

THE AMAZING ADVENTURES OF ACTION JACK & OBVIOUS GIRL!

an audioplay by

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SYNOPSIS: Action Jack struggles to balance the demands of being a successful superhero with the demands of being in a relationship. However, when archnemesis The Sultan of Cynicism further complicates his life by kidnapping both his sidekick and his girlfriend, Jack discovers an unusual solution to solve all of his problems at once.

PRODUCTION HISTORY: An earlier version of this script premiered as part of the 2014 "Happiness in Unexpected Places" radioplay festival in NYC, was featured in the Atlanta Fringe Audio Festival 2015 (Most Listened Show), and was featured on the FM Radio Show "Destinies - The Voice of Science Fiction."

CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

Announcer - Narrator. Always animatedly alerting audiences!

Action Jack - The hero, a B- Superman copycat who gets what Superman does, but not why. Does the right thing, with right defined as what's most popular. Never in danger of overanalyzing.

Obvious Girl - Action Jack's heroic sidekick, blessed with the power of stating the obvious. She'll always get an A for effort, even if she gets a C in everything else.

The Sultan of Cynicism - Action Jack's longtime archnemesis. His philosophy? If you can't join them, beat them.

Mayor - Head honcho in town, serving for the good of the people. It's good for the people if she has a mansion made of gold, right?

Hysterical Rich Lady - Potential victim of The Sultan of Cynicism's deviousness. Why, why is her life so dreadful? Ohhhh!

Frank - Local barkeep. All he wants are the simple things in life, like a model girlfriend half his age with no needs of her own. Currently battles agonizing loneliness.

Cynthia - Action Jack's long term girlfriend. A strong, caring schoolteacher with her feet firmly planted on the ground.

Janine - Commercial protagonist. Smart friend of Trisha's, who knows all about cootie shots.

Trisha - Commercial victim. Trisha has coooooooties!

Cooties - Commercial antagonist. Ew, Cooties! Go away, Cooties!

Dr. Fine Print - Commercial legal disclaimer. A very smart person saying very scary things you'd be far happier not knowing.

Tiffany - A sweet, sheltered farm girl, freshly moved to The City.

ANNOUNCER

Will anyone answer when angry antagonists are actively arranging annihilation? Who will bravely battle the blustering blowhards that blithely bully babes? Which caped crusaders constantly crush the crazed crooks concocting cruel catastrophes? Why, it's... Action Jack and Obvious Girl!

SFX: Sounds of triumph (e.g. catchy intro music, a trumpet) plays.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

When we last left our heroes-

ACTION JACK

Action Jack!

OBVIOUS GIRL

And Obvious Girl!

ANNOUNCER

-they were engaged in a vicious showdown with their archnemesis... The Sultan of Cynicism!

SULTAN

Mwahaha! That's right my dears... I've stolen the jewels of the town's glitterati, and if the Mayor doesn't wire me fifty million dollars in the next five minutes, my elaborate contraption will activate, hurling their sparkly sweeties into the Conveniently Nearby Volcano!

OBVIOUS GIRL

Golly, that's a lot of jewels! Why wouldn't you just keep the glitz if you wanted to be rich?

SULTAN

Do you realize how obscene the mark-up on diamonds is? They depreciate in value just by taking them out of the store. It's grotesque! Not to mention the hassle of haggling over each individual bauble... or the pleasure of hearing the wealthy's agonizing screams as their valuables melt into ash!

MAYOR

Oooh... curse you, Sultan of
Cynicism! You know the city council
won't allow me to negotiate with
terrorists!

HYSTERICAL RICH LADY

My diamonds! Won't somebody please
save my poor, defenseless diamonds!

OBVIOUS GIRL

Action Jack! If we don't do
something soon, those diamonds will
revert to coal lickety split!

SULTAN

You fool... diamonds aren't made
from coal! That's a common
misconception... as is the concept
that you could ever defeat me!
Mwahaha!

ACTION JACK

Obvious Girl! Head to the
Conveniently Nearby Volcano and see
if you can prevent the gems from
taking a premature swan dive. I'll
handle the Sultan!

OBVIOUS GIRL

Gee willikers... that volcano's
currently active... it's going to
be super hot!

ACTION JACK

Believe in yourself, Obvious Girl!
I know you can do this! And as for
you, Sultan... I'm not just going
to stand back and let you steal
these poor socialities's valuables!

SULTAN

Oh yes? I contracted three henchmen
with advanced engineering degrees
to help me build my device. How
exactly do you intend to stop me?

ACTION JACK

With this!

SFX: Pow!

SULTAN

Ow! Physical violence, really? I thought you were supposed to be some sort of role model!

ACTION JACK

How about I model that I'm on a roll!

SFX: Smash!

SULTAN

Oof! Was that your lame attempt at a pun? That was pathetic!

ACTION JACK

Guess I'll have to follow up with a really strong PUNCH-line!

SFX: Ka-BLAM!

SULTAN

Ooooh... ow... oh, my head... curse you, Action Jack! Once again, you got lucky this time. But just you wait... soon, vengeance shall be mine! Mwahahaha!

The laughter fades away. The Sultan is gone.

MAYOR

Superb trouncing, Action Jack! But tell me... were you able to secure the jewels?

HYSTERICAL RICH LADY

My diamonds! Oh please, tell me you saved my sweet valuable diamonds!

ACTION JACK

(through radio)

Obvious Girl! Come in, Obvious Girl! Did you make it to the Conveniently Nearby Volcano?

OBVIOUS GIRL

(through radio)

Good news, Action Jack! I made it to the volcano and secured the gems before they dropped, while only sustaining second degree burns!

MAYOR

Then this is a glorious day!
Everyone, give a cheer for Action
Jack and Obvious Girl!

ALL

Hip, Hip, Hurrah!

ANNOUNCER

Another triumphant success for our
handsome helpful heroes! Later that
evening, Action Jack and Obvious
Girl retired to a local watering
hole to celebrate their success.

SFX: Grimy dive bar background noise.

ACTION JACK

A couple of beers, please.

FRANK

Sure thing, Jackie. Anything for
the two of youse.

ACTION JACK

Thanks, Frank.
(sighs)

OBVIOUS GIRL

Action Jack? You seem unhappy.
Wasn't today a success?

ACTION JACK

Sorry, Obvious Girl. I'm a little
preoccupied. Things aren't going so
well with Cynthia.

OBVIOUS GIRL

Your girlfriend Cynthia... aww,
gee. You know, it's been weeks
since I've seen her!

ACTION JACK

Yeah... She never comes out to
watch our climactic showdowns
anymore. And the other week, over
dinner...

SFX: Tinkly music leads us into...

Flashback time. Cynthia is waiting for Action Jack at a
restaurant. He is almost an hour late. Again.

CYNTHIA
 (sighs)
 Mmmm-hmmmm.

ACTION JACK
 Sorry I'm late, sweetheart. Trouble
 down at the bridge.

CYNTHIA
 What, did the Mayor lose a gold
 button?

ACTION JACK
 Emerald, actually. But thanks to my
 ultravision, I spied it out in no
 time at all! And then flew here as
 fast as possible!

CYNTHIA
 Of course.

ACTION JACK
 Which as you may recall, is super
 fast! I soared through the sky like
 a majestic eagle to get to you!

CYNTHIA
 And I drove here in rush hour
 traffic to get to you. On time.

Awkward silence.

ACTION JACK
 So...

Another awkward silence.

ACTION JACK (CONT'D)
 You look very--

CYNTHIA
 I'm glad you wer--

ACTION JACK (CONT'D)
 What?

CYNTHIA
 No, sorry, you were--

ACTION JACK
 What were--

CYNTHIA
 You were saying something?

ACTION JACK

I was just, going to say... you look nice this evening.

CYNTHIA

Oh. Thanks.

ACTION JACK

Is that a new dress?

CYNTHIA

No.

ACTION JACK

Oh.

Awkward silence reprise.

ACTION JACK (CONT'D)

Well, you do look nice.

CYNTHIA

Thanks. My big meeting was today, so...

ACTION JACK

Meeting?

CYNTHIA

At work? With the school board?

ACTION JACK

(obviously not remembering)

Yes... yes, of course!

CYNTHIA

(sighs)

Of course.

So awkward.

ACTION JACK

Did it go well?

CYNTHIA

Not particularly, no. They're slashing our budget even further... I'm going to have fifty kids in my class next year! Forget any individualized attention... there's no way I can effectively teach under those conditions.

ACTION JACK

I'm sorry. But you know, it's like they say, every cloud has a silver lining!

CYNTHIA

Really? Where?

(No response. She sighs.)

I wish there was a silver lining. Then I could sell it to buy some updated textbooks.

SFX: Action Jack's superhero pager goes off.

ACTION JACK

Ah, jeez. It's

ACTION JACK (CONT'D)

-the mayor.

CYNTHIA

-the mayor.

CYNTHIA

Of course.

ACTION JACK

Look, I'm sorry, but you know I have to go.

CYNTHIA

Seriously? Again? You're supposed to be off duty.

ACTION JACK

There's no off duty for heroes... I'm Action Jack, not Occasionally If It's Convenient Jack.

CYNTHIA

It's never a serious crime... she probably just needs help counting her ridiculous stacks of money. Can't Obvious Girl take this one?

ACTION JACK

(derisive laugh)

Obvious Girl? Please, she--

(remembers he's recounting this story to Obvious Girl)

--is certainly a very talented, and, um, capable hero in training... but she's a sidekick. Guild rules won't allow her to take a call without supervision.

CYNTHIA

Right.

ACTION JACK

I'm sorry.

CYNTHIA

This always happens.

ACTION JACK

I can't help--

CYNTHIA

No, no, I know. Honor, duty, yeah.
(sighs)

As long as you're there, could you maybe at least mention how underfunded the school is now? If she could just give a fraction of what she spends on caviar alone--

ACTION JACK

Cynthia.

CYNTHIA

Right. Right. Of course. That would be unprofessional.

ACTION JACK

You know I can't take advantage of how my job gives me proximity to the Mayor. It would completely betray her trust. There's a time and a place.

CYNTHIA

That's never now and here.

SFX: The superhero pager goes off again.

ACTION JACK

I...

CYNTHIA

I know.

ACTION JACK

I'll see you soon.

CYNTHIA

Sure.

SFX: Flashback music tinkles again.

OBVIOUS GIRL
Golly. It sure sounds like you two
are in a rough patch.

ACTION JACK
Yeah... hey Frank.

FRANK
Yeah, boss?

ACTION JACK
You're a man in a position to see a
lot of things. What's your take?

FRANK
Let me ask youse a question. This
dame, you know her last name?

ACTION JACK
Yeah.

FRANK
There's your problem. I's always
figured by the time you know the
end of a broad's name, it's time to
know the end of her.

ACTION JACK
Well that's certainly one
perspective.

OBVIOUS GIRL
You couldn't know a girl very long
for that to work!

SFX: A phone rings.

FRANK
Hello? Hey, it's for youse. It's
the mayor.

ACTION JACK
The mayor? That's odd...

OBVIOUS GIRL
Normally she pages!

ACTION JACK
Hello?

SULTAN
(poorly impersonating the
mayor)
(MORE)

SULTAN (CONT'D)

Hello. This is the Mayor, the real Mayor, for realsies calling you.

ACTION JACK

Yes, Ms. Mayor. What can I do for you?

SULTAN

(stifling laughter)

I need your help. Can you meet me on the roof of City Hall?

ACTION JACK

Of course.

SULTAN

Excellent. I require assistance as you see, I'm such a fat cat...

(more giggling)

I'm just bursting at the seams with money, and it's making it difficult to zip up my ruby encrusted jacket without the help of your strength. It's very embarrassing, so I need you to come alone.

ACTION JACK

Whatever you need, ma'am. I'm on my way. Frank, Obvious Girl... you wait here. I'll be back in a tick.

ANNOUNCER

Action Jack raced across the night sky to City Hall, only to find the rooftop completely deserted upon arrival.

ACTION JACK

Hello? Ms. Mayor?

ANNOUNCER

As Action Jack pondered his unexpected solitude, he noticed a mysterious gleam out of the corner of his eye.

ACTION JACK

What is that... a tape recorder? Well let's see here.

SULTAN

(crackly recording)

Hello, Action Jack.

ACTION JACK
The Sultan of Cynicism!

SULTAN
(crackly recording)
If you are listening to this then you should congratulate me, as I have artfully executed my elaborate trap. By the time you hear this, I will have successfully captured both your girlfriend, AND your sidekick!

ACTION JACK
Drat! Curse you and your fiendish ways!

SULTAN
(crackly recording)
Meet me at the base of the Notable Bridge at dawn, and be prepared to decide... who do you hold most dear?

ACTION JACK
Obvious Girl... Cynthia... it's almost dawn now! To the bridge!

ANNOUNCER
Will Action Jack reach the base of The Notable Bridge in time to rescue both his sidekick, and his side girl? Find out... after a word from our sponsors!

SFX: Cheery music plays.

JANINE
Hi Trisha!

TRISHA
(despondent)
Hi Janine.

JANINE
Gee whiz Trisha; you sound glummer than a track without a trolley.

TRISHA
Oh Janine, everything's just the worst! This is so embarrassing, but I sorta have--

COOTIES
 Helllllllllllllo!

JANINE
 Ew! Trish! You have cooties!?!

COOTIES
 Come closer, Janine. Let's snuggle!

TRISHA
 My life is over.

JANINE
 Haven't you gotten your cootie shot?

COOTIES
 Whoa... don't tell her about that!

TRISHA
 Cootie shot? What's that?

DR. FINE PRINT
 (spoken in a cheery, swift
 pace)
 Cootie shots are the only treatment for cooties currently undergoing approval by the FDA. It is not known exactly how the cootie shot works. Patients dependent on oxygenating blood for survival should use caution when taking the cootie shot. Common side effects include dizziness, possessed limbs, and spontaneous implosion. Ask your doctor if the cootie shot is right for you.

TRISHA AND JANINE
 Circle, circle, dot, dot, now you've got the cootie shot!

COOTIES
 Noooooo! Not the cootie shot! Oh, you cursed brat, look what you've done! I'm melting, melting! Oh, hashtag FML!

SFX: Cooties makes a gurgling dying sound.

TRISHA
 Wow! I feel so much better!

JANINE

Good! Now come on, silly. We're gonna be late for the ritual! Cthulhu isn't going to stay dead and dreaming forever.

TRISHA

Now that I'm pure and clean, I'm sure I'll make the perfect human sacrifice!

TRISHA AND JANINE

Thanks, cootie shot!

SFX: Sounds of sea carnage intertwine with the cheery music as the commercial fades out.

ANNOUNCER

And thanks to you, Trisha and Janine! Welcome back, faithful listeners. Just like Action Jack, you've arrived at the base of the Notable Bridge with only moments to spare: and indeed, standing there is the Sultan of Cynicism, but Cynthia and Obvious Girl remain eerily out of sight.

SULTAN

Mwahaha... hello, Action Jack! How nice of you to join us!

ACTION JACK

Sultan of Cynicism... where are they?

SULTAN

Why don't you look to the skies you're so fond of traversing!

CYNTHIA

Jack!

OBVIOUS GIRL

Action Jack! We're up here!

SULTAN

Yes... the two people you care about most, both dangling precariously over the deeply shark infested waters! Soon I shall cut the rope, leaving you with only enough time to save one of them.

(MORE)

SULTAN (CONT'D)

But tell me... which one will you choose?

CYNTHIA

Jack! Get me down from here!

ACTION JACK

Cynthia! Are you okay?

CYNTHIA

No! No, I'm not! You don't need ultra vision to see that nothing about this is okay!

OBVIOUS GIRL

Save us, Action Jack!

ACTION JACK

Aw, jeez, I... look, Cynthia... I have to save Obvious Girl.

OBVIOUS GIRL

Yay! I get to live!

CYNTHIA

What? Really. Really? REALLY? She's a superhero!

ACTION JACK

Well, a sidekick. I have a responsibility to her.

CYNTHIA

She has powers!

ACTION JACK

Eh, kinda... They're still developing? It's like an internship.

OBVIOUS GIRL

I'm learning valuable life skills!

CYNTHIA

She has *something*. I'm a civilian!

ACTION JACK

And a great one, really just, so great, but I feel like we haven't been connecting recently...

CYNTHIA

Oh my god... are you dumping me?
You're using this fricking hostage
situation as an excuse to dump me?

SULTAN

Wow. Dude, that is cold.

ACTION JACK

It's just, it seems like we're
naturally drifting apart...

CYNTHIA

Yeah, and we're going to drift a
lot further apart when I'm being
dragged downstream by sharks! I
wouldn't even be here if it wasn't
for you! Aren't you supposed to be
a hero?

ACTION JACK

Oh, oh, so all of a sudden now that
you're in need, now it's suddenly
great that I'm a hero?

CYNTHIA

I've always wanted you to be a real
hero... not a puppet for our sham
of a mayor!

ACTION JACK

(gasp)
How dare you insult the mayor!

CYNTHIA

She's ridiculously corrupt.

SULTAN

Yes! Thank you!

CYNTHIA

Why do you think our schools are so
underfunded? Why do you think our
city has so much crime to begin
with?

ACTION JACK

Crimes like this scum trying to rob
our illustrious citizens?

CYNTHIA

Serious crimes, like what happens
to everyone who doesn't have
multiple bank accounts!

(MORE)

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)

Maybe if you weren't so busy sucking up to the high society members, you'd see that they're the real villains destroying this city.

SULTAN

Yes, you get it! Finally, someone else gets it!

ACTION JACK

Do you hear yourself? You're siding with this evildoer!

CYNTHIA

Maybe I should! The Sultan of Cynicism can be a little extreme, sure, but maybe we do need someone fighting against the elite's stranglehold on our town!

SULTAN

You know, I wasn't always a supervillain. I wrote letters to the editor for ten years, went to every single community board meeting...

CYNTHIA

And nobody listens! It's insane.

SULTAN

That's what *drove* me insane! Hey... would you want to take off, maybe grab a bite to eat, talk about ways to overthrow the affluent?

CYNTHIA

Yeah. Yeah, I think I'd like that.

ACTION JACK

Cynthia...

SULTAN

Sorry, Jack. Looks like someone else gets to have a little action this time!

SULTAN AND CYNTHIA

Mwahahahaha!

Their laughter fades away. Action Jack and Obvious Girl are alone.

OBVIOUS GIRL

Yay! We both get to live!

ACTION JACK

Wow... is she right, Obvious Girl?
Am I just a pawn who's working for
the wrong team? Have I been so
blinded by the glory and the
fanfare, that I can't see where
evil really lies?

TIFFANY

Excuse me... is everything okay? I
saw a commotion... Oh. My. God.
You're Action Jack! Action Jack!!!
You're totally ultra cool.

ACTION JACK

Yeah... yeah I am, aren't I?

TIFFANY

I love nothing more than watching
you fly around the city. You're so
big, and strong, and airborne. It's
super impressive.

ACTION JACK

Why thank you, little lady. What's
your name?

TIFFANY

Tiffany. Tiffany Mc--

ACTION JACK

Why don't we leave it as just
Tiffany. How'd you like a bird's
eye view of the Conveniently Nearby
Volcano?

TIFFANY

Whoa. Really? That'd be amazing!

ACTION JACK

Then come here. Action Jack, away!

OBVIOUS GIRL

Um, hello? Action Jack? Sultan of
Cynicism? Is anyone gonna cut me
down first?

ANNOUNCER

Will dashing daredevils deliver us
from deranged demons' dastardly
deeds?

(MORE)

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Can we expect entities to engage in
evacuating everyone from evil
encounters with enraged egomaniacs?
Who shall fortune favor to finally
find freedom from fiendish foes'
felonious frenzies?

OBVIOUS GIRL

Guys... the rope is starting to
unravel...

ANNOUNCER

Find out next time on... Action
Jack and Obvious Girl!