

BEAST: Yes.
BELLE: What can I do?
BEAST: Marry me, Belle.
BELLE: I can't.
BEAST: I know.
BELLE: Believe me, Beast.
BEAST: I do. (*Exits.*)

The Boy Who Stole the Stars

Julian Wiles

Events unfold when Nicholas visits his grandfather one summer. Grandfather, who is becoming forgetful and isn't as friendly as he used to be, tells Nicholas a story about how if all the stars are taken from the sky and scattered across the earth, paradise will return. When Nicholas learns that his grandfather is dying, he sets on an adventure to capture the stars and slay a dragon.

One Male and One Female

In the first scene, the boy (Nicholas) plays in the yard under the stars, when the freckled-face girl enters; she tells the boy she's sorry his grandfather is ill. In the second scene, the boy speaks of his plan to count the stars and save his grandfather. In the third scene, the freckled-face girl, who is trying to count crickets and frogs, comes to the boy, who is finding it difficult to count all the stars. In the final scene, learning that his grandfather is dying, the boy sets out to steal the stars.



Nicholas bounds outside with a baseball bat. He picks up rocks (imaginary) and bats them out toward the audience. After hitting a few times, he notices the first star of the evening.

THE BOY: Twinkle, twinkle, little star
How I wonder what you are
Like a diamond in the sky
Stick a moon beam in your eye.

(He throws a rock at a star.)

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: *(Entering.)* Whatcha doing, Nicholas?

THE BOY: Throwing a rock at a star.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: That's useful.

THE BOY: What's it to you?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Nothing — how's your grandfather?

THE BOY: What do you mean?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Nothing — just that my mom said he got lost going to the grocery store and they had to call your grandmother to come pick him up.

THE BOY: He hasn't been feeling well lately.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: That's what my mom said, only she wasn't so polite.

THE BOY: I'll bet she'd talk differently if it was one of your grandfathers . . .

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: I haven't got any grandfathers, they're both dead — before I was born.

THE BOY: I've only got one left —

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: I'm sorry he's sick.

THE BOY: Me too.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Have you decided what you're going to do for your summer science project?

THE BOY: No, not exactly, have you?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: I've got a couple of great ideas floating around. I'll decide on one by tomorrow.

THE BOY: You're not going to make another papier-mâché volcano are you? There's still soot on the ceiling from that one.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: That was a good project — I got an A on it.

THE BOY: That's only because you cried after the principal called the fire department. The teacher felt sorry for you.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: She did not!

THE BOY: If you say so.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Well I do, so there . . . *(Starts to exit,*

turns back.) Oh, I only came over to tell you that my mom said that we'll pick you up around six forty-five.

THE BOY: Six forty-five! Why so early?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: When you live out in the country, Nicholas, you have to get used to getting up early, besides, it takes a while to get to school from here.

THE BOY: Six forty-five?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Yeah, well, I've got to get home to supper. See you later. *(She exits.)*

THE BOY: *(Calling after her.)* Yeah, later — make it much later. *(He crosses to the stump and pulls out a loop of string and begins making string tricks.)*



THE BOY: *(Speaking to his imaginary teacher out front.)*

Yes, ma'am,

my science project?

I plan to count the stars.

Ma'am?

. . . that's right . . . count the stars.

Yes, ma'am, all of them.

. . . well, if it's all right, my grandfather will help me . . .

my grandfather used to be a star counter himself . . .

Ma'am?

A star counter,

you know, on a ship.

He was a navigator.

Yes, ma'am, that's what I said,

a navigator.

What?

Yes, I suppose I will need all the help I can get . . .

Yes, ma'am, I'm sure it's the project I want to do.

(Freckled-face girl enters upstage left and stands just behind and to the side of him.)

. . . well, it's no worse than building papier-mâché volcanos that melt before they erupt . . .

(Freckled-face girl clears her throat, clearly annoyed.)

I'm sorry, but . . .

Yes, ma'am,

next term,

first day of class,

I'll be ready.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: We'll see.

THE BOY: Don't lose any sleep over it.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: You don't have to worry about that.

THE BOY: Oh, I forgot, you'll be too busy looking for crickets and frogs, sounds like a great science project.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: It beats papier-mâché volcanos, don't you think!

THE BOY: Anything beats papier-mâché volcanos.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: So, you're going to count all the stars.

THE BOY: I thought I would.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: *(Erasing an imaginary board.)* Why did you decide to count stars?

THE BOY: I thought it would be fun to do something with my grandfather.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: How is he?

THE BOY: About the same.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Was he really a navigator?

THE BOY: He was one of the best. He even went on an expedition to the South Pole.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: No kidding.

THE BOY: He guided ships around the world twice, and now he can't even get home from the supermarket.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: I'm sorry about that.

THE BOY: It doesn't matter.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Yes it does . . . Look, we all get lost sometimes — when I was a little kid, I remember crying my eyes out once when my mom left me alone in the shopping cart — she was only on the next aisle, but that didn't matter, I cried anyway.

THE BOY: But you were a kid — kids are supposed to get lost and cry — grownups aren't. They're supposed to have it all together, and when they don't people think they're nuts.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: I suppose you're right.

THE BOY: You know I'm right. Your mother thinks he's nuts.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: I wouldn't pay too much attention to my mother, I certainly don't.

THE BOY: You know, you can actually be funny sometimes.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: And you can actually be civilized.

THE BOY: Gee, thanks.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Don't mention it. Well, I guess I gotta go.

THE BOY: Right.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Bye. *(She exits.)*

THE BOY: Bye . . . Now I've done it . . . she likes me!
(Fade to black.)



THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Come on little cricket
come on . . .

. . . there's that other frog I heard.

Come on both of you. I just want to count you.

That's a good boy . . . or girl?

Look out!

Look out little cricket!

Oh, no!

. . . I wonder if I should still count a cricket that's been
swallowed by a frog?

Gosh . . .

Think of all those frogs with crickets inside of them.

There's no way to know . . .

unless . . . unless frogs with crickets inside of them jump farther than . . .

THE BOY: How are the crickets and frogs?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: All right, I suppose . . . They're . . . em . . . coming together, so to speak.

THE BOY: That's good, because I'm having a time with these stars. There are so many it's like starting over every night.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: At least they don't hop around.

THE BOY: No, but you can catch all the crickets and frogs in the bog and count them and let them go. I can't do that with the stars.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: You could have chosen crickets and frogs . . . it was your idea to count the stars.

THE BOY: I used to play with frogs when I was little. But I had enough of them — so slimy and all.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: As I remember it, you brought that bullfrog to school and right in front of the whole class he peed on you . . .

THE BOY: I don't remember that . . .

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: And Jonathan said you'd get warts.

THE BOY: Leave Jonathan out of it.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Oh, I forgot, no one can mention Jonathan around you without your going crazy.

THE BOY: Who said that?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Everyone says it.

THE BOY: That's not true.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Yes it is . . . they all say you grieve over him like he was a lost puppy.

THE BOY: They do not . . . you don't know what you're talking about.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: And he hasn't written you, has he?

THE BOY: Why should he?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: I heard you got one Christmas card and that was it — I can't believe you can't forget him.

THE BOY: So he moved away, what does it matter?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Doesn't matter at all to me . . . only your friends think you've gone nuts — you don't give any of us the time of day now that Jonathan's gone . . .

THE BOY: Let's drop it, OK?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: OK . . . how many stars have you counted?

THE BOY: Eight hundred and twenty-seven . . . how many crickets and frogs?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Not counting the crickets inside the . . . I mean 213 frogs and 614 crickets, so far. But that's only this side of the bog . . .

THE BOY: Yes, I've got a lot of big constellations to go, too.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Will you finish by September?

THE BOY: Certainly, will you?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Certainly.

THE BOY: Boy, is she stuck on herself.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Boy, is he stuck on himself.

(Fade to black.)



Lights up.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Wait . . . Where are you going?

THE BOY: What's it to you?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Nicholas, what's the matter?

THE BOY: Nothing.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: What's so terrible about nothing?

THE BOY: Who cares?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: I do, Nicholas.

THE BOY: My grandfather . . . he's dying, Genevieve.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Dying? . . . I don't know what to say.

THE BOY: There's nothing to say — there's nothing to do. It's done, it's decided, it's happening, and there's nothing I can do about it.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: You love him Nicholas, perhaps that's all he needs.

THE BOY: He doesn't notice that.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Must run in the family.

THE BOY: What?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: In case you haven't noticed, Nicholas, I want to be your friend — have you ever had a friend?

THE BOY: Sure, I had a friend once — a best friend — but he moved away. The next year I got a Christmas card from somebody using his name, but it wasn't the same . . . There, are you satisfied?

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: So you lost a friend. Are you never going to take a chance on another one?

THE BOY: My grandfather's my friend, and now I'm going to lose him, too. It hurts — it hurts too much.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Maybe that's the price we have to pay for caring so much.

THE BOY: Then the price is too high.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Sometimes we have to reach to the sky to get what we want.

THE BOY: If only we could steal the stars.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: What?

THE BOY: Anything can become real if you believe it hard enough.

THE FRECKLED-FACE GIRL: Nicholas, you're not making any sense . . . where are you going?

THE BOY: To slay a dragon.

(Blackout.)

The Boy Who Talked to Whales

Webster Smalley

Set near Puget Sound in the Northwest, ten-year-old Jerry befriends and learns to communicate with Ooka, a fifty-foot whale that has escaped from whalers. Together with his friend, Meg, Jerry devises a plan to help Ooka protect herself. In the process, though, they create an international crisis that they have to help the president of the United States resolve.

One Male and Two Females

In the first scene of the play, Betty, Jerry's mother, is searching for him when she encounters eleven-year-old Meg, a friend of Jerry's, playing on the pier. Betty and, at first, Meg are unaware that Jerry is hiding under the pier. In the second scene, Jerry introduces his friend Meg to Ooka, the whale.



Betty sits on edge of pier, hears noise.

BETTY: Jerry!

MEG: *(Entering.)* It's just me.

BETTY: *(Stands.)* Oh, Meg. Have you seen Jerry?

(Meg is eleven, but is in Jerry's class. She is dressed in jeans and a sloppy blouse. She is attractive and bright, a bit of a tomboy.)

MEG: *(Simply.)* I was eating dinner.

BETTY: Well, I want Jerry to have his dinner.

MEG: Yeah, I heard. I wish my dad'd fix interesting things. We just had crummy old steak.

BETTY: Do you know where he might be?