



Jack and the Beanstalk

Description

Once upon a time there was a poor widow woman who lived with her son Jack. One day she told her son to go to the market and sell the only cow they had so they could buy food to get through the long winter.

Jack took his cow to market, but on the way he met an old man who offered to trade his cow for it:

– What will you give me for my cow?

– I'll give you five magic beans," said the old man.

Jack, who loved magic stories, agreed and went home proudly with his beans.



Jack and the Magic Bean – Illustration by Walter Crane

His mother became angry when she saw the beans and thought her son had been fooled by the old man.

– What are we going to do now, with no cow and no money and these stupid beans that are worthless! And in anger, she threw the beans out the window.

Jack was very sad and ashamed and went to bed without dinner.

The next day, when he woke up and looked out the window, he saw that a huge plant had grown where his mother had thrown the magic beans, and was reaching up to the clouds. He climbed up the stem, holding on to the branches, and began to climb to the sky. He climbed and climbed until he reached the clouds and there, in the distance, he saw a beautiful castle.



Jack and the Beanstalk – Illustration by Walter Crane

He walked to the castle and discovered that it was the home of a couple of giants, for the doors and furniture were gigantic. In the kitchen, he found the giant woman and asked her:

– Can you give me something to eat ma'am? I have not eaten all day and I am very hungry.

The woman was very kind and gave him some bread and milk. She told him to leave as soon as he had finished because her husband, the giant, had a very bad temper and even ate the children.

Just then, they heard a loud slam of the door: it was the giant going home. Jack was very scared but fortunately he had time to hide.

– It smells like a child's fresh meat here... Where is it? I will eat it for dinner, I am very hungry!

I'm very hungry!



Jack and the Magic Bean – Illustration by Flora-Annie-Steel

– There’s no child here, darling, just me. Says the woman. Come on, you must be tired, eat the meal I prepared for you and go take a nap.

The giant, suspicious but obedient, took his dinner and went to his room. That’s where Jack had been hiding, and from his hiding place, he saw the giant open a small cage and take out a hen to whom he began to talk.

– Lay an egg, my little chicken,” said the giant. And with these words, the hen laid a golden egg.

Then the giant took his harp and said:

– Harp, play for me!

Then the harp began to play music, and diamonds and precious stones came out.

Satisfied and full, the giant fell asleep for his nap.



Jack and the Beanstalk – Illustration by Walter Crane

Jack took advantage of this moment to grab the hen and the harp and ran out of the room. But in his flight, he touched the strings of the harp and the melody woke the giant. He saw Jack already outside and ran after him.

– I knew it! Here you are, you little rascal! I'm going to get you, you little rascal!
You will be my meal tonight!

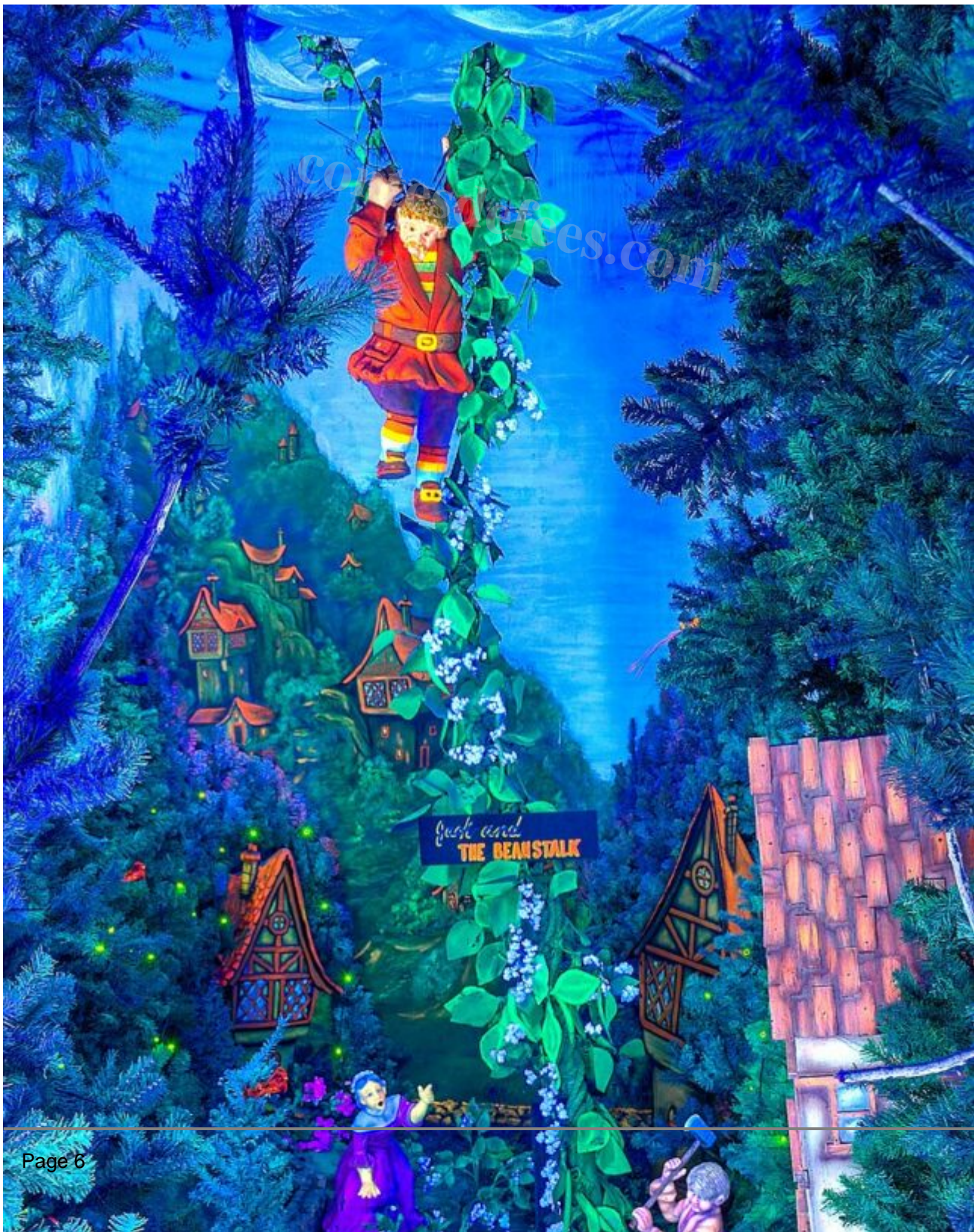
The giant shouted as he chased Jack as he ran to the bean.



Jack and the Magic Bean – Illustration by Jessie-Willcox-Smith

Jack was coming down as fast as he could, jumping from branch to branch, not stopping for a second. He could hear the giant above him yelling and huffing and puffing and tearing at the branches.

He reached the ground before the giant caught up with him and ran home to his stunned mother. He grabbed an axe and went back to the giant bean, which he began to chop down as fast as he could. The plant was fragile, and when it was completely cut, it fell, taking the giant with it, who died instantly.



Jack and the Magic Bean – Illustration by Dsdugan

From that day on, Jack and his mother never had to worry about food again and even became rich thanks to the chicken and the harp.

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