place. *(To Mabel)* This is about as far as you can get from our cottage.

PETE At last. My legs are killing me.

JACK Now boys, I would like you to follow that path and see if there is any fallen wood down there. It is easier to gather fallen wood than to chop down trees.

ZAK Oh Father, do we have to?

JACK Yes, Zak, you do.
(The six older boys exit but Tom hangs back reluctantly.)
And you, Tom. You must go too.
(Tom rushes forwards and hugs first his mother tightly and then his father before rushing off to join his brothers, without a word. After he exits Mabel weeps.)

MABEL Oh Jack, I can't bear this. Life is so cruel. It's almost as if Tom knows what we are doing.

JACK Come Mabel. We should not stay here any longer. It would only make things more difficult.
(Jack leads her off. She sobs and casts frequent glances in the direction the boys went.)
(Enter the boys, some of them carrying sticks.)

PETE Mother, Father!

TOM I told you they would not be here. They planned to abandon us.

BILL That's why they brought us so far into the forest to an unfamiliar place.

TOM Don't worry. I didn't eat my bread for breakfast. I left a trail of breadcrumbs along the way. All we have to do is follow it home.
(They all look for crumbs, apart from Harry.)

HARRY You're wasting your time.

TOM Why?

HARRY Did you not notice that we were being followed on the way here by four big black birds. I wondered why they were so interested in us.

TOM You, you mean....
