

Jack and the Beanstalk

Once upon time a boy named Jack lived with his mother. All they had in the world was one cow. One day Jack's mother said, "We have no money for food. We'll have to sell the cow." So Jack took the cow to market.

"If you give me your cow," said the man, "I'll give you some magic beans that are better than money." Jack thought the magic beans sounded wonderful, so he gave the man the cow. Then he ran home as fast as he could. "How much money did you get for the cow?" asked his mother. "I got something much better than money," said Jack, showing her the magic beans. "These beans are no good to us!" cried his mother angrily. And she threw them out the window.

When Jack woke up the next day, his room seemed darker than usual. He went to the window and saw that a huge beanstalk had grown in the garden overnight. "I must find out what's at the top," he cried, rushing outside. And he began to climb the beanstalk. Up and up he climbed. At last he found himself in a bare, rocky wilderness. There were no plants or animals to be seen anywhere.

But a log road led into the distance, and Jack began to walk along it. Toward evening he came to a castle and knocked loudly on the door. "Can you please give me some food and a bed the night?" Jack asked to woman who answered. "Oh no," said the women. "My husband is a fierce giant who hates stranger." But Jack begged so hard that she let him in and gave him some supper. Just as Jack was enjoying some hot soup, he heard the giant coming. The women quickly hid Jack in a cupboard.

The giant stalked in and roared, "Fee, fie, foe, fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman! Be he alive or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!" "Nonsense!" said his wife. "There's no one here." And she gave the giant his supper. When he had finished his supper, the giant bellowed, "Bring me my hen!. His wife brought a little hen and put it on the table. "Lay!" shouted the giant. Jack peeked out of his hiding place. To his amazement, every time the giant shouted, the hen laid a little golden egg. When he had twelve golden eggs, the giant fell asleep. As soon as all was quiet, Jack crept out of the cupboard, grabbed the little hen, and tiptoed out. Then he ran and ran until he was back at the top of the beanstalk.

Quickly, he climbed down and took the magic hen to his mother. How pleased she was! "Long ago, a wicked giant stole this hen from your father," she said. "Now that we have her back, our worries are over." Jack lived happily with his mother for a while.

But he longed for adventure, and one day he decided to climb the beanstalk again. Just as before, Jack reached the castle toward evening. And once again the giant's wife hid him when they heard the giant roar, "Fee, fie, foe, fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman! Be he alive or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!" After supper the giant shouted, "Get me my money bags!" His wife brought him some sacks filled with gold coins. The giant emptied the sacks onto the table and counted the coins over and over again. At last he put the money back in the sacks and fell asleep. Quick as a flash, Jack took the money and ran all the way home. His mother was delighted when she saw the money bags. "The giant stole this money from your father," she said. You have done well to bring it back."

Although Jack and his mother were now rich, Jack wanted to climb the beanstalk on last time. Everything happened just as before. This time the giant's wife brought a beautiful golden harp.

“Play!” roared the giant, and the harp began to play soft music. The music was so gentle that it sent the giant to sleep. But when Jack crept out and seized it, the harp cried “Master! Master!” The giant woke up in a rage, just in time to see Jack disappearing through the door with the harp. “Stop, thief!” the giant roared. Now Jack had to run for his life. The giant took huge strides and was soon at Jack’s heels. Scrambling down the beanstalk, Jack shouted as loudly as he could, “Mother, Mother, bring the ax!” When Jack’s mother brought the ax, Jack seized it with both hands and aimed a mighty blow at the beanstalk. Thwack! The beanstalk toppled to the ground, and the giant tumbled down with an earthshaking thud. That was the end of the giant. Jack and his mother were never poor again, and they both lived happily ever after.