



by Arthur Amos Holmes

Once upon a time (I think it was a long time ago) there lived a mother and her son. The mother was bent and forlorn while the son (perhaps because of his youth) was only forlorn. It was hard to figure out why the mother was bent but you could tell right away why she was forlorn. You see...she had a cupboard that would make Mother Hubbard's cupboard look simply bountiful. She really didn't mind the fact that she had no meat or milk or vegetables...but Lordy...she couldn't stand not having beer in the house.

At last (while suffering severe withdrawal symptoms) the mother called to her son. "Jack" she croaked, "I want you to take the cow into town and sell her. And remember...the cow is the only thing we have in the world...so don't sell her for something stupid like a basketball or a magic bean."

Jack was eager to sell the cow. He didn't mind not having beer in the refrigerator but he sure missed that meat, milk, and vegetables. He took the cow and started for town. Jack was in great pain because the sun was

so hot. The cow didn't mind the heat but she did mind stepping on her udder every second step.

(Writer's Note: If you are considering not finishing this story please reconsider. It keeps getting better and better.)

After sixteen hours of toil and trouble, Jack finally arrived in town. He was just about to turn on Main Street when he was confronted by an old, ugly, gypsy woman coming out of Duke's Bar. They gypsy looked at Jack, and the cow, and cackled, "Son, where are you taking that bow-legged bovine?"

Jack replied, "I am bringing her here to sell her."

"That's a terrible looking udder she has," said the gypsy.

"She's been stepping on it for the last three hours," replied Jack.

The gypsy slapped her forehead, and whined, "Boy, I must be out of my head, but I have taken a fancy to that cow. And as much as I hate doing it...as much as it goes against the grain...I will trade this magic bean for that lousy critter."

"Is it really a magic bean?" asked Jack.

"Certainly," replied the old crone, "all you have to do is rub this bean along your leg and then you ask for anything you want. Gold, jewels, lettuce, or coffee."

"Girls?" simpered Jack.

"Yes," answered the gypsy, "you can even ask for girls. And...if you rub particularly hard you can ask for ten cases of beer to go along with the girls. And you know how much your mother would appreciate that."

## Jack and the Beanstalk

So Jack traded away the cow and ran home with the magic bean. His mother, not particularly pleasant at any time, snarled, "Where's the loot?"

"Mama," cried Jack, "I traded the cow for this magic bean. Here...let me show you how it works." Jack rubbed the bean along his leg, and said, "bean...I would like ten cases of your best beer and two blondes."

Of course nothing happened and Jack's mother thundered, "YOU PIMPLE BRAIN...YOU LOUSY PUMPKIN SKULL...YOU INCORRIGIBLE BLITHERING IDIOT." She then took the bean and threw it out the window.

The next morning Jack saw a huge beanstalk towering into the sky. He climbed the beanstalk until he came to a castle. When he entered the castle he saw a giant sitting at a table. The giant held a chicken in his hands. The giant said to the chicken, "My feathered friend...if I'm not too bold...lay me an egg...of solid gold."

And I'll be damned if that chicken didn't do just that. Out plopped the most perfect golden egg.

Jack decided to steal the chicken. He would take it to his mother and he quivered in anticipation thinking of his mother's happiness.

So while the giant slept, Jack ran up and grabbed the chicken. He climbed swiftly down the beanstalk and ran immediately to the kitchen. "Mama," he cried, "look what I have."

"It looks like a chicken," replied the mother.

"Yes," said Jack, "but what a chicken. A magic chicken."

"Get lost," snarled the mother.

"But Mama," bellowed Jack, "I'm not putting you on. This chicken is REALLY a magic chicken. Just hold your hand under the chicken's rear-end and see what happens."

"You've got rocks in your head," shouted the mother.

"Please Mama," cried Jack, "have faith in me. Just this once...have faith in me."

So the mother, very tentatively, hesitantly, placed her hand under the chicken's rear-end. Jack, in the mystic voice that must be used in situations of this type, said, "my feathered friend...if I'm not too bold...lay me an egg...of solid gold."

Well, my friends, when the chicken was taken from the castle it immediately lost all of its magical powers. So what plopped into the mother's hand was certainly not a golden egg. It created quite a scene.

Jack was banished from the house and nobody lived happily ever after.

And the moral to this story:

If you love your mother just a little bit

Don't fill her hand with chicken manure.

(Writers Note: Although the styles are similar, do not confuse this work with the work of Hans Christian Andersen.