

APPLES TO OREGON

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Bare stage. A barefoot young girl walks across the stage tossing an apple into the air. Perhaps she whistles a tune. She stops short when she sees the audience.

Delicious: Well, howdy there! Ya'll just appeared out of nowhere didn't ya? Nice to make your acquaintance. My name is Delicious. I was just about to enjoy my favorite winesap apple homegrown in Oregon soil. Do ya'll know about Oregon apples?

Delicious encourages audience replies.

Delicious: What?! Right beneath you is the greatest soil for growing apples around! My daddy knew that, and that's why we traveled here all the way from Iowa. Wait a minute- you wouldn't want to hear that story, would ya?

Again, Delicious encourages the audience's replies.

Delicious: Well, alrighty then! It all started when my daddy got us all packed up and ready to move to Oregon.

When each character is introduced, they enter the story. We transition to the past.

Daddy: Delicious! You better hurry up or you'll get left behind in Iowa! If I'm not leaving my apple trees behind, I certainly am not leaving my Delicious!

Delicious: Daddy loved growin' apples. He couldn't bear to leave his apple trees behind. So he got my brothers together to build a big box to put his trees in.

Brother #1: Dad, why can't we just pack the *normal* things that everyone else is taking? Why do we have to haul all these seeds and tree roots?

Daddy: Because son, if everyone else is bringing everything else- no one will have remembered some of the sweetest and most delicious parts of home- Apples! And apples are great for a lot of different things like pies, and sauce, and juice, and-

Mama: Annnnnd crumbles, and breads, and we know! We know! You love your apples! And it'll keep us fed on the trail. Listen to your father, sons. Build him that box for his apples.

Brother #2: Don't forget the peaches, pears, plums, grapes, and cherries!

Delicious: So Daddy built a big wagon bed and laid his trees to sleep, and only to wake them when we arrived upon the sweet soil of Oregon.

Sister #1: So, we all climbed into our little wagon trailing behind the tree wagon. Daddy jumped up front and spurred on the oxen, all while shouting-

Daddy: Apples, ho!

Mama: Sit down, honey. You're rockin the wagon.

Delicious: We traveled all day long and slept at night.

Brother #1: It was a long, long journey.

Brother #2: Sometimes we got grumpy.

Sister #1: But never Daddy. He would hum and flick his whip, moving those oxen closer and closer to Oregon.

Delicious: Sometimes, on warm nights, we would sleep under the stars. I can still hear my daddy singing lullabies and crooning to the Gravensteins.

Daddy: "Hush, little babies, don't you cry.
Momma's gonna bake you in an apple pie.
If that apple pie ain't sweet,
Daddy's gonna munch you for his own special treat."

Brother #1: We were traveling along fine until we reached the Platte River.

Sister #1: It was wider than Texas, muddier than a cowboy's toenails-

Brother #2: (snickering) And thicker than Momma's muskrat stew.

Mama: I heard that!

Delicious: We weren't the only ones at the riverbank. Folks in prairie schooners saw our little fruit trees fluttering in the breeze and they burst out laughing.

Folk Man #1: Those leaves will be brown as dirt before you hit the plains!

Folk Woman #2: Plains? That nursery wagon won't make it halfway across the river.

Folk Man #1: Look at that wagon bed! There isn't even enough room for their family!

Folk Woman #2: Iowa's full of those trees. If you are going to miss 'em so much, why don't you stay there?

Brother #1: Daddy didn't let that worry him. He looked Delicious square in the eye and said-

Daddy: Delicious, I'm gonna need your help.

Delicious: Anything, Daddy.

Daddy: We're going to have to ford the river, and we're all going to have to work together to make it happen! Boys! Girls! ...Honey?

Mama: Don't look at me. What do you think I could do?

Daddy: Could you whip us up some of that famous-no-leak-hard-as-stone-sticky stuff?

Mama: (annoyed) You mean, my oatmeal?

Daddy: Is that what you call it? Sure, honey!

(Mama sighs. Mama brings out a bowl that was prepared that morning, and everyone begins to use it to caulk the wagon).

Delicious: So, we built ourselves a raft to float those trees down the river.

Daddy: Now make sure my precious plants don't topple into the water!

Mama: We hadn't gone very far when that muddy drink started bringing us down.

Brother #2: (*to Brother #1*) Kinda like mama's muskrat stew...

Mama: I heard that!

All: (*as the raft is sinking*) Whoa!

Sister #1: The peaches are plummeting!

Brother #1: The plums are plunging!

Daddy: Don't let my babies go belly up!

Delicious: We needed to go faster. So I turned to my brothers and sisters and said- TAKE OFF YOUR SHOES AND KICK!

Sister #1: Because we'd all been raised on apples, we'd kicked ourselves to the shore before you could say "Johnny Appleseed"!

Daddy: (checking in on his trees) How'd we do, my little Grannies? How about my Fujis? What a close call *that* was, Honeycrisps!

Brother #1: No sooner than we had gotten to shore, a group of foul looking clouds came rolling in.

Brother #2: Look out there, Daddy! Have you ever seen anything like it?

Sister #1: It looks like it is heading right towards us!

Delicious: It's getting darker! And brrr! This wind is blowing something fierce!

Mama: The wind blew so hard that it blew all of our belongings off the wagon!

Brother #2: Hailstones as big as plums came out of the sky!

Daddy: Guard the grapes! Protect the peaches!

Delicious: So we threw ourselves over the trees to protect Daddy's little darlings!

All: (as hailstones hit them) Ouch! Ouchie! Etc.

Mama: The storm blew past and it warmed up.

Daddy: Well done, family! Another crisis averted. We'll get these trees to Oregon somehow!

Delicious: Daddy was very optimistic as we set off again. He was sure that we had seen the most of our troubles.

Brother #1: After all, we survived the rough river.

Brother #2: We conquered the hail and windstorm.

Mama: But as he so often is, your father was wrong.

Sister #1: We began to cross a sandy desert, and our shoes were still missing.

All: (hopping up and down) Hot feet! Ouch! Owie! Etc.

Brother #1: Hot feet also meant hot sun.

Brother #2: Which meant that Daddy's trees began to dry up!

Daddy: We got to find a water hole or my babies are done for!

Mama: What should we do?

Daddy: I don't know! Let's shade them for now, but if we don't find water soon... I'm scared to think what will happen.

Brother #2: As those trees began to droop, Daddy held those dead branches up to his heart and cried.

Delicious: I couldn't bear to see my daddy suffer! So I set out to find Daddy some water. After searching for hours, I got so tired. I sat down and felt something hard beneath me. My boot.

Sister #1: Delicious! You found water!

Mama: In Delicious's boot was a puddle of water from the river!

Delicious: Here Daddy! I found some water!

Brother #2: As we looked around we saw all our things from the wagon buried in the sand.

Brother #1: Mama's pot's and pans held small puddles and we even wrung out some of our clothes.

Sister #2: I am *not* touching any of Brother's stinky socks. Phew!

Daddy: Thank you Delicious! Once again, my trees may live to root in that precious Oregon soil.

Brother #1: Hey! We helped! We helped shade them and we collected water too!

Daddy: You're right. It takes a real strong family to come together over and over again. I'm mighty proud of you all.

Mama: And with that, once again the trees were saved! We went on our way once again.

Delicious: We came upon a water hole!

Brother #1: Finally!!!! Yahoo! (he performs a cannonball jump into the pond and splashes everyone)

Brother #2: Wait for me! (they get in a splashing match)

Sister #1: Stop! You're getting me wet!

Delicious: That first drink tasted mighty fine. As night fell, we started putting everything back in the wagon. By the way, my left boot never did show up. I reckon the wind blew it clear to the other side of the moon. And, if it ever did happen to drop out of the sky and land on your head one day, I'd sure appreciate your sending it along to me.

Mama: We woke up the next morning feeling refreshed and fine. (looking at the Brothers) and significantly less smelly.

(Brothers grin back at her.)

Brother #1: We kept going past Courthouse Rock, Chimney Rock and Independence Rock.

Brother #2: When we got to the Columbia River, Daddy said,-

Daddy: Just a hundred miles to go!

All groan. Ad lib.

Delicious: Our nights had some run ins with old Jack Frost.

Brother #1: He came sneaking around our campsite late at night and early in the morning.

Sister #1: He'd brush the cottonwoods with his cold white tongue, waiting to sink his teeth into Daddy's apple trees.

Delicious: He was no match for my fire. I protected those trees from Jack Frost's nasty bite and sent him running to Walla Walla Washington! Daddy woke up the next morning and checked his trees.

Daddy: Why, Delicious! There isn't even a speck of frostbite on my trees. I'm mighty grateful, sweetie.

Sister #1: We floated the trees down to a pretty place near Portland.

Brother #1: Then we planted them in that sweet Oregon dirt at last!

Brother #2: WE MADE IT! FINALLY!

Delicious: After that, gold was discovered in California. As folks ran off to seek their fortunes, we just smiled to ourselves because we had already found ours.

Mama: After all, apples taste a whole lot better than gold.

Brother #2: And anything tastes better than Mama's muskrat stew.

Mama: That's it! You come here young man!

The family runs off stage adlibbing.

Delicious: Well, there you have it. Daddy never forgot my deeds on the trail. After he sold his first bushel of apple, he bought me the prettiest pair of boots you ever saw!

And Daddy made a fortune, because you know... Oregon's apples are the most delicious of them all! So very delicious... Well, now that makes me hungry for that snack.

Mmmmmmmmmmm, time to take a bite! *(she goes to take a bite but is interrupted)*

Daddy: Delicious! Stop right there! You'll spoil your supper.

Delicious: What are we having?

Daddy: Muskrat stew. *(pause. They exchange a look.)* Yeah, ok. Just don't let your Mama catch ya. You comin'?

Delicious: Yes, Daddy.

Daddy: Delicious?

Delicious: Yeah, Daddy?

Daddy: You'll always be the apple of my eye. *(he exits)*

Delicious looks at the audience, takes a large bite of her apple, smiles and waves. She exits.

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