

STORY GUIDE

Jack and the Beanstalk

Original story by: Joseph Jacobs

Read by: Chazz Palminteri



morals and themes

Bravery, Responsibility, Fairness

general comprehension questions

- Where does the story take place?
- Who are the characters?
- Who is your favorite character and why?
- Which character don't you like and why?
- What are the problems the characters face?
- How do they solve these problems?
- How does the story end?
- What lesson does this story teach you?

discussion questions

- Why did Jack's mother send him to the market?
- Why did Jack trade his family's cow for some beans?
- What did the fairy tell Jack about the castle?
- Why did Jack go back to the castle even after his golden hen ensured that his family would not be poor?
- What are some other symbolic meanings of "planting a seed?"
- Do you think Jack was right to take from the Giant? Why? (Hint: There is no right answer)

extension questions

- What other stories does this remind you of?
- How does this story relate to your own life?
- Write an alternate ending for the story.
- Write your own version of what happens next.

research activity

Use the internet or library to research beanstalks.

- What do people use them for?
- How do they grow?
- How do they compare to other plants?

notes on this adaptation

Though Jacobs is usually credited with popularizing this story, this version contains elements from an adaptation by Andrew Lang, which depicts a more virtuous Jack than other versions. When he trades his cow for the magic beans, he does so with the practical intention of growing food rather than the whimsy of magic. Yet when presented with the challenge of climbing the stalk, he proves to be courageous, and his curiosity is rewarded when the fairy tells him that his family is the rightful owner of the castle in the sky.