Five Famous Fairy Tales

When a fisherman opens an old jar, a giant comes out. When a donkey opens its mouth, gold falls out. There is magic in these five fairy tales. Good people are often very unhappy – but in the end they have happy lives.

Penguin Readers are simplified texts which provide a step-by-step approach to the joys of reading for pleasure.

Series Editors: Andy Hopkins and Jocelyn Potter

**Levels**

- **Easystarts**: 200 headwords
- **Level 1**: 300 headwords (Beginner)
- **Level 2**: 600 headwords (Elementary)
- **Level 3**: 1200 headwords (Pre-Intermediate)
- **Level 4**: 1700 headwords (Intermediate)
- **Level 5**: 2300 headwords (Upper-Intermediate)
- **Level 6**: 3000 headwords (Advanced)

Classic British English

**Number of words (excluding activities)**: 9,927

Cover illustration by Gwen Tourret

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**Introduction**

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm – the Brothers Grimm – were good friends. Jacob was a quiet man and sometimes sad. Wilhelm was often very ill but he was a happier person than his brother. He had a wife and children.

The brothers’ stories came from friends and family. They paid one poor old man for his story with some new trousers. A woman from the next village sold them eggs and told them stories. Their first book came out in Germany in 1812, when Jacob and Wilhelm were nearly forty.

Hans Andersen came from Denmark and wrote more than 150 fairy tales. He was the son of a poor shoemaker, and his mother couldn’t read. But his father read him the *Arabian Nights* and the young Hans began to love stories. At the age of 14 he went to Copenhagen and got some work in the theatre. A very kind man helped him at university, and at the age of 23 he was a writer. In 1835 his first book of fairy tales came out. ‘The Glass Box’ was one of these stories. He wrote for people of all ages.

Another name for the *Arabian Nights* is the *Thousand and One Nights*. Aladdin, Ali Baba, Sindbad and a story in this book, ‘The Fisherman and the Giant’, are all from the *Thousand and One Nights*. There was a king in Arabia, and his wife loved another man. The king killed her and now he hated women. He married a new woman every day and killed her the next morning. But then he married Sheherezade. She told him a story every night but she didn’t tell him the end. So the king had to wait for the next evening and he could not kill her. After a thousand and one nights, Sheherezade had no more stories. But now the king loved her and did not want to kill her.
The Table, the Donkey and the Stick

Once there was a woman with three sons – Tom, Bob and Jack. Tom was the youngest. Bob came next, and Jack was the oldest. They lived in a village. They were happy, but their mother was very poor. So the boys looked for work.

Tom worked for a kind man in the next town. The man made tables and other things from wood. Tom worked very hard for one year. When the year ended, the kind man gave him a table. It looked old and dirty, but it was a magic table.

‘Say to the table, “I am hungry.” Then wonderful food will appear on it by magic,’ said the man, with a smile.

‘You are very kind,’ said Tom to the man. And he left. He went from country to country and from city to city, and he was always happy. He carried his table on his back. When he wanted food, he put the table down – in the street, by a river, under a tree. He said to the table, ‘I am hungry’, and lovely food appeared.

Some months later, he thought, ‘I would like to see my mother. I’ll go home.’

On the last night of his journey to his mother’s house, he came to an old house. An old man lived there.

‘Can I stay the night here?’ he asked the old man.

‘Yes, you can stay here, but I can’t give you any food,’ said the old man.

‘Don’t give me any food,’ Tom said. ‘You can eat with me.’ Then he put down his table and said, ‘I am hungry.’ Wonderful food appeared and they ate it.

Now this man was not a good man. He was a jealous man.

‘I want this boy’s table,’ he thought. ‘It will give me food. I can sell the food to other people. I will never be hungry again.’
He said to the table, ‘I am hungry’, and lovely food appeared.
When Tom was asleep that night, the old man took the magic
table from Tom's room. He worked all night and made a new table.
It looked the same. He put it next to Tom's bed.

The next morning Tom put the new table on his back and he
walked to his mother's house.

Tom's mother was very happy when she saw her youngest son.
'What did you do when you were away?' she asked.
'I made tables,' said Tom. 'And I have a table here.'
'It's not a very nice table,' said his mother.
'But it's a magic table,' answered Tom. 'When I say to it, "I am
hungry", beautiful food appears on it.'
'Show me!' said his mother.
'Let's invite our friends from the village. Then everybody can
see the magic,' said Tom.

Tom's mother invited everybody from the village. Tom put his
table down in front of them and said, 'I am hungry.' But nothing
happened. No wonderful food appeared on the table. Everybody
laughed and went away. Tom was very angry. He knew now – the
old man had his magic table.

Tom was very unhappy. He ran away from home and went
back to his old job. He wrote to his brother, Jack. His letter told
the story of the magic table and the jealous old man.

Bob, the second brother, worked with a friendly man in a village
many kilometres away. Bob worked very hard for one year. When
the year ended, the man gave Bob a donkey.

'You can't sit on this donkey,' the man said, 'but it is a good
donkey:'

'It's very small. Why is it a good donkey?' asked Bob.

'Because it's a magic donkey,' answered the man. 'Put a box
under its mouth. Say the magic word, "Bricklebat", and gold will
suddenly fall from its mouth. Catch the gold in the box. You will
never be poor.'
‘You are very kind,’ Bob said to the man. Bob went from country to country, and from city to city, and he was always happy. He took the donkey with him. He bought the most expensive clothes and ate the most wonderful food. He stayed in the best houses. When he wanted more money, he said ‘Bricklebat’ to the donkey.

Some months later, Bob thought, ‘I would like to see my mother. I’ll go home.’

On the last night of his journey, he came to the old house. The jealous old man was there.

‘Can I stay the night here?’ he asked.

‘Yes, you can stay here, but I want money for your food and your bed.’

‘Money!’ cried Bob. ‘You can have a lot of money!’

Bob ate lovely food at Tom’s table. The old man asked for some money. Bob put his hand in his coat but there was nothing in it.

‘Wait,’ said Bob, ‘I’ll get some.’

He took a box and went outside to the donkey. The old man followed him to the door. He stood behind the door and Bob did not see him.

‘Where is his money?’ the old man thought. ‘I’ll watch him. When he’s asleep, I’ll take his money.’

Bob put the box under the donkey’s mouth. He said the magic word. The gold fell into the box. The old man’s mouth opened wider and wider.

‘I want that donkey,’ he thought.

Later that night, when Bob was asleep, the old man went outside. He found another donkey and put it in the place of the magic donkey.

The next morning, Bob took the new donkey and walked to his mother’s house.

Bob’s mother was very happy when she saw her son.

‘What did you do when you were away?’ she asked.

‘I worked for a man,’ said Bob. ‘And he gave me this donkey.’
‘It’s a very small donkey,’ said his mother. ‘Is it strong?’
‘No,’ answered Bob, ‘but it’s a magic donkey. When I say the magic word, gold falls from its mouth. Call your friends. Let’s show them.’

Everybody came from the village.
‘Now, watch this!’ said Bob. ‘Bricklebat!’ Everybody looked at the donkey. The donkey looked at them. Nothing happened. No gold fell from its mouth. Everybody laughed, and Bob was very angry. He knew now – the old man had his magic donkey. He ran away from home and went back to his old job. He wrote to his brother, Jack. His letter told the story of the magic donkey and the jealous old man.

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Jack worked with a wood-cutter. He worked very hard for one year. When the year ended, the wood-cutter gave Jack a beautiful box. There was a stick inside it.

‘Thank you for the beautiful box,’ said Jack, ‘but I don’t want the stick. I’ll put something prettier than a stick in this lovely box.’

‘It’s a magic stick,’ said the wood-cutter. ‘When somebody is unkind to you, the stick will help you. You say, “Stick! Out of the box!” The stick will jump out of the box and it will hit them. When you say, “Stick! Back in the box!”, it will stop hitting them.’

Jack took the box and started his journey home. On the last night of his journey, he came to the old house. The jealous old man was there. He gave Jack some food. Then Jack told him about his journey.

‘Do you know,’ said Jack, ‘that there is a magic table? You say “I am hungry” to the table. Then wonderful food appears on it. And there is a magic donkey. You say “Bricklebat!” to it, and gold falls from its mouth. But I have something better than the magic table or the magic donkey in this box. Nothing in the world is as good as this!’
‘What is it?’ thought the jealous old man. ‘I want it.’

When Jack went to bed, he put the box on the floor. He shut his eyes. After some time, the old man came into Jack’s room. He looked at Jack. Quietly he put his hand on the box. Suddenly, Jack jumped out of bed. ‘Stick! Out of the box!’ he cried. The stick hit the jealous old man on his head and arms and back. The old man wanted to run away but he couldn’t.

‘Give me the magic table and the magic donkey. Then I will put the stick back in the box,’ said Jack.

‘Yes, yes,’ cried the old man. ‘You can have them. Stop the stick! Stop the stick!’

The next day, Jack took the table, the donkey and the stick and he walked to his mother’s house.

Jack’s mother was very happy when she saw her son.
‘What did you do when you were away?’ she asked.
‘I worked with a wood-cutter,’ said Jack. ‘He gave me this stick.’
‘A stick!’ cried his mother angrily. ‘Why did he give you a stick? You can get a stick from every tree in the world!’

‘Yes,’ said Jack. ‘But this is a magic stick. When somebody is unkind to me, I say, “Stick! Out of the box!” It jumps out of the box and hits them. It only stops when I say, “Stick! Back in the box!” My brothers had a magic table and a magic donkey. A jealous old man took them. With this stick, I got them back again.’

Jack’s mother was very happy. She wrote to Tom and Bob and told them the story. They came home. She invited everybody from the village to their house. Everybody sat round the magic table and ate wonderful food. Everybody took home a bag of gold from the magic donkey’s mouth.

From that day, the old woman and her three sons lived very happily.