



Jack and the Beanstalk

8. The castle in the clouds

Jack carried on climbing the beanstalk. By now, the clouds were beneath him - but when he looked up, all he could see was more sky. He suddenly felt very lonely. 'I wish Ma was with me,' he thought. 'I hope I see her again soon!'



He was also starting to feel very hot and tired. 'I don't think I can carry on much longer!' he cried out, as if speaking to the old man.

'Keep going, Jack, you're a strong and brave boy!' said a little voice inside his head. 'You can do it! You're nearly there!'



Suddenly, a grey, swirling mist appeared all around Jack. He could hardly see a thing. He reached up for the next bit of beanstalk - but instead, he grasped what felt like a large rock. 'Hooray, I think I've reached the top!' thought Jack. He grabbed the rock and pulled himself up through what seemed like a hole in the ground.





His head popped out the other side and he looked around. A bleak, rocky landscape stretched as far as he could see. Up above, large black crows were circling in the sky. Jack shivered in the chilly wind. This wasn't what he'd been expecting at all! There wasn't a building, a person or even a tree to be seen. 'Now what do I do?' he wondered.



Suddenly, a hare jumped out of a nearby hole. It stopped, looked Jack in the eye and cocked its ear. It was as if it wanted Jack to follow it. As the hare ran off, Jack followed until he came to an old stone path leading away into the distance.

By now, the hare had disappeared. 'Well, I suppose I'll just walk along this path and see where it goes...' thought Jack. So Jack began walking. On and on he walked for what felt like miles across the barren rocky landscape, until something appeared in the distance.

As he got closer, Jack could see it was a castle. It had high walls of grey rock and a round turret. It was the biggest castle he had ever seen, and it looked a bit scary. 'Who lives in such an enormous place?' Jack wondered as he crept closer. 'Surely, only someone very big indeed!'

