

Jack and the Beanstalk

11. The magic hen

After Jack returned home from his adventure, life became much easier. He and Ma had plenty of food, a table to eat at and Jack even had a bed to sleep in again.



But, after a while, there was only one silver coin left in the bag. Winter had arrived and it was the coldest and snowiest anyone could remember. Food was running out and the villagers were starting to feel hungry once more.

'Look, Jack, the cupboard is almost empty again,' said Ma one morning. Jack gazed through the window at the snow-covered beanstalk.



'I'm going back to the castle,' he said. 'Maybe the Giant's wife will help me again.'

Jack put on his warmest coat and gloves and climbed back up the beanstalk. When he arrived at the castle, the Giant's wife was delighted to see him again. 'You'll be quite safe,' she said. 'My husband's gone hunting for tomorrow's supper. Though he'll be back soon.'





She made Jack a cup of thorny bush tea and he was just about to tell her why he'd come back, when... He shivered at the sound of the Giant's roar. 'Oh dear, he's back already,' said the Giant's wife. 'This time I'll hide you up the chimney. He won't smell you there!' 'Fee-fi-fo-fum!' roared the Giant as he entered the kitchen.



'Hmm, I'm sure I can smell little boy again,' he sniffed. 'Oh, you and your imagination!' said his wife. 'Now sit down - I've got a splendid supper ready for you.' 'Now, wife, bring me my magic hen,' said the Giant when he'd finished scoffing. 'You know, the one I stole a few weeks ago.'

'Tch! I'd return that hen to its rightful owner if you'd tell me who it is,' said the Giant's wife.

'And why would I want to do that?' replied the Giant. 'Magic hen! Where are you, my precious..?'



Jack almost gasped out loud as a little hen walked into the kitchen. It wasn't brown and speckled like the hens in the village. This hen was golden. It was covered in glittering, golden feathers, that lit up the room...even its eyes were gold! 'Now, magic hen,' said the Giant. 'Lay me a golden egg!'