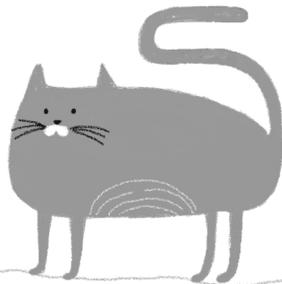




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STORYTELLING: THE CAT THAT WALKED BY HIMSELF AND OTHER STORIES

for elementary school students



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JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

by Flora Annie Steel

ONCE upon a time there lived a poor widow and her son Jack. One day, Jack's mother told him to sell their only cow. Jack went to the market and on the way he met a man who wanted to buy his cow. Jack asked, "What will you give me in return for my cow?" The man answered, "I will give you five magic beans!" Jack took the magic beans and gave the man the cow. But when he reached home, Jack's mother was very angry. She said, "You fool! He took away your cow and gave you some beans!" She threw the beans out of the window. Jack was very sad and went to sleep without dinner.

The next day, when Jack woke up in the morning and looked out of the window, he saw that a huge beanstalk had grown from his magic beans! He climbed up the beanstalk and reached a kingdom in the sky. There lived a giant and his wife. Jack went inside the house and found the giant's wife in the kitchen. Jack said, "Could you please give me something to eat?"

I am so hungry!" The kind wife gave him bread and some milk.

While he was eating, the giant came home. The giant was very big and looked very fearsome. Jack was terrified and went and hid inside. The giant cried, "Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive, or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!" The wife said, "There is no boy in here!" So, the giant ate his food and then went to his room. He took out his sacks of gold coins, counted them, and kept them aside. Then he went to sleep. In the night, Jack crept out of his hiding place, took one sack of gold coins, and climbed down the beanstalk. At home, he gave the coins to his mother. His mother was very happy, and they lived well for some time.

Jack climbed the beanstalk and went to the giant's house again. Once again, Jack asked the giant's wife for food, but while he was eating, the giant returned. Jack leapt up in fright and went and hid under the bed. The giant cried, "Fee-fifo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive, or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!" The wife said, "There is no boy in here!" The giant ate his food and went to his room. There, he took out a hen. He shouted, "Lay!" and the hen laid a golden egg. When the giant fell asleep, Jack took the hen and climbed down the beanstalk. Jack's mother was very happy with him.

After some days, Jack once again climbed the beanstalk and went to the giant's castle. For the third time, Jack met the giant's wife and asked for some food. Once again, the giant's wife gave him bread and milk. But while Jack was eating, the giant came home. "Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman. Be he alive, or be he dead, I'll grind his bones to make my bread!" cried the giant. "Don't be silly! There is no boy in here!" said his wife.

The giant had a magical harp that could play beautiful songs. While the giant slept, Jack took the harp and was about to leave. Suddenly, the magic harp cried, "Help master! A boy is stealing me!" The giant woke up and saw Jack with the harp. Furious, he ran after Jack. But Jack was too fast for him. He ran down the beanstalk and reached home. The giant followed him down. Jack quickly ran inside his house and fetched an axe. He began to chop the beanstalk. The giant fell and died.

Jack and his mother were now very rich, and they lived happily ever after.

THE BOGEY-BEAST

by Flora Annie Steel

THERE was once a woman who was very, very cheerful, though she had little to make her so; for she was old, and poor, and lonely. She lived in a little cottage and earned a scant living by running errands for her neighbours, getting a bite here, a sup there, as a reward for her services. So she made a shift to get on, and always looked as spry and cheery as if she had not a want in the world.

Now one summer evening, as she was trotting, full of smiles as ever, along the high road to her hovel, what should she see but a big black pot lying in the ditch!

“Goodness me!” she cried, “that would be just the very thing for me if I only had something to put in it! But I haven’t! Now, who could have left it in the ditch?”

And she looked about her, expecting the owner would not be far off, but she could see nobody.

“Maybe there is a hole in it,” she went on, “and that’s why it has been cast away. But it would do fine to

put a flower in for my window; so I'll just take it home with me."

And with that, she lifted the lid and looked inside. "Mercy me!" she cried, fair amazed. "If it isn't full of gold pieces. Here's luck!"

And so it was, brimful of great gold coins. Well, at first she simply stood stock-still, wondering if she was standing on her head or her heels. Then she began saying: "Lawks! But I do feel rich. I feel awful rich!"

After she had said this many times, she began to wonder how she was to get her treasure home. It was too heavy for her to carry, and she could see no better way than to tie the end of her shawl to it and drag it behind her like a go-cart.

"It will soon be dark," she said to herself as she trotted along. "So much the better! The neighbours will not see what I'm bringing home, and I shall have all the night to myself, and be able to think what I'll do! Mayhap I'll buy a grand house and just sit by the fire with a cup o' tea and do no work at all like a queen. Or maybe I'll bury it at the garden foot and just keep a bit in the old china teapot on the chimney-piece. Or maybe — Goody! Goody! I feel that grand I don't know myself."

By this time she was a bit tired of dragging such a heavy weight, and, stopping to rest a while, turned to look at her treasure.

And lo! It wasn't a pot of gold at all! It was nothing but a lump of silver.

She stared at it, and rubbed her eyes, and stared at it again.

"Well! I never!" she said at last. "And me thinking it was a pot of gold! I must have been dreaming. But this is luck! Silver is far less trouble — easier to mind, and not so easy stolen. Them gold pieces would have been the death o' me, and with this great lump of silver" — So she went off again planning what she would do, and feeling as rich as rich, until becoming a bit tired again she stopped to rest and gave a look round to see if her treasure was safe; and she saw nothing but a great lump of iron!

"Well! I never!" says she again. "And I mistaking it for silver! I must have been dreaming. But this is luck! It's real convenient. I can get penny pieces for old iron, and penny pieces are a deal handier for me than your gold and silver. Why! I should never have slept a wink for fear of being robbed. But a penny piece comes in useful, and I shall sell that iron for a lot and be real rich — rolling rich."

So on she trotted, full of plans as to how she would spend her penny pieces, till once more she stopped to rest and looked round to see her treasure was safe. And this time she saw nothing but a big stone.

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