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A Fairy Tale

by Penny Humphrey

Frankly, Jack was in the doghouse, not that they had a dog, they had a goat and that was the problem.

Let me start this story from the moment everything started to go wrong. That was when Jack's father left home forever to go and live with a strange young girl by the name of Gerda, who lived in the next village with her brother Kai.

Gerda was given to flights of fancy and told stories of being abducted by the Snow Queen who took her and her brother to her ice palace and turned Kai's heart to ice. Gerda on the other hand had obviously managed to melt the heart of Jack's father.

But that's a different story, I must not digress.

Jack's father had left him and his mother in poverty, clinging to what they could get from the land with hard toil.

Now Jack was a good boy and worked hard but he wasn't the brightest kid on the block and one day while he was walking the goat along the lane, he met Gerda's brother Kai.

"That's a fine looking goat you have there" said Kai "Would you sell me that goat for these three fine beans and this golden ticket?"

Jack thought this a sensible offer and made the exchange.

When he told his mother he had sold the goat for three beans and a ticket, she was less than pleased. “Now we have no milk” she scolded “What use are three beans and a ticket?” She put the ticket on the mantelpiece and shooed Jack out to plant the beans. He’s not such a bad boy she thought to herself as she looked down at the little red shoes Jack had found floating in the river one day and brought home for her.

Jack planted the beans and that night he dreamt that they grew right up to the sky and he had climbed all the way up and found a giant and a magic goose that laid golden eggs. He stole the golden eggs from under the giant’s nose and brought them back to his mother. It was a great dream and he rushed out in the morning to see if it might just be true but sadly all he found were three holes where the rabbits had dug up the beans and eaten them because he hadn’t remembered to cover them over.

That evening his mother had another little scold about the goat as they sat drinking black tea, which neither of them liked. They switched on the tele just as they were announcing the lottery ticket winners, the golden lottery ticket winners. Jack jumped up and grabbed the ticket from the mantelpiece as they read out the numbers, they all matched.

The moral of this story is that if you’re a bit thick and willing to exchange a goat for beans and a ticket... you’ve more chance of living Happily Ever After.