

Jack and Jill

Went up the Hill

To fetch a Pail of Water;

Jack fell down

And broke his Crown,

And Jill came tumbling after.

A. Summary: The nursery rhyme “Jack and Jill” displays two children performing a domestic chore: collecting water from a well. For undefined reasons, an accident occurs causing Jack and Jill to both stumble and fall down a slope. The verse is set in a basic rhyme formula.

B. Paraphrase: *The Annotated Mother Goose* relates the story within this rhyme. Two children, Jack and Jill, race to a nearby well in order to gather a bucketful of water—without warning. Jack stumbles and falls, cracking open his skull. Startled, Jill herself loses her balance, only to roll down the hill, following Jack (Baring-Gould 58).

C. Internal Quotation: The nursery rhyme “Jack and Jill” relates the story of two children performing domestic chores, “to fetch a pail of water;” unfortunately, “Jack fell down and broke his Crown/and Jill came tumbling after” (Baring-Gould 58). As with most of these verses, disaster lurks even during casual errands.

D. Long Quotation: The nursery rhyme “Jack and Jill” relates the story of two children performing domestic chores:

To fetch a pail of water; (unfortunately)

Jack fell down

And broke his Crown

And Jill came tumbling after (Baring-Gould 58).

As with most of these verses, disaster lurks even during casual errands.

E. Analysis/Interpretation: Nursery rhymes often depict an accidental act in the guise of slapstick comedy for children’s amusement. For instance, in the well-known rhyme “Jack and Jill” the children are shown performing a basic chore. Unfortunately: “Jack fell down and broke his crown/And Jill came tumbling after”(58). This short scene teaches school children the importance of paying attention their surroundings. It also implies that accidents occur when people are careless and take situations for granted. Jack’s tumble results in bodily harm—which he could have avoided.

F. Analysis with Supportive Critical Opinion

The well-known rhyme “Jack and Jill” shows two children performing a basic chore. This reinforces to children reading the poem that domestic duties should be completed correctly. Author William Baring-Gould relates how rhymes were intended to serve multiple purposes, from lullabies to counting songs, riddles, charms or incantations, proverbs, fragmented ballads, and nonsense songs (12). Consequently, nursery rhymes served as a way of establishing a structured order through rigid rhythms and short melodies.