



JACK THE PEA BOY

Once there was a poor little wooden shack with a crumbling roof and a broken chimney, where a farmer lived with his beloved wife. In their tiny yard, they raised just a gaggle of geese that kept gabbling and two little squealing pigs. Of course they also had a big dog, but he preferred to wander around the kitchen than to guard the yard.

Every morning the farmer went to the field to plough and his wife took care of all their hungry little critters. They had no children and they yearned for a son who they could raise with love. One day, when the farmer left to work on the field, and the wife was about to feed the animals and make lunch, something incredible happened. The farmer's wife was making pea soup and throwing dumplings into boiling water while dreaming about a little son. She thought: He doesn't need to be a giant, even if he were tiny, my heart would fill with joy. Oh, how much happier we would be if only we were three. The soup filled the kitchen with a tempting smell and the dumplings were already bubbling in the boiling water when suddenly someone spoke to her: "Woow, what a lovely smell, I would love something tasty in my belly." The farmer's wife was so startled she dropped her wooden spoon. She was looking all around but she couldn't see anyone.

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“Who was that? Who scared me half to death? Show yourself, stop hiding!” she called and her eyes kept searching all around the room for the person who just spoke.

“Why, I’m right here in front of you. Can’t you see me?” said the voice from a shelf by the window and suddenly this person started dancing, jumping up, even somersaulting, so that the woman could see him.

And now, the farmer’s wife finally saw a tiny little boy sitting on the shelf. He was as tiny as a pea, she could hardly see him, and his eyes were as little as the dots on a ladybug’s wings.

“You wished for a son, so here I am. My name is Jack. I am tiny, but also very clever, brave and strong like a bull. Now, mommy, please give me something to eat or I’ll faint from hunger,” said the boy and he put his hand on his empty rumbling stomach.

The farmer’s wife served a plate full of dumplings to Jack the Pea Boy so that he could eat as much as he wanted, seeing as he was so hungry. Though he was tiny, he tackled the mountain of dumplings with ease and even licked the plate, he was such a big eater.

“Thank you for lunch, mommy. Now that I got some strength, I can bring some lunch to daddy, too,” said Jack the Pea Boy when his belly was full.

The farmer’s wife packed a clay pot with hot soup and a wooden bowl with dumplings in a linen sack. Jack the Pea Boy threw the sack over his shoulder, took a spoon and a fork in his hand, and set out for the field to find his father.

And so Jack the Pea Boy walked through the valley whistling as he walked. But the people he met along the way could hardly believe their eyes, because they could only see a walking, whistling sack with a spoon and fork sticking out. The little boy was all hidden from sight. Soon he reached a little stream he needed to cross. An ordinary person would easily jump over it, but for this tiny boy, it was a great obstacle. Now, Jack the Pea Boy got a great idea. He boarded the spoon like a boat and used the fork as an oar. That way, he cleverly got to the other side. Then he continued towards the field and gazed at the world around him when suddenly he stumbled over a rock and fell into a hole that was in the middle of the path. When he fell, the bowl of dumplings spilled out, the pot of soup broke

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and the soup started leaking out. The spilled soup made a lake in the hole and tiny little Jack started drowning.

“Oh no, help! I can’t swim at all. I haven’t had time to learn, it’s only my first day in the world,” cried the boy until his throat was sore.

But then he found a way once again. He quickly climbed up as high as he could on the fork, which stuck into the ground in the middle of the soup lake with peas and dumplings swimming around. Luckily, in a while, the dry ground soaked up all the soup, leaving only peas and dumplings lying around. Jack carefully picked up everything and put it back in the wooden bowl. He took his fork and continued to the field.

In a moment, he saw the farmer, who was just sitting down under a tree to have a little break and hide from the sun.

Jack the Pea Boy started shouting: “Daddy, oh daddy, I have some lunch for you.” The farmer looked around to see who was shouting and calling him daddy. But he couldn’t see anyone. He only thought he saw a bowl and a fork walking down the path towards him.

“Oh my, I must have gotten heatstroke from the sun, I am seeing things,” the farmer shook his head.

“Here I am, daddy. It’s me who’s shouting at you. I am your son, little Jack,” said Jack the Pea Boy as loud as he could once he got close enough to the farmer.

The farmer looked at him in surprise, but finally, they hugged very tight, as father and son. In a minute, the father looked at the bowl of dumplings and asked: “Jack, didn’t you bring any soup for me?”

“Oh well, the naughty dog... he knocked the pot of soup from the table with his tail, the pot broke and mom had nothing to put the soup in,” lied Jack the Pea Boy. And so, the father dug into these strange dumplings with peas, which even squeaked between his teeth because some grains of sand from the ground got into them. He asked the little prankster, what kind of dumplings they were.

“Well, mom wanted to try out a new recipe to make a healthier lunch,” Jack the Pea Boy lied again. But when the father had a closer look, he saw that there was sand and dirt mixed in with the dumplings. He was just about to tell the little rascal off for telling lies and making things up, but just then, Jack the Pea Boy ran to the oxen waiting on the field. The little boy scrambled up onto one of them, sat

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right by his ear and shouted: “Hey, ho, let’s go, on the field!”

The oxen hitched to a plough ran out and ploughed the earth up and down the field. When his father saw how easily Jack the Pea Boy ploughed the field all by himself, he stopped being angry.

At that very moment, a rich stranger on a horse was riding by. He noticed the oxen ploughing the field all by themselves, without the farmer. He stopped by the farmer and asked what kind of a miracle this was. He told him everything that had happened that day and how this tiny son fell straight from heaven and now he was ploughing alone, sitting by the ox’s ear. The rich stranger decided that he had to have this miraculous boy for himself, and he was already imagining how happy his wife was going to be when he brought her such an incredible surprise. He offered the farmer a purse full of money for the boy, but the farmer didn’t want to sell his little son.

“Don’t be angry, sir, but I cannot sell my son to you. We yearned for him so much and now we finally have him. He’s our biggest good fortune, I would never exchange him for all the money in the world,” the father said.

But then he heard Jack the Pea Boy whispering in his ear. “Daddy, don’t worry, you can sell me to this man. I can escape from him, don’t be afraid.”

And so, the farmer and the stranger agreed on a price. The stranger put the little boy in his pocket where his money was, got onto his black horse and went home to his native land. Jack the Pea Boy didn’t dawdle, and started cutting the pocket from the inside with his little knife. As they were galloping on the horse, all the coins spilled from the little hole one by one. After that, Jack the Pea Boy jumped out of the pocket and the fallen coins marked the way home for him.

The farmer with his wife were already missing their little son, they were sad to be alone in the house again, and that they had so little time together with Jack the Pea Boy. But then, suddenly, a familiar voice brought them out of their sadness: “Is there anything tasty for my hungry little belly?”

The parents jumped up from their chairs with joy, and they started welcoming their little son. Jack was finally back and he even brought some money, because he picked it all up on the way home.

And then the three of them were all happy together, they fixed the little house and the chimney with the money they got. And they lived happily ever after. The end.