Jack and the Beanstalk

Retold and illustrated by Heroica Books



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Where does this story come from?

It is an English folk tale. It has appeared in print since the eighteenth century, and the best-known version is Joseph Jacobs's, in "English Fairy Tales" (1890), with the hen that lays golden eggs, the harp and the famous "Fee-fi-fo-fum". In the original the giant falls along with the beanstalk. In this retelling for young children he simply stays up in the clouds.

What is the moral of the story?

Courage and quick thinking open doors, and sometimes an idea that seems silly can change your life.



What if the hero of the next story were your child?

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Once upon a time there was a boy called Jack who lived with his mother in a very simple cottage. All they had was an old cow that hardly gave any milk. "Take the cow to market and sell her for a good price," said his mother.

On the way Jack met an old man in a long coat. "I'll swap your cow for these five magic beans," he offered with a mysterious smile. Jack thought it was a marvellous idea and agreed at once.



When he got home, his mother was cross. "Beans? Instead of our cow?" And she threw the beans out of the window. Jack went to bed sad, without any supper.

But the next morning his room was strangely dark. Jack ran to the window and got a shock: in the garden a huge beanstalk had grown, so tall that it disappeared into the clouds!



Without a second thought, Jack began to climb. He climbed and climbed and climbed, leaf by leaf, until he passed through the clouds.

Up there was a road of fluffy clouds, and at the end of it stood an enormous stone castle with doors taller than a tree.



Jack knocked at the door, and the giant's wife opened it, an enormous and kind woman. "Careful, boy! My husband is coming home, and he doesn't like visitors." And she hid Jack inside a big copper pot.

Soon the floor shook: THUMP, THUMP, THUMP! The giant stomped into the kitchen, sniffing the air. "Fee-fi-fo-fum! I smell someone!" "It must be the soup," said his wife, and the giant sat down to eat.



After supper the giant took out a hen and said, "Lay!" And the hen laid a golden egg. Then he took out a golden harp, which played such a gentle tune that the giant fell asleep in his chair, snoring.

Very quietly, Jack climbed out of the pot, picked up the hen and the harp and ran to the beanstalk.



The harp cried out, "Master! Master!" The giant woke up and went after Jack, but the boy climbed down so fast that he got there first. "Mother, the axe!" he shouted. With a few chops the beanstalk came down, and the giant was left up in the clouds, unable to climb down.

With the golden eggs, Jack and his mother never went without again. And the harp played for them every night. The end.

NOW IT'S YOUR CHILD'S TURN

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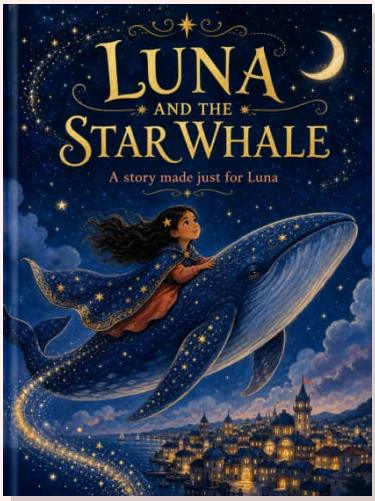

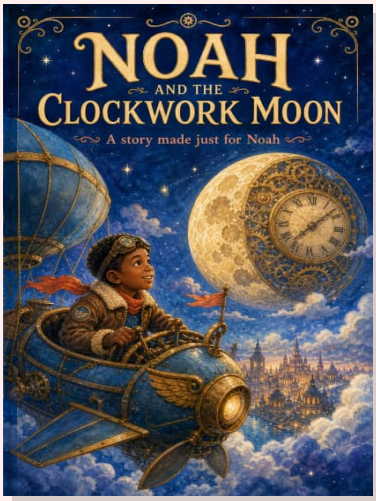



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