

BEFORE-READING QUESTIONS:

1. What is your favourite fairy tale? Try telling it to your reflection in a mirror. What is the most important thing in telling a fairy tale?

2. What is the difference between a fairy tale written by a single person and a folk tale? What do they have in common?

3. One of the most common narrative tricks in fairy tales is repetition. Fairy tale characters do the same thing at least thrice. Yet it is not a complete repetition: they do the same thing with small changes. So, the Wolf first comes to the first little pig, then to the second little pig and, in the end, to the third little pig. Try telling a story about your everyday life as if it was a fairy tale, repeating the same thing for at least three times, while adding slight changes to the story.

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

There lives a poor **widow** who has one son **named** Jack, and a cow **named** Milky-white. And all they have is the milk the cow gives every morning which they carry to the **market** and sell. But one morning Milky-white gives no milk and they don't know what to do.

“What shall we do, what shall we do?” says the **widow**. She is unhappy and wants to cry.

“**Cheer up**, mother, I'll go and get work somewhere,” says Jack.

“We tried that. Nobody wants you,” says his mother; “we must sell Milky-white.”

“All right, mother,” says Jack; “it's market-day today, and I'll soon sell Milky-white, and then we'll see what we can do.”

So he takes the cow, and he goes. He meets a **funny-looking** old man who says to him: “Good morning, Jack.”

“Good morning to you,” says Jack, and he doesn't know how the man knows his name.

“Well, Jack, and where are you going?” says the man.

“I'm going to the **market** to sell our cow.”

“Oh, you look the **proper** sort of boy to sell cows,” says the man; “I wonder if you know how many beans make five.”



“Two in each hand and one in your mouth,” says Jack.

“Right you are,” says the man, “and here are the beans,” he takes out of his **pocket** a number of strange-looking beans. “As you are so sharp,” says he, “I don’t mind doing a **swop** with you—your cow for these beans.”

“What!” says Jack; “the beans?”

“Ah! you don’t know what these beans are,” says the man; “if you **plant** them at night, by morning they grow right up to the sky.”

“Really?” says Jack; “it can’t be true.”

“Yes, that is so, and if it isn’t true you can have your cow back.”

“Right,” says Jack, and gives him Milky-white and takes the beans.

Then Jack goes back home, and as it isn’t very far it isn’t **dusk** by the time he gets to his door.

“Are you back, Jack?” says his mother; “I see you haven’t got Milky-white, so you sold her. How much do you get for her?”

“You’ll never **guess**, mother,” says Jack.

“Good boy! Five pounds, ten, fifteen, no, it can’t be twenty.”

“I tell you, you can’t **guess**, what do you say to these beans; they’re magical, **plant** them at night and—”



“What!” says Jack’s mother, “are you such a **fool**, such an idiot, as to give away my Milky-white, the best cow, for beans. Take that! Take that! Take that! And as for your **precious** beans here they go out of the window. And now go to bed. You will not eat, and you will not drink this night.”

So Jack goes **upstairs** to his little room in the **attic**. He is sad and sorry, to be sure. He is sorry because his mother screamed at him and because he is hungry.

At last he goes to sleep.

When he wakes up, the room looks so funny. The sun is shining into it, and all the **rest** is quite dark. So Jack jumps up and dresses himself and goes to the window. And what do you think he sees? the beans his mother threw out of the window are now a big **beanstalk**. It goes up and up and up till it reaches the sky. So the man said the **truth** after all!

The **beanstalk** grows up quite close to Jack’s window, so he opens it and jumps on to the **beanstalk** which is like a big **ladder**. So Jack climbs and he climbs and he climbs and he climbs and he climbs and he climbs and he climbs till **at last** he reaches the sky. And when he gets there he finds a long **broad** road going **straight**. So he walks along and he walks along and he walks along till he comes to



a great big tall house, and on the doorstep there is a great big tall woman.

“Good morning, mum,” says Jack, quite polite. “Could you be so kind as to give me some breakfast.” For he didn’t have anything to eat, you know, the night before and is as hungry as a hunter.

“It’s breakfast you want, is it?” says the great big tall woman, “you will be breakfast if you don’t move off from here. My man is an **ogre** and there’s nothing he likes more than boys on toast. Go or he’ll soon be coming.”

“Oh! please mum, do give me something to eat, mum. I have nothing to eat since yesterday morning, really and truly, mum,” says Jack. “I may as well be cooked, as die of hunger.”

Well, the **ogre’s** wife isn’t such a bad sort, after all. So she takes Jack into the kitchen, and gives him a junk of bread and cheese and a jug of milk. But **suddenly** thump! thump! thump! the whole house begins to shake with the noise of someone coming.

“Oh my God! It’s my old man,” says the **ogre’s** wife, “what shall I do? Here, come quick and jump in here.” And she pushes Jack into the oven just as the **ogre** comes in.

He is a big one, to be sure. At his **belt** he has three calves, and he throws them down on the table and says:



“Here, wife, cook me a couple of these for breakfast. Ah what’s this I smell?

*Fee-fi-fo-fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman,
Be he alive, or be he dead
I’ll have his bones to grind my bread.”*

“**Nonsense**, dear,” says his wife, “you’re dreaming. Or perhaps you smell the scraps of that little boy you liked so much for yesterday’s dinner. Here, go and tidy up, and by the time you come back your breakfast’ll be ready for you.”

So the **ogre** goes off, and Jack is just going to jump out of the oven and run off when the woman tells him not. “Wait till he’s asleep,” says she; “he always sleeps after breakfast.”

Well, the **ogre** has his breakfast, and after that he goes to a big chest and takes out of it a couple of bags of gold and sits down counting them till **at last** his head begins to nod and he begins to sleep till the whole house shakes again.

Then Jack **creeps** out **on tiptoe** from his oven, and as he is passing the **ogre** he takes one of the bags of gold under his arm, and off he goes till he comes to the **beanstalk**, and then he throws down the bag of gold which of course falls in to his mother’s garden, and then he climbs down and climbs



down till **at last** he gets home and tells his mother and shows her the gold and says: “Well, mother, I am right about the beans. They are really magical, you see.”

So they live on the bag of gold for some time, but **at last** they come to the end of that so Jack **makes up his mind** to **try** his **luck** once more up at the top of the **beanstalk**. So one fine morning he gets up early, and gets on to the **beanstalk**, and he climbs and he climbs and he climbs and he climbs and he climbs and he climbs till **at last** he gets on the road again and comes to the great big tall house. There, sure enough, is the great big tall woman standing on the door-step.

“Good morning, mum,” says Jack, “can you be so good as to give me something to eat?”

“Go away, my boy,” says the big, tall woman, “or else my man will eat you up for breakfast. But aren’t you the boy who was here once before? Do you know, that day, somebody took my man’s bag of gold.”

“That’s strange, mum,” says Jack, “I dare say I could tell you something about that but I’m so hungry I can’t speak till I have something to eat.”

Well the big tall woman is that **curious** that she takes him in and gives him something to eat. But he begins eating it slowly when thump! thump! thump! they hear the **ogre’s** **footstep**, and his wife hides Jack away in the oven.