# Jack and the Bean Stalk 3000
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# Jack and the Bean Stalk / Emre Sururi

*For Hande Toffoli*

Jack Cassidy was a simple, yet highly skeptical man who didn't believe in anyone or anything unless the truth of it stared him right in the face. He always guessed who the killer was in all of the masterfully written crime novels and could tell you exactly what would happen in the movie that he was watching with you. He said that he was taking the screenwriter's considerations about the would-be viewers' expectations into account and he would call it a one-layered interference. A double-layered account would occur when the same screenwriter would also include a special viewer like Jack himself and try to take a shot at him, but then the screenplay should suffer a penalty of some abstraction due to this hidden context and Jack had calculated this limit to be practically a 4-fold. After that, you had no choice but present a swirl of colors and sounds, escaped from Henri Matisse's worst nightmares. This was his theory, classification and proposition.

He witnessed the invention and rise of the simulator cabins. These cabins exploited a back-door to the brain's perception center (called as the *cummulinus point*, just below the right ear and a bit towards the neck), making it possible to give you all the things you ever wanted. You'd never be disappointed in what you found, because what you had been presented was what you asked for in the first place and everyone would agree that it was just as they had hoped and expected. It had a price, of course: while you weren't connected,  you had to fill your quota by working in the farms, growing vegetables and plants, raising cattle as well as tending to those who were connected at the moment... Two years in such labor would earn you twenty years in the heaven of your choice. Since they were directly "I/O"ing the brain, and analog-to-digital converters such as the eyes, ears, etc.. were no longer involved in the process, speed-up factors up to 10 had been achieved. Nobody worried by the fact that they had tricked the old mother earth, living ten times longer during its one slow tour (and quite the opposite, they were fond of this). On the first occasion in the *dreamed land* (as they were identifying the virtual world), people would usually start ruling the city they were coming from and it didn't take long to increase the limits of their influence to kingdom, soon to be followed by kingdom, empire and godhood. Among them, there were even ones who strictly believe that the dreamed land was the reality, this world where from time to time they worked in the trenches to fill up their quotas was just a designed limbo to curb their enthusiasm and also help them to fully appreciate the heaven they were coming from by acting as the contrast.

People were divided into two factions: the ones who stayed away from the cabins and acknowledged such a division between themselves and the rest; and the ones who just didn't care. The first faction usually pitied the rest, saying that they were spellbound by this new witchery/drug/evil. With the millions turning to the simulator cabins and therefore minimizing their need for an actual quality of living while being connected and at other times failing to see any difference between the standards of the lowest peons and the *crème de la crème* – compared to their "usual" on the other side of the living, the world soon renewed its resources and bloomed. The "unconnecting" ones had so much available now, that they somehow managed to be content with living in the same world with the others.

Jack was an unconnecting one, but he was very different from his fellow unconnecteds: they all had some similar reasons to stay away from the simulators – be it religion, paranoia, or political opposition... Jack, on the other hand, was rejecting to enter into a simulator simply because he believed that he would see through the simulation right from the start. Since there was no payback, he didn't want his two years' commitment to go waste  (there was no such thing as refunding but then again

nobody had ever asked for a refund). All he wanted in his life was to sum up the money needed to buy that red Plymouth sedan that he fell in love with, from the moment he set his eyes on one.

His faction believed in his self-confidence to be infallible and they worked in the simulator company's farms to cover Jack's payment. They were so sure that Jack would indeed beat the wicked machine and set an example. They took turns so the quota was soon filled. Thus, one day Jack entered into the cabin. The lid closed, only to be opened a short time later. A technician in a white lab coat holding a clipboard stood really unhappy by Jack's cabin. He *regretted to tell that* the machine had failed in the initialization stage where it scans the brain to find the heart's most powerful desires and begins to act accordingly. Not that Jack didn't have any such desires, for which he apparently had plenty; but his consciousness was so high at all times that the *imagined life* would appear to him no more convincing than a magician's show executed with a transparent hat and a clothless, bare table. He talked about the probability of such a thing happening being really, really low and he even went forward to show that incredibly small number on his clipboard. Jack asked if a refund of some sort to his friends was possible but after consulting his superior, the technician once again regretted to decline. Jack was already anticipating it, so he didn't push further.

So, eventually, he left the building and started to walk back to his home. On the way to his village, as he was passing the lottery shop, he realized that his chances of winning the big prize was actually much higher than the probability of beating the simulator, so he decided to have a go at it. He didn't win the big prize but won an amount just enough to buy that red Plymouth sedan of his dreams.

From that moment on, everything got a little better each day.

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