



Jack and the Beanstalk

Courage

Life is tough for an impoverished widow and her son... In order to survive the winter, the boy must sell their only cow. But instead, he trades her for a handful of magic beans. Little does he know that a single bean would grow into an enormous beanstalk overnight! The boy climbs it high...



🕒 12 min

😊 5+

A small family lived a humble life in a shack at the edge of a village. Jack's father made a living as a woodcutter, but one day a tree fell on him and killed him. Ever since then, his wife has taken care of the household and their little boy.

After the death of Jack's father, a cloud of misery hung over the house. Jack and his mother often had nothing to eat. It was only thanks to Milky, their cow, that they made it through the hard times — the milk she provided was sometimes the only nourishment they received.

Winter was fast approaching, and the family hadn't a single penny left. Jack's clothes were so tattered — mostly just patches of thin fabric stitched together. He could only dream of having a warm coat and shoes without holes in them.

One day, in desperation, Jack's mother said to him: "We've reached the limit. We have to **sell the cow!** Take her to market in the morning and get as much money for her as you can. It's the only way we'll be able to survive the winter."

The very next day, Jack prepared the cow, and his mother drew the last bucketful of milk. She said goodbye to her beloved Milky, with tears in her eyes. After Jack finished polishing the bell that hung around **Milky's neck**, he grabbed the reins and started walking the cow towards the market. It was a very hot day, and there was a long, dusty road ahead of them.

"Who knows if anyone will even buy our Milky," Jack mumbled to himself.

They hadn't gone far when they chanced upon a strange old man. His long, snow-white beard glistened against his red robes, and he was **whistling to**

himself. As Jack and Milky were passing, the old man spoke to him.

“Please let me have the cow. I don’t have **any money**, but I can trade you for some magic beans. Trust me — just one of these beans will provide you with much more than **you can imagine.**”

Jack slowly nodded in agreement, feeling a little unsure. The old man took the cow by the reins, dropped the beans into Jack’s hand, and instantly disappeared behind the village gates.

Feeling anxious about the deal he had just made, young Jack headed back home without the cow and with only a handful of beans.

Mum’s going to be so mad at me! How will we ever survive the winter? he thought to himself. Jack was feeling **completely discouraged.**

From a distance, his mother saw him returning without Milky. She was sure this meant the boy had managed to get some good money for their much-cherished cow. But when Jack showed her what was in his pocket, his mother was furious.

“Damn you and your so-called magic beans! We’ll starve to death **this winter!**” she shouted, taking one of the beans and throwing it out of the window in anger.

Jack felt like a fool. He lay in bed wide awake — it was ages before he fell asleep.

In the morning, the loud chirping of birds **woke Jack up.** He wondered why the room was quite so dark even though it was sunny outside. He looked out the window and saw a huge beanstalk! Its stem was as thick as a tree trunk, and it was so tall that it almost reached the edge of the sky. He was completely intrigued. Staring up at it, he opened the window wide, jumped onto a leaf, and began to climb up the stem like a ladder, in his bare feet.

He climbed and climbed until he finally **reached the sky.** He stepped off. There, ahead of him, was a long, wide avenue, straight as an arrow. He kept

going, beholding in the distance a grand palace with colossal ramparts, slim towers, and barred gates within an arched entrance. What a most peculiar fairy-tale world this was!

Once Jack was at the iron entrance gates, who do you think was standing there? Well, it was the old man who had sold him the magic beans! Eerie lights **glimmered around the man**, making him seem even more mysterious. Jack passed through **the tall gates** and came to a velvet curtain. Strange noises were coming from the other side.

As he pulled **back the curtain**, he saw an enormous room — in it was a table full of food, and surrounding that were loads of riches. A horrid giant was sitting at the table, stuffing himself with meat. Jack then noticed a golden hen sitting at the giant's feet. Every so often, it laid a golden egg, which then rolled towards a golden harp that played beautiful melodies **all on its own**.

If only I could bring some of these treasures back to my mother, we would no longer have a worry in the world, thought Jack.

For a long while he watched the giant feasting on the delicious food, at the same time marvelling at all the incredible treasures in this **massive room**. Eventually the giant fell asleep at the table, exhausted from gluttony.

At that moment, the old man spoke to Jack: "The giant is asleep — go and take some of his treasures."

"Okay. I'll climb onto the table, but I'll only take one bag of gold," said Jack. The old man nodded, and Jack made his way into the room. The giant was now **snoring away** with his head buried between several empty bowls and plates, so Jack knew he was sound asleep. He took the opportunity to look around more thoroughly.

Hmm, what else could I take? he thought to himself.

The hen that laid golden eggs scuttled **over to Jack**.

“Take me with you,” she cackled in an irresistible voice. Jack duly lifted her up and tucked her under his arm.

“What about the golden harp?” he said to the hen. “I’ve never heard such wonderful music. We must take that with us too.” The hen nodded enthusiastically.

Having loaded himself up with treasures, Jack started making his way out of the room. But as he was leaving, he accidentally dropped a couple of gold coins. This awakened the giant, who now stood **behind him, roaring**. He had just about managed to grab Jack when the old man appeared once again. He twirled his magic wand and the giant was instantly glued to the spot. Jack swiftly sprinted out of the palace, through the gates, and along the avenue. He jumped onto the beanstalk and began climbing down it as fast as he could go.

But the giant couldn’t bear to be defeated. He freed himself from the wizard’s spell and rushed to the beanstalk to go after the boy. Jack was moving at speed — he could hear the wind whistling past his ears as he descended **faster and faster**. But the giant was so much bigger than him, and very soon he was almost on top of Jack.

As Jack neared the base of the beanstalk, he called out in his loudest voice: “Mum, Mum, hand me **the axe, quickly!**”

Jack then leapt off, grabbed the axe from his mother in one swoop, and set about chopping down the beanstalk with **all his might**. The stem cracked and the beanstalk came crashing down, landing **next to a lake**. As it fell, the giant was hurled into the air, landing heavily in the water and sinking down into the depths.

Jack and his mum stood and stared at the lake for ages, worried that the giant would suddenly emerge. But the water remained still. Jack sighed with relief. Magically, the huge beanstalk began to vanish, bit by bit, and soon there was nothing left of it.

At that moment, Jack finally dared to look up at his mum's face. She was smiling from ear to ear, so happy that her son had made it safely back home... She was also very pleased that he had brought all those fine treasures with him.

The hen continued to lay golden eggs for them, and harp music filled their days with **sweet melodies**. Their life was good.

Meanwhile, the locals had spread the story of "Jack and the Beanstalk" far and wide.

Jack's adventure up the beanstalk had turned him into a rich farmer. But he never once forgot about how he had climbed all the way to the sky, thanks to a single magic bean.