

## Jack and the beanstalk

Many years ago, there lived a poor widow who had a son called Jack. One day she told Jack to sell their cow, Milky-White, at the market. So, Jack walked until he met a frail, elderly man.

"If you sell me your cow, I'll give you not one... but five magic beans," said the old man, his eyes sparkling with mischief.

When Jack got home, his mother was furious and she threw those beans right out of the window.

Early next morning, Jack woke up to find a beanstalk higher than the sky. He climbed till at last he reached the clouds. There he found a road leading to a giant's castle.

Inside was the giant's wife, ugly as a troll's doll. "Quick, hide in the oven. My husband is coming!" she whispered, opening the greasy oven door.

Sure enough, along thumped the giant with three bags of gold. "What's that I smell?" he roared. "Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!" Luckily, the giant fell asleep. Hoping not to be caught, Jack grabbed the gold and made his escape down the beanstalk. His mother was mightily pleased.

However, the gold ran out, so Jack eagerly climbed the beanstalk again. This time, he took the giant's hen that laid golden eggs. Again, he escaped while the giant slept.

Still not happy, Jack went up once more. He saw a golden harp that could sing! Jack grabbed it and fled, but the harp shouted, "Master! Master!" and woke the giant. Jack raced down the beanstalk, the giant in pursuit!

"Mother! Bring me an axe!" Jack shouted. He hurriedly chopped the beanstalk once, twice, three times. The giant fell down and down, and the beanstalk crashed after him.

Jack and his mother were safe. And Jack? He married a princess and they lived happily ever after...or so they say!