

The Lion and the Rabbit

A **cruel** lion lived in the forest. Every day, he killed and ate a **lot** of animals. The other animals were **afraid** the lion would kill them all.

The animals told the lion, "Let's make a deal. If you **promise** to eat only one animal each day, then one of us will come to you every day. Then you don't have to **hunt** and kill us."

The plan sounded **well** thought-out to the lion, so he **agreed**, but he also said, "If you don't come every day, I promise to kill all of you the next day!"

Each day after that, one animal went to the lion so that the lion could eat it. Then, all the other animals were **safe**.

Finally, it was the rabbit's turn to go to the lion. The rabbit went very slowly that day, so the lion was **angry** when the rabbit finally **arrived**.

The lion angrily asked the rabbit, "Why are you late?"

"I was **hiding** from another lion in the forest. That lion said he was the king, so I was afraid."

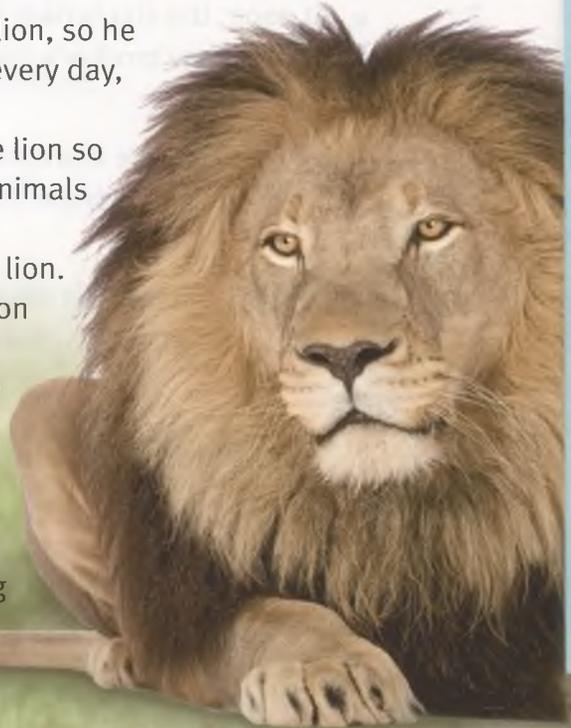
The lion told the rabbit, "I am the only king here! Take me to that other lion, and I will kill him."

The rabbit **replied**, "I will be happy to show you where he lives."

The rabbit led the lion to an old well in the **middle** of the forest. The well was very deep with water at the **bottom**. The rabbit told the lion, "Look in there. The lion lives at the bottom."

When the lion looked in the well, he could see his own face in the water. He thought that was the other lion. Without waiting another **moment**, the lion jumped into the well to **attack** the other lion. He never came out.

All of the other animals in the forest were very **pleased** with the rabbit's **clever trick**.



The Laboratory

Mia's father had a **laboratory**, but she had no idea what was in it. Her dad always closed and locked the door when he went in. She knew that he used it to do **projects** for work. He never told Mia what these projects were.

One night, Mia **approached** the door to the laboratory. She stopped and thought, "I wonder what crazy **experiment** he is doing now." Suddenly, she heard a **loud noise**. It sounded like an **evil laugh**. The noise **scared** her, so she walked quickly back to her room.

The next night, her friend Liz came to her house. When Liz arrived, Mia told her about the night before. "Oh, it was **terrible**," she said.

"Why don't we see what is in there?" Liz asked. "It will be a fun **adventure!**"

Mia felt **nervous** about going into her father's laboratory, but she agreed. As always, the door was locked. They waited until Mia's father left the laboratory to eat dinner. "He didn't lock the door!" Liz said. "Let's go."

The laboratory was dark. The girls walked down the stairs **carefully**. Mia **smelled** strange **chemicals**. What terrible thing was her father **creating**?

Suddenly, they heard an evil laugh. It was even **worse** than the one Mia heard the night before. What if a monster was going to **kill** them? Mia had to do something. She **shouted** for help.

Mia's father ran into the room and turned on the lights. "Oh, no," he said. "You must have learned my **secret**."

"Your monster tried to kill us," Mia said.

"Monster?" he asked. "You mean this?" He had a pretty doll in his hands. The doll laughed. The laugh didn't sound so evil anymore. "I made this for your birthday. I wanted to give it to you then, but you can have it now. I hope you like it!"



The Report

Lee sat **among** the books at the **library** and thought about his group project.

They had to turn it in soon, but he hadn't even started his part! Jack and Claire were in his group. They had worked hard. They were also very smart, and Lee didn't want them to get a bad **grade**.

Jack did the **report**. He wrote a lot of very good sentences and **described** things with great adjectives. Claire drew a nice map of the stars. Now, Lee needed to do his part of the project.

"Well, I **suppose** I need to start my model," Lee thought.

Making a model of a **planet** was really hard. Lee tried to read **several** books, but he couldn't **comprehend** any of the **charts**. "We're going to **fail** because of me!" Lee said. He put his head down on the table and said, "I wish I could see a planet, **instead** of having to read about it!"

Suddenly, there was a bright light. Lee was pulled from his chair, through the roof, and right into a strange ship! "Hello, kid," said an **alien**. "Did you ask for help?"

Lee told the **friendly** alien all about his project. The alien agreed to help Lee **solve** his problem. "First, we'll fly through space to **view** the **universe**. Then, I can help you make a model of my planet."

Soon, they were going through the **clouds**. They passed the moon. Then they viewed Mars. Lee was very excited. Instead of a bad grade, his group would have the best project **ever!**

"It's time to go home," the alien finally said. On the way back, he helped Lee make a model of the planet Mars. Soon, they were on Earth.

"Thanks," Lee said. "My model will be awesome!" Then he took his model and said goodbye to his new friend.



The Dog's Bell

John's dog was a bad dog. He bit people **frequently**. John had great **concern** about this. It was not an **appropriate** way for a dog to **behave**. His friends in the **village** always **expected** the dog to bite them. The news about John's dog **spread** through the village. **None** of the people wanted to go to John's house. John tried to **instruct** the dog to behave, but it never worked. He tried to be **patient** and teach the dog to be **calm**. That also didn't work. John didn't want to **punish** the dog. "How will I stop my dog's bad **habit**?" John asked himself.

John's friend came to talk to him about the **issue**. During their important meeting, his friend said, "The people in the village asked me to **represent** them. We want your dog to stop this habit. Why don't you put a bell around the dog's neck? This way, we would hear your dog coming down the street."

John thought this was a great idea. Now, people could stay away from the dog. It would not be able to bite anyone anymore.

The dog liked the bell, too. People looked at him when they heard his bell. This made the dog very **content**. He liked the song the bell played when he walked.

One day, John's dog **strolled** through the village and met some other dogs. He expected them to want a bell like his. But they laughed at his bell. They said the bell made people **avoid** him. John's dog **shook** his head. "No, they look at me because they like the bell."

The other dogs said, "You have the wrong idea of what makes you popular. Of course they like your bell. It tells them where you are so they can avoid you. You aren't able to bite them anymore!"

You see, being popular isn't something **positive** when it's for the wrong reason.



The Jackal and the Sun Child

A jackal is a **wild** dog with a big black back. It **resides** in the desert. But how did the jackal get his black back? This was how it happened.

One day, the jackal saw a girl. She was sitting upon a rock. She was not a **normal** child. She was a **rare** and beautiful sun child. She was bright and warm like the sun. The child saw the jackal and smiled.

She said, "Jackal, I have been **relaxing** on this rock for too long. I must get home soon. But, I am slow and you are fast. You will **likely** get me home more quickly." Then she **requested**, "Will you carry me home? If you do, I'll give you a gift. This necklace **belongs** to me, but I will give it to you."

The wild jackal agreed. So the sun child sat on the dog's back. They started to walk. But soon, the jackal felt ill. The sun child was very hot on his back. The heat was **hurting** his back very **badly**. "I made a terrible **error in judgment**," he thought. He shouldn't have agreed to carry her. So he asked her to get off.

But she did not. The jackal's back **continued** to get hotter and hotter. He had to get away from the sun child. So he made a plan. First, he ran as fast as he could.

He hoped the sun child would fall off. But she did not. So when the sun child was looking at the sky, not **aware** of the jackal's next plan, he jumped into a **field** of flowers. As a **result**, the child **rolled** off his back. The jackal ran away.

But the sun child left a mark on the jackal's back, a **visible** black mark. Ever **since** his **experience** with the sun child, the jackal has had a black back.



The Friendly Ghost

A nice woman lived by a large river. She loved children. She wanted to help them in any way. She loved her **community**, and everyone in the community loved her. She lived a very long time and became very **wise**.

When she died, she became a **ghost**. She was **dead**, but every night she **returned** to her community. She wanted to help children and not to **cause** them **fright**. But she had a scary **voice**. Children were afraid of her, but the ghost was a good one. She only scared them to help them.

One night, some children and a dog were playing by the river. They were having fun with their **pet**. But they were far from home. Then the **weather** became bad. It rained and rained. The river was rising. It was very dark. The children knew they were lost. They needed to go north, but they didn't know which direction it was. When the moon came out, they saw a ghost by the river. The ghost said, "Go away!"

The children felt great fright. They knew it was a ghost. Then the ghost moved closer. She yelled again, "Go away!" The children became very **upset**. Some of them began to cry. The children knew they had a **choice**: they could **escape**, or they could stay and **face** this scary **individual** in the dark.

The children ran a long **distance** away. The ghost **followed** them all the way.

Finally, the children **reached** home. The ghost was very

happy. Soon the river rose higher and higher. It was very dangerous. The ghost had helped the children **survive!** She had saved them from the

rising water. She also used her power to lead them home. Sometimes, meeting a ghost has **advantages**. A ghost can save your life!



The Best Prince

King Minos was very sick. His **condition** was getting worse. He had three sons. He loved them all. He had to **announce** who would become king.

Two of the **princes** stood waiting outside the king's room. Theseus was the oldest and strongest. He thought his father would make him king. Pelias, the second son, thought differently. He was an **expert** with weapons. He thought the king would choose him.

"When I'm king," Theseus told Pelias, "I'll let you **contribute** to the defense of our country. You can lead the army."

Pelias became angry. "Father knows I'm **famous** for my sword skills. He'll make me king."

"You?" Theseus yelled. "He won't choose you!"

"The kingdom is mine!" Pelias **claimed**. "Father will give it to me—or I'll use **force** to take it!"

Theseus made a **sudden** move to take out his sword. Then Pelias did the same.

"Beating me will be a **challenge**," Theseus said. "Fight me now. The winner gets the kingdom!"

Pelias agreed.

King Minos could hear his sons fighting. The youngest son, Jason, stood **beside** him. He **sensed** his father's sadness. The king **laid** his hand flat on Jason's arm.

"Your brothers fight too much," the king told him. "I must **protect** my kingdom from all **harm**. They'll **divide** it between them. The people won't know what to do. There'll be war. I can't **allow** either of them to be king. **Therefore**, I'm making you king. Your kindness has always made you special. It's the **difference** between you and your brothers. You can bring **peace**. They can't."

Then the king died. Theseus and Pelias heard that their youngest brother was king. They were surprised. They realized that their fighting was wrong. It had kept them from saying goodbye to their father. They agreed to have Jason as their king. He was the best choice.



How the Sun and the Moon Were Made

Do you ever wonder where the moon and the sun came from? The Inuit people of Alaska have a **theory**.

They tell a story about a beautiful girl. She was very nice. In **contrast**, her brother was a mean little boy. One day he **proposed** something. "We should go to a party," he said. The girl **accepted**. First, it was **necessary** for her to prepare. She **arranged** her hair and put on nice clothes. This **required** a lot of time. But the girl worked hard, and soon she had **success**. She looked perfect.

They **attended** the party together. The girl was having fun. Later, she walked into the bathroom. Suddenly, the lights were turned off! Someone **grabbed** her hair and **tore** her clothes. She ran out of the bathroom. She wanted to know who did this to her.

Then she had an idea. She fixed her hair again. This time it was even more beautiful. She even **balanced** beautiful jewels in it. She wanted to **encourage** the person to grab it again. She put black dirt in her hair. The **purpose** of this was to catch the person.

She went to the bathroom again, and it was the same **pattern**. The lights went off, and someone grabbed her hair. When he **released** it, his hand was black. The girl returned to the party. She knew there was only a **single** person with a black hand. When she saw that person, he was very **familiar**. It was her brother!

He ran into the woods. The girl ran after him. They both carried fire so they could see in the dark. The smoke went into the air. As they ran, they grew. They became **huge**. Then they went into space. When the girl's fire went out, she **hung** in the sky. She became the moon, and her brother became the sun. They chase each other forever.



The Starfish

Last summer I took a trip to an **island**. I had a lot of fun. I sat and watched the **waves** and listened to the **ocean**. I learned to **identify** birds. I **discovered** pretty things and enjoyed the **taste** of new foods. It was a very nice time.

One evening I took a **pleasant** walk by the ocean. When the waves came in, many starfish* fell on the **beach**. Some starfish went back into the water, and they were safe. But other starfish were **still** on the sand. They would die if they did not get into the water. There were many starfish on the beach that night. It made me sad, but I knew I could not **fix** the problem. I **stepped** very carefully so I did not **damage** them.

Then I saw a little girl. She was also sad about the starfish. She wanted to **prevent** all of them from dying. She asked me if I could **perhaps** help her.

“To be **frank**, I don’t think we can do anything,” I said.

The little girl started to cry. She sat back **against** a **rock** and thought for a while. Finally, the **emotion** was gone. She stopped crying and stood up. Then she picked up a starfish and **threw** it into the water.

“What are you doing?” I asked her. But she did not answer me. She just threw as many starfish as she could. “You cannot **save** all of them!” I said.

She stopped to look at me. “No, I cannot save them all,” she replied. Then she picked up a very big starfish and said, “But I can save this one.” And then she smiled and threw the starfish as far as she could into the ocean.

*starfish – an animal shaped like a star that lives in the water



The First Peacock

Argos lived in Ancient Greece. He was a husband and a **proud** father. He worked hard and did well at his job. But one thing about him wasn't normal. He was born with 100 eyes. Having many eyes was usually a **benefit** to him. He had a **chance** to see many things.

Also, since he had so many eyes, he was very good at **guarding** things. While sleeping, he only **rested** a few eyes at a time. The others stayed awake. He worked for Hera, a great goddess. His **primary function** was to guard a special cow. The cow was very important to Hera. It was her favorite pet. The most **essential** part of his job was to keep the cow alone. It had to be kept **separate** from all the other cows and **far** away from people.

This was an easy job for Argos. The cow just ate **grass** all day. But the god Zeus wanted the cow. He wanted to take it away from Hera. He had a plan. He found a great music player. He asked the man to play a beautiful song for Argos. Zeus was **certain** Argos would go to sleep.

The song had an **immediate effect**. Argos couldn't **focus** on his job. He fell asleep. Zeus saw this, and he took the cow.

Hera was very angry with Argos. She turned him into a peacock. She put his many eyes on his **tail**. Argos was very sad.

Zeus saw how much **trouble** he had caused Argos. He made another plan. He turned Argos into a group of stars. He wanted Argos to **remain** in the sky forever. Even today, Argos' **image** remains there, above the **site** where all his problems began. We can still see him in the night sky.



Princess Rose and the Creature

There was once a beautiful princess named Rose. Her mother, the queen, however, was not as beautiful as the princess. The queen felt bad that she was not the most beautiful woman in the kingdom **anymore**. She was tired of **competing** with her daughter. She made a **decision**. She **prepared** a drink for the princess. After the princess drank it, she fell **asleep**. Then the queen took the princess to the **forest**. She left the princess there. It was a very **serious** thing to do. **“Either** she will be killed by animals or she will get lost in the forest,” the queen thought.

The princess had a dream. She dreamed about a man with brown hair and brown eyes. It was the man she would wed.

The princess **woke** up. She saw a **strange creature** on the **ground**. It looked like a man, but he was hairy and green. He had horns on his head and a pig’s nose.

The creature said, “Did I scare you? I hope not. Let me **introduce** myself. I am Henry.”

“I am not scared. To tell you the **truth**, I think you are cute,” said Rose.

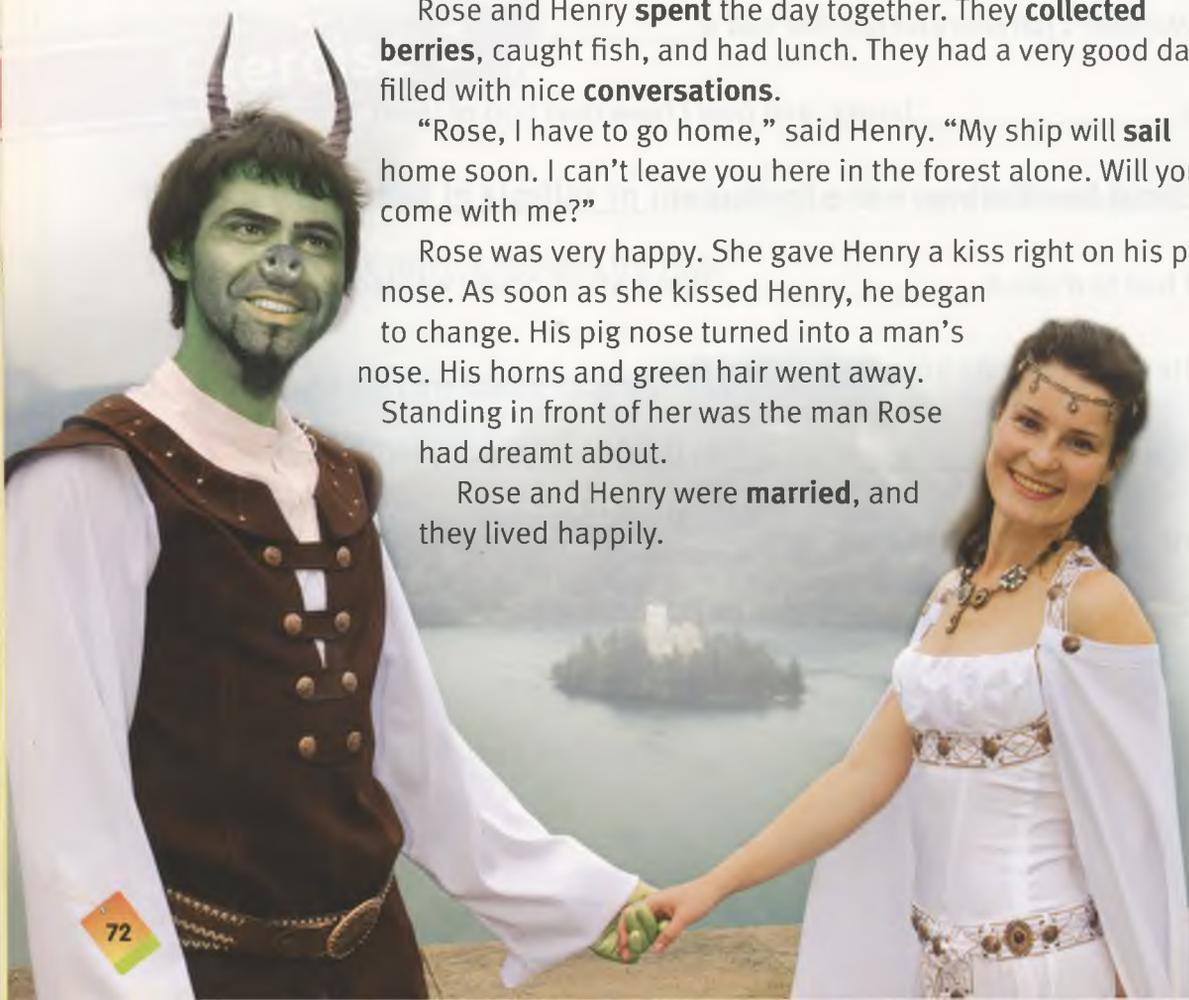
Rose and Henry **spent** the day together. They **collected berries**, caught fish, and had lunch. They had a very good day filled with nice **conversations**.

“Rose, I have to go home,” said Henry. “My ship will **sail** home soon. I can’t leave you here in the forest alone. Will you come with me?”

Rose was very happy. She gave Henry a kiss right on his pig nose. As soon as she kissed Henry, he began to change. His pig nose turned into a man’s nose. His horns and green hair went away.

Standing in front of her was the man Rose had dreamt about.

Rose and Henry were **married**, and they lived happily.



The Crazy Artist

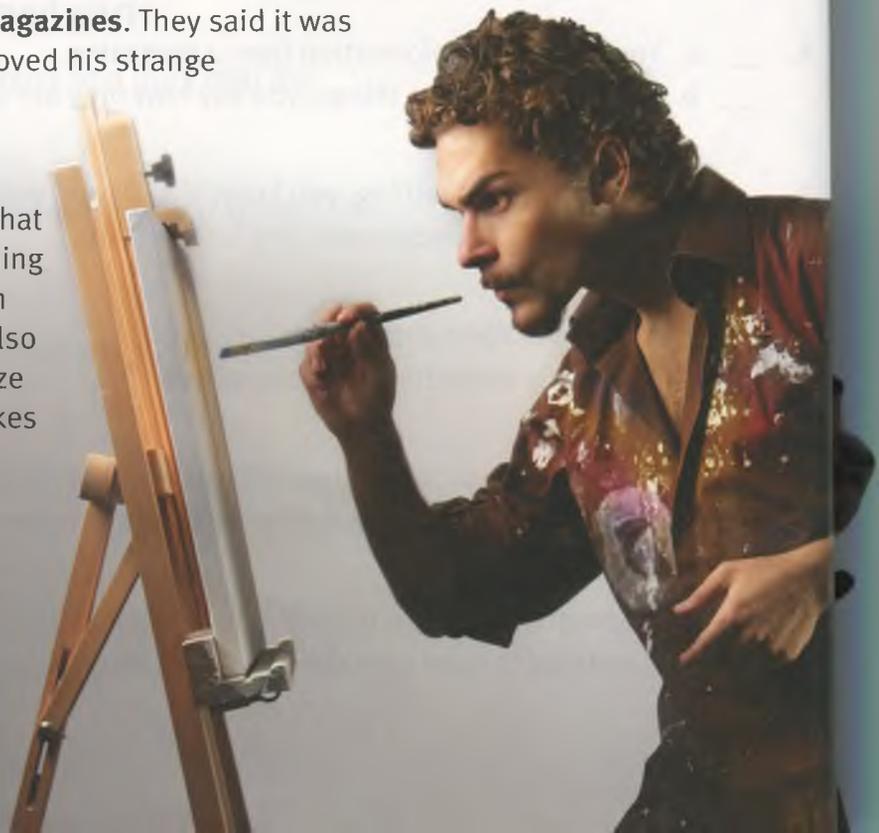
Frenhofer was the best **artist** in the world. Everyone loved him. The **quality** of his paintings was very high. He always used the best **materials**. He made a big **profit** from his paintings. He had delicious **meals** with his rich **neighbors**. He taught art classes. Life was good.

Then his **attitude** changed. He stopped selling paintings and teaching. He tried a new **method** of painting. He stayed **alone** in his **apartment** all day. He worked all day and all night, rarely eating. Soon Frenhofer became very **thin**. But he kept working on the same painting for many years. He worked as hard as he could.

Finally, he finished the painting. He was very happy and invited other artists to see it. "I want your **professional** opinion," he said. He wanted them to **judge** it and **compare** it to other paintings. Everyone was very excited as they went up the **stairs** to his apartment. Frenhofer was excited to show his painting, and the artists were excited to see it. "They'll love it," he thought. But they did not.

They were surprised by his painting. There was no white anywhere. Frenhofer filled the whole painting with lines and colors. There was no **space** for a normal picture. It was full of strange **shapes**. It looked bad to the other artists. He used **symbols**, and they didn't understand them. They thought it was terrible. "Why did you paint this strange picture?" someone asked. They didn't understand its beauty.

But after some time, many people began to like his painting. People wrote **articles** about it in **magazines**. They said it was his best work. They loved his strange symbols. They loved his strange colors. Frenhofer's painting reminded everyone that just because something was new didn't mean that it was bad. He also helped them to realize that sometimes it takes people a little time to understand great things.



The Farmer and the Cats

Arthur was a **responsible** farmer, and Maria was a nice lady. But they were poor. They **owed** the town **lord** money for their land. One summer, their farm **burned**. One **structure** caught fire, and most of the animals ran away. Only the cats stayed. So Arthur and Maria had to bring in their **crops** without an animal's help.

On a fall day, the lord **demanded** his money. Arthur asked if the lord could wait until he brought in his crops.

The lord was angry. He **raised** his hands high and yelled, "Pay me by the end of the week. If you don't, I will **increase** the money you have to pay. I might put you in a jail **cell**."

So Arthur and Maria worked until there was **blood** on their hands. They finished four lines of corn and went to bed.

But the next morning, eight lines were finished! "Maria, didn't we stop in this **spot** here?" Arthur asked.

"Yes, that is **correct**. And the tools were in a different **position**, too," Maria said. They were surprised and happy. That day, they worked hard and finished five lines.

But in the morning, ten lines were done! Each day they did a lot of work. Each night, someone else did an **equal** amount of work. In a week, the **whole** field was finished. "Tomorrow I will sell the crops and pay the lord," Arthur said. But that morning, the crops were gone. A bag was in the middle of the field. It **contained** money.

"Maria, let's see who has helped us work." Through a **hole** in the wall, they saw a funny **sight**. The cats were dancing in the field and eating corn! Now Arthur knew what had happened. The cats had worked at night! After that, Arthur was very nice to his cats and **fed** them lots of corn.



A Magical Book

Sarah loved to read. She read **novels** and poems. She loved the beautiful **descriptions** and phrases. She loved reading work from **poets** and novelists. She didn't like video games or **technology**. She was on the basketball team, but she didn't like sports. Her parents made her play basketball. In fact, Sarah's parents made her do many things. But she didn't want to do those things. She just wanted to sit and read all day.

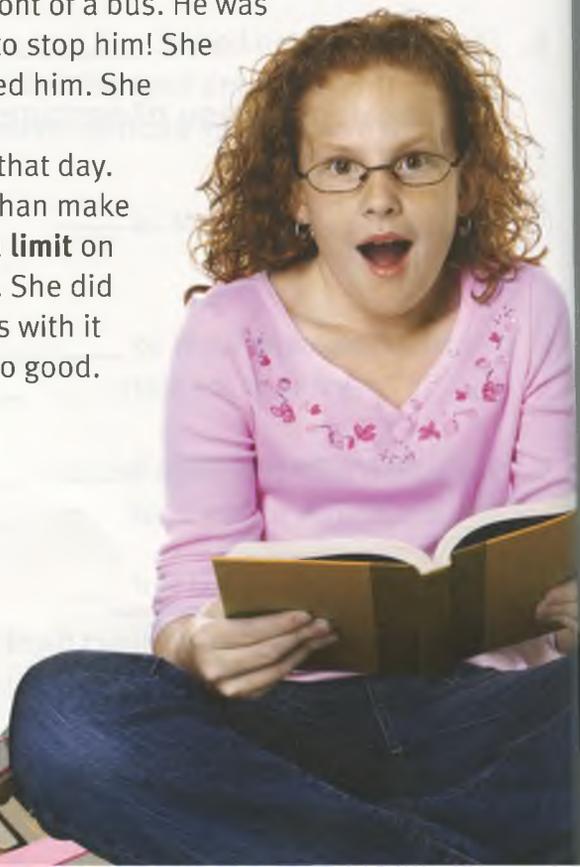
One day, a small book came in the **mail**. It was for Sarah. The book looked very special. It was **printed** on **sheets** of gold. Sarah began to read. The **outline** of the story was simple. It was about a **magical** place. Strange things happened there. One **example** from the book was about a boy who could **control** people. In one **scene**, he made his friends tell funny jokes.

Sarah loved the book. She read it all the time. Then something strange happened. The book gave Sarah a special power. She could control other people. She was like the boy in the book. During one **exam**, she made her friend tell **silly** jokes. Her friend got in trouble.

After school, Sarah did not make a **direct** trip home. On the way, she went to the **local store**. She wanted to play more tricks on people. She caused problems. She made people fall down. She laughed and had fun.

Finally she left and started to walk home. Then she saw something. Her basketball **coach** was about to walk in front of a bus. He was looking the other way. She had to stop him! She used her power. She controlled him. She made him stop walking.

Sarah learned something that day. It was better to help people than make them **suffer**. So, she put a **limit** on how she used her power. She did not want to do bad things with it anymore. She only wanted to do good.



The Big Race

A dog saw a group of animals **across** the road. He walked over to meet them. “What are you doing?” he asked them.

“I just sold them tickets to a race between the rabbit and the turtle,” the duck **responded**.

This news **excited** the dog. He felt **fortunate** that he **happened** to be there. “I don’t have anything to do today,” the dog said. “I want to buy a ticket, too.”

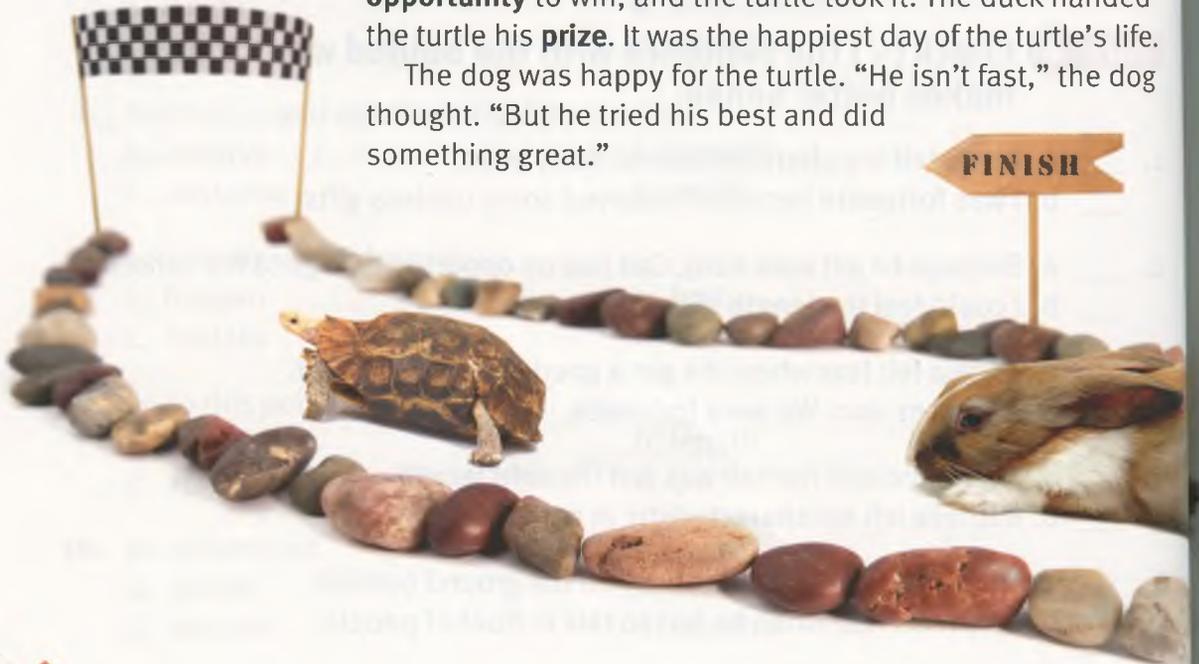
The dog sat down to **observe** the **race**. The race would be **extreme**. It would be many kilometers in **length**. The rabbit and the turtle stood next to each other. They waited for the race to start. The dog **wondered** why the turtle agreed to run against the rabbit. Being fast was not a **characteristic** of turtles. The rabbit was going to win easily.

Suddenly, the race began. The rabbit ran extremely quickly. The turtle walked slowly. After a minute, the rabbit looked back. He saw that the turtle was far behind him and was **breathing** quickly because he was so tired. The rabbit smiled and slowed to a walk.

A minute later, the rabbit said, “I’m winning, so I’ll take a rest.” He sat and began to **consume** some grass. Then, he let his eyes close. He wasn’t the winner **yet**. But there was no **risk** of him losing the race. He went to sleep.

Hours later, a loud sound woke him. All of the animals were yelling and looking at the field. He felt **fear** for the first time. The turtle was almost at the finish line. Now, the rabbit **realized** his **mistake**. But the race was over. He gave the turtle an **opportunity** to win, and the turtle took it. The duck handed the turtle his **prize**. It was the happiest day of the turtle’s life.

The dog was happy for the turtle. “He isn’t fast,” the dog thought. “But he tried his best and did something great.”



Adams County's Gold

Adams **Academy** was a good school. Boys lived there and took classes. Tom worked hard all week. On a spring Saturday, he wanted to do something fun!

He asked his friend Jeff to go to the movie **theater**. "Sorry," Jeff answered. "I'm going to a **concert**."

So Tom asked Joe to go to the movies. But Joe's soccer team had a game.

Next, Tom went down the hall to Brad's room. Brad was reading a very large old book. "Hi, Brad," Tom said. "Are you reading a **dictionary**? It looks **ancient**."

"No. This is called *The **Wealth of Adams County***. It's about **hidden** gold in Adams County. It's more than a **century** old. It was **published** in 1870! Look, it even has the **original** cover on it."

Tom asked, "Where did you get it?"

"It's from my dad's friend. He is a nice **gentleman**, an **officer** in the army," answered Brad.

"The gold doesn't really **exist**, does it?" Tom asked.

"I don't know, but **maybe!** There are **clues** to it in this book. Let's find it!" Looking for gold sounded like fun.

The first clue was to find a **flat** tree underground. "It must be in the forest," Tom said.

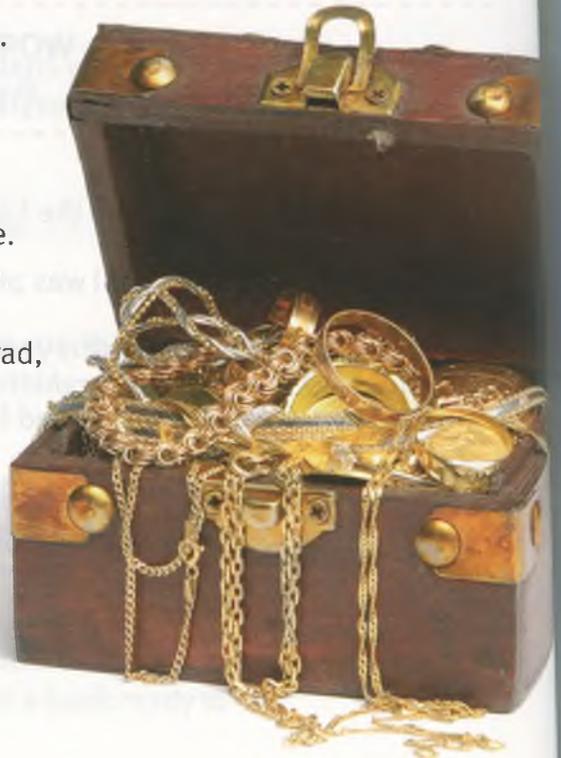
Brad said, "The flat tree could be a **board** under the dirt. It could cover the gold."

Tom and Brad dug in the dirt all morning. The **process** of looking for gold made them hungry. They were ready to stop for lunch. But then Brad hit something hard. It was a board!

Brad **pounded** on the board until it broke. There was a small hole under it. "Look!" He held up a gold coin.

Tom saw a piece of paper in the hole. "Brad, there's more. It's a map to the rest of the gold!"

Brad smiled. "Let's go!" And they hurried to find the wealth of Adams County.



The Race for Water

There was a town next to a river. The people there had a lot of water. But they **wasted** it. That made the Sky angry. It said, "If you waste water, I will take it away from you." But the people didn't listen.

When the **season** changed from spring to summer, the clouds **disappeared**. The **bright** sun was hot and made the river dry. There was no water **available**. People asked, "When will the rain fall?"

The Sky's **response** was, "You don't **appreciate** water. You waste it, and now I will never make rain again."

A boy **determined** that this wasn't **fair**. He thought of a **solution**. He asked the Sky to race him. He said, "If I get to the top of that **hill** before your rain can form **puddles**, you must fill our river."

The Sky laughed. "Little boy, I am the Sky. I am above everything **else**. You cannot **beat** me." But the boy knew he would win.

When the race began, the boy ran **forward**. The Sky started raining on the hill. But puddles did not form there. When it rained on the hill, the water went down.

The Sky kept raining. The water **flowed** down into the river. When the boy reached the top of the hill, the river was full. The people began to **celebrate**. It was the highest **level** the river had ever been at before.

The Sky was angry. "A boy can't beat me! I won't fill your river," it said.

Now the boy laughed. "It doesn't matter **whether** you want to fill it or not," he said. "You already did." The Sky looked at the full river.

"You tricked me," it said. It asked the people, "Do you appreciate water now?"

"Yes," they said. "We won't waste it."

That is how a **lone** boy saved his town and won the race for water.



The Little Red Chicken

A little red chicken had a store in a small town. She sold many different **items** to people in the town. The people loved her **products**.

One day, a cat came to her **property**. He saw the sign that **indicated** where the chicken's store was located. He wanted to **purchase** bread, but the chicken's store was almost **empty**. She had only a bag of wheat.*

"You can use the wheat to make bread," the chicken said.

"No, I don't want to work," the cat said. "I just want to buy bread." The cat became angry and left the store.

Later, the little red chicken saw the cat in a **crowd**.

"I will help you make the bread," she said.

But the cat **treated** her badly. He did not even **communicate** with her. He did not want to do any work.

So the chicken decided to make the bread. She **selected** the **exact** amount of wheat to make **fresh** bread. She used a stone to pound the wheat to get it ready. Soon, her bread was ready.

The cat came and saw the bread on a **dish**.

"Give me some of your bread," he said.

"No," said the little red chicken. "You did not help me make the bread. So you shall not have any to eat."

The cat **argued** with the chicken. He tried to **offer** a **price** for it. But the little red chicken did not want to sell her bread.

"Don't **depend** on others to do work for you," said the little red chicken.

"Then how will I get bread?" the cat asked.

"I **recommend** doing some work," said the little red chicken. "Use a **tool** to plant your own wheat. When it grows big, you can **gather** it and make your own bread. You need to learn to do work for what you want."

*wheat – a type of plant used to make bread



Shipwrecked

Simon Yates was a **lawyer**. He helped many people. **However**, he was not a nice man. His **policy** was to help only rich people. He didn't **bother** about **social injustice**. He made a lot of money, but many people didn't like him. Even people on his **staff** didn't like him. They wanted bad things to happen to him. In fact, they were **glad** when he got into trouble.

Simon had a very bad day. He did many things wrong and lost his job. Soon, he didn't have any money. His wife, Mrs. Yates, began to have **doubts** about him. Simon wanted to start a new life. He planned to leave the country.

He **mentioned** his plan to the **captain** of a ship. The captain was **exploring** the world. The captain felt bad for Simon and said, "I will take you to **foreign** countries." They left the next day.

Near the **conclusion** of their **international** trip, the weather turned bad. A wave pushed Simon off the boat. But he was **alive**. He swam **toward** an island. After a long time he got there.

At first he was upset. He was lost and alone. "I'll never go home again," he thought. He had a lot of problems, but he survived. He built a house in a tree. He lived on a diet of fish. He made tools from **wood** and **bones**. He made a cup to drink rainwater.

Slowly he learned to be happy on the island. He swam every day. He had trouble sometimes, but he always found a way to fix the problem. Life was simple. He liked it.

Finally, people on a ship saw Simon on the island. They wanted to take him home. But Simon was happy. He gave them a long **speech** about life. He said he wanted to stay. He liked his new, simple life more than his old life.



The Seven Cities of Gold

Many years ago, a Spanish officer named Coronado heard the story of seven great cities. “The walls of these cities are made of gold,” his friends told him. “The people eat **meat** from golden plates and dress in nice clothes,” they said. They called these cities the Seven Cities of Gold. Were the cities **real**? Coronado never **considered** asking his friends.

Coronado thought to himself, “The things in these cities must be **worth** a lot of money.” So he went to find the Seven Cities of Gold. He took along three hundred men, many horses, and **extra** food. They headed west. Coronado wanted to **achieve** his **goal** very badly.

Coronado and his men rode for many days. Then they saw some cities. “We found the Seven Cities of Gold!” his men yelled, but Coronado wasn’t happy. He had a different **opinion**. “These can’t be the Seven Cities of Gold,” he said. “Look, they’re made of dirt!”

Coronado was right. The cities weren’t bright and golden. They were dirty and brown. The people didn’t eat meat from golden plates. They ate **vegetables** from regular bowls. They wore the most **basic** clothes.

Coronado **regarded** the cities as ugly places. “What happened to the cities of gold?” he thought. “Did someone **destroy** them? Was there a **war**? Did someone **already** come and take the gold?”

That night, the people of the cities **entertained** Coronado and his men and **served** them food. They **advised** Coronado to go home. “There is no gold here,” they told him. Coronado was angry. Did his friends **lie** to him?

He left the next morning. He looked back at the cities one more time. The sun **reflected** light on the dirt houses. Coronado thought he saw a **bit** of gold. Were his friends right after all? “No,” he told himself. “It’s just the sun.” Then he turned away and went home.



Katy

I first met 8-year-old Katy on a rainy afternoon. I was a **nurse** at a hospital. The **clerk** at the desk told me about Katy. She was there because she felt a lot of **pain**. The doctors **located** a problem at the **base** of her **brain**. I knew she was special, even before she got better. I'll always remember Katy as a **hero**.

When I **entered** Katy's room, she was not in her bed. She was in a chair next to Tommy, a little boy. **Though** Katy did not feel well, she was playing with Tommy and his toys. It took a lot of **effort** for her just to sit in the chair. But she played with Tommy because it made him happy.

Katy was always smiling and never **appeared** to be in pain. She **refused** to just lie in bed. One day I found her painting a picture. Later, she gave it to one of the older patients. Another day she went outside to get flowers for another sick little girl. Katy made everyone smile.

The doctors **hurried** to fix the problem in Katy's brain. The **operation** was successful! The doctors **informed** the hospital staff of the good news. Katy was fine. She soon felt **excellent**. She got better and was able to **leave** the hospital a month **later**.

I have had a long **career** as a nurse. I have met many patients. However, I have never met another girl like Katy. Even after she got well, she still came to the hospital. She played **various** games with the young patients. She read many books to the older patients. Katy's kind heart helped her get better so quickly. She is a hero to me and everyone else at the hospital.



A Better Reward

Jenny **delivered** food for a restaurant. She read the newspaper and said, “Uh oh.” There was a story about a **thief**. He **stole** food, and no one had seen him. Even the police couldn’t catch him. Jenny was a little scared. She worked close to that area.

The newspaper **included** a message from the police: “If anything strange **occurs**, call us. If you help us catch the thief, you’ll **earn** a **reward**.”

Jenny talked to Jim. He **managed** the restaurant. “Do you know about the thief?”

“Yes,” he said. “But he steals more than one person can eat. And why haven’t the police stopped him yet? It’s a **mystery**. If you see him, **contact** the police. Don’t run after him.”

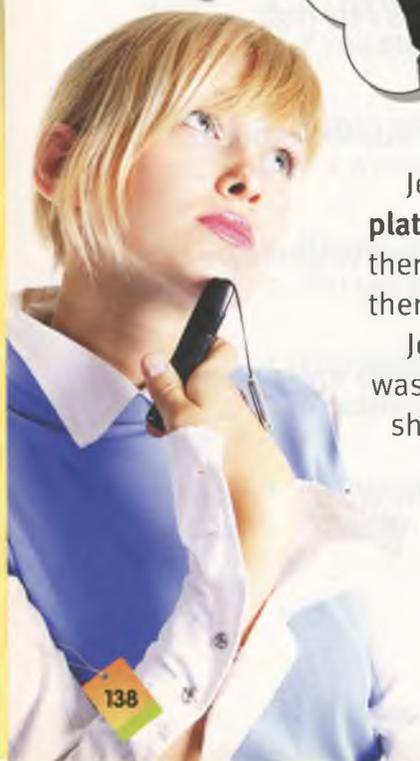
Jenny drove to a **customer’s** house. She left her car and opened the **gate** to the house. But then she heard a noise by her car. She yelled, “Thief!” She wasn’t scared. She wanted the reward! She did the **opposite** of what Jim told her to do.

“Hey,” she yelled. “Get back here!” She **set** the food on the ground and ran to her car.

But the thief had already left with the food. Jenny followed a noise around the corner. She was **amazed**. She saw a dog and some puppies. They were eating her food! They looked thin and scared. “The **actual** thief is just a dog. She’s feeding her puppies,” she said. “That’s why she steals so much food.”

Jenny felt bad. She tried to **comfort** the dogs with another **plate** of food. Then she took them back to the store. Everyone there took a puppy home. Jenny called the police. She told them there was no real thief.

Jenny didn’t do it to **receive** the reward anymore. She said, “It was just a dog. But there’s no **charge** for catching this ‘thief,’” she said. “My new dog is a better reward.”



The Camp

Stacie wanted to stay at a nice hotel for vacation. But her parents sent her to a terrible camp instead. For breakfast, Stacie liked fresh juice and chocolate milk, but she got water at the camp. In the afternoon she wanted to write **poems**, but she had to **swim**. The camp was near an airport with loud planes. Spider **webs** hung over her bed. To her, the kids' **average behavior** was very bad. No girl **matched** her **personality**. She hated it.

One day, they had a class. **Mental** exercise **sounded** good to Stacie. But it was a **course** on water **safety**. They learned how to be safe **passengers** on a boat. Stacie didn't ever plan to go on a boat.

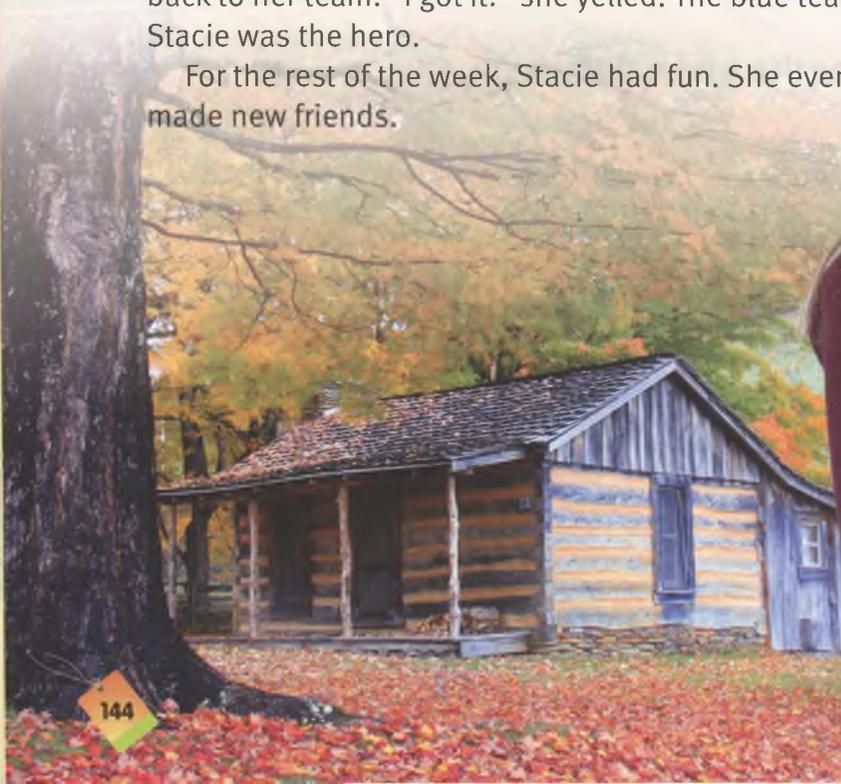
The next day, they played a game. There were a red team and a blue team. Stacie was on the blue team. Each team had to try to **remove** the other team's flag from a **pole**. They also had to use water guns. "I'm not much of an **athlete**," she said. But she still had to play.

Stacie took a water gun and looked for somewhere to hide. A boy said, "Stacie, you **advance** to the middle. I will go right. Those two will go left."

Stacie still didn't want to play. She walked into the forest and saw a red team player coming. Stacie hid **behind** a tree and then jumped out and **shot** the other player. "This is fun!" Stacie thought.

Several minutes after advancing further, Stacie saw the red flag. A red team **member** was watching over it. She shot him with her water gun. Then she **lowered** the flag and ran back to her team. "I got it!" she yelled. The blue team won! Stacie was the hero.

For the rest of the week, Stacie had fun. She even made new friends.



A Strong Friendship

Tim was the strongest man in the town. When he played sports, he always won. He **performed** and **exercised** in the **public** park. He did this to show everyone how strong he was. Most people liked him, but one man didn't. His name was Jack.

Jack hated Tim. Jack was a movie **critic** and the smartest man in town. He could solve **complex** math problems. But no one cared. Jack wanted to be famous like Tim.

One day, there was an unusual **event**. A big storm came suddenly. Snow covered the town. No one could get out. They needed food. The people said, "This is a **task** for a strong man." Tim was under **pressure** to save them. But Jack wanted to be the hero, so they both went. Tim said, "You can't help because of your **lack** of strength."

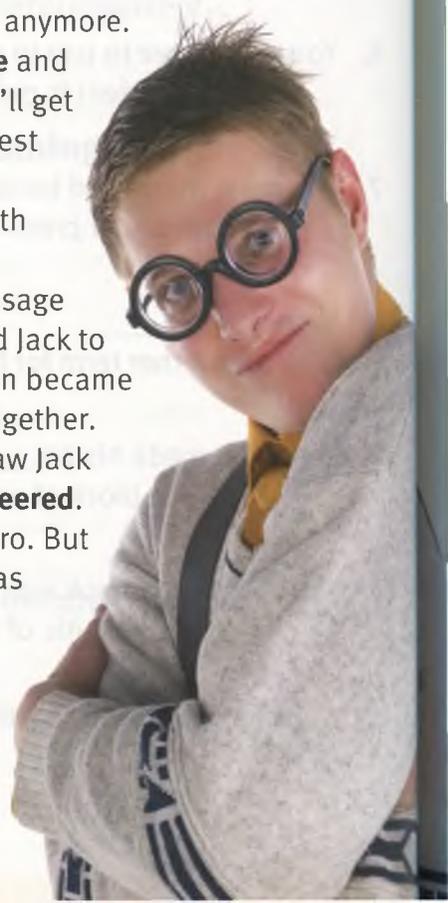
But Jack found some small **passages** under the snow. One of them led toward another town. That town had food. Because Tim was so big and strong, he almost couldn't **fit** inside. They walked until there was a **block** of ice in their way. Jack said, "We can't get past it. But if you **strike** it, it might break." Tim knew that was **probable**.

He broke it. When there were more ice blocks, Tim broke them. That made him tired. He couldn't walk anymore.

Jack said, "Let's **unite** and **support** each other. I'll get the food alone. You rest here."

Jack came back with food. Tim couldn't remember which passage led home. He needed Jack to be his **guide**. The men became friends by working together.

In town, people saw Jack with the food and **cheered**. They called Jack a hero. But Jack didn't care. He was thinking of something else. He said to Tim, "I thought I was smart, but I learned a new **term** today: **friendship**."



Joe's Pond

Joe made the world a better place. He got the idea to do that at school. He watched a video there. It was about a **factory**. This factory **produced** a lot of **trash** and put it in a river. The trash and water were a bad **mix**. People **populated** the area by the river and drank its water. This made them sick. Many of them needed **medicine** and made **regular** visits to doctors.

But the video wasn't all bad news. It showed ways to pick up trash and why it's important to do this. It said people can make a difference to their **environment**. The video's important **features** made Joe **associate** trash with hurting people.

One day Joe walked through a park. He **recognized** some of the problems from the video. One **instance** of these problems was the trash in the pond. It was full of plastic cups. There was too much trash. Joe didn't want it to hurt anyone.

He told his grandfather about the park. His grandfather said, "You know, it's a **tradition** in our family to help people. That's why we give food to poor people. Maybe you can help people by cleaning the park."

Cleaning the park would **involve** hard work. Joe decided to **organize** a group to help him. He chose a **wide** area of the park. It had the most trash. He asked his family and friends to come. On Saturday, he gave everyone a sharp stick. They wondered why. He said, "You use the stick's **tip** to pick up trash. This makes it easier." They worked for six weeks. Different people helped each time, but Joe was always there.

In that **period** of time, Joe saw a **range** of results. There was no trash in the water. People could swim in it. Joe knew that was a good **sign**. He was happy because he helped his environment.



Archie and His Donkey

Old Archie needed some money. He decided to sell his donkey. So he and his son Tom went to town. It was **situated** many miles away.

Soon, they met a woman. "Where are you going?" she asked.

"To town," said Archie.

"Any smart person would **ride** the donkey," she said.

"What are you **implying**?" Archie asked. "I'm very smart!" Archie wanted to look smart. So he **climbed** onto the donkey. Then they continued in the direction of the town.

Further along the road, they met a farmer.

"Hello," said Archie. "We want to sell this donkey. Do you want to buy it?"

"I don't need a donkey," said the farmer. "But if you want my **advice**, don't ride it. The donkey needs to be in good **physical** condition."

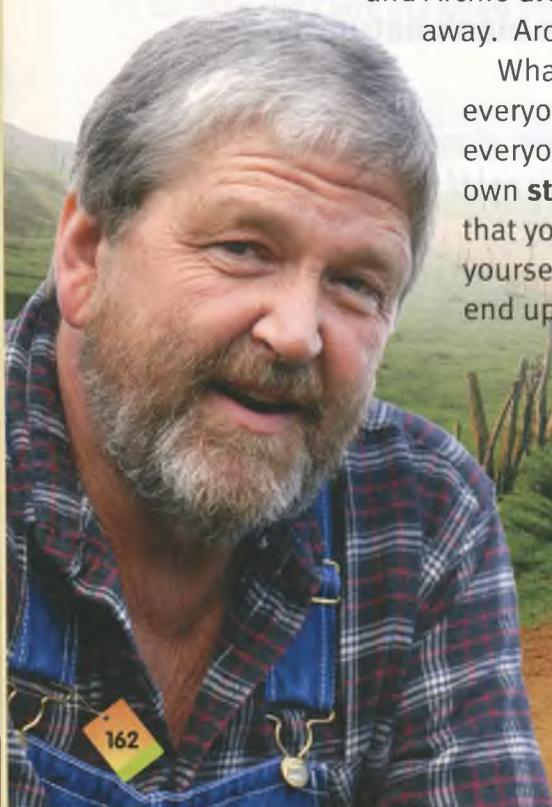
"Good idea," said Archie. "Tom, I want you to ride it. You're lighter."

"**Neither** you nor your son should ride it. It looks very tired. You should carry the donkey." **suggested** the farmer.

"You're right," said Archie. "Come on, Tom! We'll carry it for the **final** few miles!"

The donkey was very heavy, and they couldn't **maintain** a good speed. They didn't arrive until late in the evening. At last, they walked into the town. But there they **attracted** the **attention** of some teenage boys. They laughed at Tom and Archie. They started to throw stones at them. The donkey **reacted** by kicking. Tom and Archie **dropped** the donkey. It fell on the ground and then ran away. Archie lost his donkey. He went home with no money.

What does this story teach us? We cannot please everyone in our **society**. Don't take everyone's advice, but set your own **standards**. **Prove** to everyone that you can make decisions by yourself. **Otherwise**, you may end up with nothing at all.



The Spider and the Bird

There was once a very big spider. If a bug got into his web, he would **examine** it. However, he didn't eat the bug right away. He asked the bug a question first. It was always **quite** a difficult **puzzle**. If the bug's answer was correct, he let it go. If not, he ate it.

One day, a small bird on a **journey** flew into the spider's web. The spider couldn't **imagine** eating a bird. It was so big! But his **hunger** was too great. He said to the bird, "If you cannot give me a **specific** answer, I will eat you."

The bird laughed. "I could eat you!" But the bird was **actually** scared. She had used all her energy trying to get out of the web. And a spider's **bite** can be very **effective** in killing animals.

"Please don't eat me," the bird said. "I would **rather** make a **deal** with you."

"OK," the spider said. "If your answer is right, I will let you go. If not, you must give me a **gift**. It must be something of great **value**."

The bird said, "You can pick anything you want to eat. I will find it for you." The spider agreed.

"Where can you take a **trip** to the **coast**, the **desert**, and the mountains at the same time?" the spider asked.

The bird asked, "Does this place have **earthquakes**?" But the spider did not say anything. "I can see those places when I fly. Is the 'sky' the right answer?"

"**False!**" said the spider. "The answer is Hawaii! Now you must find some bugs for me."

The spider climbed on the bird's back.

They flew and ate bugs together. They took a **tour**

of the

forest. Then

the bird took

the spider home.

From that day on,

they were friends.

And they never

tried to eat each other

again.



The Party

Cody's family moved to a new house. His dad got a new job as a **professor**. Cody liked his new town, but he missed his grandparents. For his birthday, Cody wanted to have a party. His dad said, "Yes, we could even have a band play!"

On the day of the party, Cody woke up and **rushed** to get ready. He started to check his **list** of things to do. He was so excited! But then he **noticed** something terrible. There was snow on the ground and lots of it! "Dad!" he yelled. "How can the **band** play their **instruments** outside?"

Dad said, "We'll move the **stage** inside." It **barely** fit **within** the garage because there were some boxes and **garbage** there. But when they finished, they got a call from the band. They did not want to come in the snow **storm**.

Dad said, "Let's get someone to perform **magic**." But no one would come because of the snow.

Finally, Dad said, "Cody, there's too much snow. We need to **cancel** the party."

"Yes, sir," Cody said sadly. "It's going to be a **boring** birthday," he **predicted**. Cody wanted to **share** his birthday with someone. He wanted to be at his old home. He wanted to see his grandparents.

But then something got his attention. He noticed a car in the **driveway**. His grandparents **owned** a car like that!

Cody was right. His grandparents came for his birthday! "Happy birthday, Cody! We're sorry we are late. But there was so much snow. It made us go off **schedule**. We tried to leave a **message** to tell you."

Cody told them what happened. "I'm sorry," said Grandpa.

"I was sad," Cody said. "But I'm not anymore. I'm so happy to see you." Dad brought out Cody's birthday treat. It was his favorite type, a sundae with whipped cream on top. Then Cody told his grandparents about the new town. It was his best birthday ever.



How the World Got Light

The **president** of Darkland was a pig—a very bad pig. He was a pig of **major importance**. He was **rich**, and he had a lot of **strength**. But he was **mean** to all the animals in Darkland. He kept all of the world’s light in a bag. He **preferred** to keep the world **cool** and dark. He wanted to stop the **progress** of the city. The animals couldn’t work in the dark. He didn’t have any **respect** for them. “Light is too good for them,” he said. “Only I should have light.”

But the animals needed light. So they decided to hold a **competition**. They wanted to find the smartest animal in Darkland. That animal had to steal light from the president. They **advertised** the competition everywhere. All the animals came.

The animals all showed off their **skills**. The **audience** watched and then **voted** for the animal with the most **knowledge**. The winner was a tall bird named Raven. They **assigned** him the job of getting light.

The next morning, Raven ate **breakfast** and then left his home. “How will I **gain** light from the president?” thought Raven. He needed to trick the president **somehow**. Then, Raven had an idea. Raven could make his voice sound like anything!

Raven walked up to the president’s door. He made the sound of a crying baby. He cried very loudly. Soon, the president opened the door.

“Be quiet!” the president yelled. Right then, Raven quickly made his move. He flew by the pig and found the soft bag. He took it outside. The sun was inside the bag!

Raven flew high and put the sun in the sky. The president was very mad. Raven tricked him! But the other animals were very happy. At last, they had light—all because of Raven’s smart thinking.



Cats and Secrets

In English, there is a **common idiom** “let the cat out of the bag.” It means to tell a secret. But where did this idiom start?

It came from a **section** of England. Long ago, people there went from town to town to sell things like vegetables, clothes, and pigs. They had strong **beliefs** about **honesty**. They didn't like lying. One day, a man went to the section's **center** to sell things.

“I have a baby pig for sale! It won't **cost** much,” he said. He held the animal **above** his head. His style was **different** from honest people's style. He was a **master** of tricking people and lying.

A woman named Beth **scanned** his pig. He offered her the pig for one gold coin. That was a very small **amount**. Beth gave him the coin. He put it in his pocket. He walked **ahead** of Beth to get the pig.

He gave her a closed bag and said, “Here's your pig.” He then left very quickly.

Beth looked at the bag's **surface**. It was moving. She opened it to let the pig out. A cat was **inside**! “He tricked me! That isn't **proper**,” she said.

Later, the man returned to trick more people. Beth saw him and the **memory** of the cat came back. She told her friends. They stopped him. But no one knew what to do next.

Someone said, “We need an **independent** and fair person to decide that.” They went to the judge. Beth told him about the cat in the bag.

The judge asked, “Is there **evidence**? Can you **demonstrate** how he did it?”

“Look in his bag,” said Beth. She opened it and let a cat out of the bag. They learned the man's secret, and he went to jail.

That's how the idiom “let the cat out of the bag” came to mean to tell a secret.

