

MONEY TALKS

By Michal Jacot

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to my wife Laurie, who always makes me feel like a million dollars.

*The Playwright,
Michal Jacot*

STORY OF THE PLAY

Adam Cogswell is a likable guy whose meager paycheck often makes him “financially challenged.” It doesn’t matter to Adam’s family and friends, who like him for who he is, but it’s a thorn in Adam’s side. Then he meets an eccentric billionaire, Mr. Pierpont, who makes Adam the bet of his life: if Adam can start with a dollar and keep doubling it until he reaches a million dollars, Pierpont will match whatever Adam has accumulated! What follows is a hectic pursuit by Adam to win the bet while his friends try and show him what he is giving up during that pursuit.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: Cripps Hardware, June 17th.

Scene 2: The Community Service Center.

Scene 3: The Bean Stalk, a trendy coffee shop.

Scene 4: Cripps Hardware.

Scene 5: The Community Service Center, July 4th.

Scene 6: Adam’s living room.

ACT II

Scene 1: A garage sale, July 5th.

Scene 2: Adam’s living room.

Scene 3: Adam’s living room, August 20th, six weeks later.

Scene 4: The Community Service Center, September 14th.

Scene 5: Adam’s living room.

Scene 6: The Bean Stalk, September 15th.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(4 M, 8 W, 1 Flexible, doubling possible)

ADAM COGSWELL: A personable man in his early twenties.

THE CALENDAR GIRL: While not a part of the action, her job is to flip calendar pages so that the audience can keep track of Adam's progress. Each time she appears with a different look.

MRS. CRIPPS: Adam's boss, a rough, sour old woman who runs a hardware store.

BARBARA WADE: Adam's girlfriend. Pretty and likable. Also in her twenties.

ROGER WATT: The head of the Community Service Center, a charity organization. He is in his 40s, always ready to help.

WAITRESS: Who would rather be doing anything else besides waiting tables.

PIERPONT: An eccentric billionaire, in his golden years.

MISS SIMMONS: Pierpont's assistant. All business, but friendly and courteous. Dressed in a business suit.

MURPHY: An acquaintance of Adam's. Can be male or female.

GARAGE SALE WOMAN: Her garage sale is Big Business.

A MAID: For a rich collector.

MRS. DeLUCCI: A society woman in her mid-fifties, refined, loaded with jewelry, and loves art.

A SAD-LOOKING GUY: One of society's bitter dregs.

DOUBLING

The roles of Mrs. Cripps, the Waitress, and Miss Simmons can be doubled with those of the Garage Sale Woman, Murphy, the Maid and Mrs. DeLucci. If Murphy is played by a man, the role can be doubled with that of the Sad-Looking Guy.

SET

There are a number of different but easy sets in the script. The main stage has three exits - exit SR, exit SL, and exit USL. There are two hinged "wings" on both sides of the set that can be easily swung in or out. When they are swung in flat against the side walls, the set is the Community Service Center, an auditorium with its heart in the right place, although it has seen better days. There are paint cans, scrap wood, a saw and hammers scattered about; there is obviously some kind of construction project going. When the right wing is swung out, that corner becomes the Bean Stalk. Likewise, when the left wing is swung out, that corner becomes Adam's living room. When a particular set becomes active, the lights will focus on that set. When a wing is in the "shut" position, it will close off the exit in that set.

Cripps Hardware can be represented by a couple of flats set up CS with enough dressing on them to suggest a hardware store — a few tools, a sale sign, etc. When the hardware scenes are done, your stagehands can simply flip them to the unfinished side and lean them up against the wall of the community center set. Since there is a stage-building-in-progress going on in that set, the flats will look perfectly natural there!

The garage sale can also be set up CS. All that is needed is a chair, a box of magazines, a tape player and a stand-up sign reading "GARAGE SALE."

Other minor sets should be done on CS with a minimum of props. These are, of course, only suggestions; if you find other methods that will suit you better, please feel free to use them.

Also note that there is a large calendar - actually a stack of large sheets of paper - hanging at one side of the stage. The Calendar Girl will pull a sheet off periodically to denote time passing. Make sure that these sheets are large enough for everyone in your audience to read clearly; high enough where they can see it clearly; and far enough away from the stage action so as not to interfere with anyone's viewing of the play. It is also important that the audience is focused on the Calendar Girl when she turns the pages so that they can see how time is passing. She should not do this "on the sly," but rather be the center of attention when doing it.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: Cripps Hardware. At a corner of the stage is our CALENDAR GIRL, dressed in a baggy shirt and a baseball cap worn backwards - a typical street kid. She is sitting on the floor reading a comic book. At this point, she is simply "set dressing." We see ADAM COGSWELL seated in a folding chair DS. He is engrossed in a play script. He reads a line to himself, his lips moving as he does so, then he closes the script and recites the line. He is obviously trying to memorize lines. He is completely absorbed in this process; so absorbed that he is totally unaware that MRS. CRIPPS is standing directly behind him. She is alternately glaring at him and looking at her watch. After a few moments)

MRS. CRIPPS: *(Yelling.)* Cogswell!!

ADAM: *(Screams and leaps to his feet, then vainly tries to hide the script.)* Mrs. Cripps! I didn't see you there!

MRS. CRIPPS: What are you not doing?

ADAM: Excuse me?

MRS. CRIPPS: What are you not doing?

ADAM: Uh ... well, if you mean "what am I doing"? Then ... well, Mrs. Cripps, I guess I was reading this script, and -

MRS. CRIPPS: That isn't what I asked. What are you not doing?

ADAM: I ... don't understand.

MRS. CRIPPS: What you are not doing is your job. I told you to straighten these shelves and put this new stock away, not read scripts on time that I'm paying you for!

ADAM: Yes, ma'am. I did all that, and I just had a few minutes left before quitting time so I didn't figure there was any harm in ... *(Sees HE'S not getting through.)* ... I'm sorry, Mrs. Cripps. It's just that we've got rehearsal for this play tonight and -

MRS. CRIPPS: What play?

ADAM: *(Pointing to script.)* This play. It's about this rich family, and they -

MRS. CRIPPS: I don't care what it's about!!

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ADAM: No, ma'am. Of course you don't. We're just doing it to raise a little money for the CSC.

MRS. CRIPPS: The what?

ADAM: The Community Service Center. I do some volunteer work down there. *(Nervously babbling now.)* They're doing this play to raise some money for the orphanage, because they try to raise money to keep the orphanage going, and ... I ... I was, uh ... *(MRS. CRIPPS is glaring at HIM.)* ... did I mention I was in this play?

MRS. CRIPPS: Cogswell, that's why you're never going to amount to anything. Wasting your time on this garbage.

ADAM: Oh, I'm doing this for a very good cause!

MRS. CRIPPS: And how much are you getting paid for your trouble?

ADAM: Well ... it's volunteer work ...

MRS. CRIPPS: And here you sit, making minimum wage and complaining about never having any money, and you're out there working for free. Cogswell, don't give anything away for free. You're a fool. *(SHE looks at the clock - 5:00.)* Go on, get out of here.

ADAM: Yes, ma'am. *(HE starts to leave, then tries to take one more stab at it.)* Mrs. Cripps, this is for the orphanage-

MRS. CRIPPS: Get outta here!! *(SHE starts to leave, then turns on HIM again.)* You're going to be a nobody all your life if you don't start making some money!

(SHE stomps out, exiting around the hardware set and out the back door. ADAM, moping, exits. The CALENDAR GIRL rises from her spot and walks to the calendar, which up till now has been covered. She opens it up to reveal the first page, which reads in bold letters: June 17, One Dollar. Calendar Girl exits as the LIGHTS go down.)

End of Scene 1

End of Freeview

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