**Hansel and Gretel**

Once upon a time a very poor woodcutter lived in a tiny cottage in the forest with his two children, Hansel and Gretel. His second wife often ill-treated the children and was forever nagging the woodcutter.   
   
"There is not enough food in the house for us all. There are too many mouths to feed! We must get rid of the two brats," she declared. And she kept on trying to persuade her husband to abandon his children in the forest.   
   
"Take them miles from home, so far that they can never find their way back! Maybe someone will find them and give them a home." The downcast woodcutter didn't know what to do. Hansel who, one evening, had overheard his parents' conversation, comforted Gretel.   
   
"Don't worry! If they do leave us in the forest, we'll find the way home," he said. And slipping out of the house he filled his pockets with little white pebbles, then went back to bed.   
   
All night long, the woodcutter's wife harped on and on at her husband till, at dawn, he led Hansel and Gretel away into the forest. But as they went into the depths of the trees, Hansel dropped a little white pebble here and there on the mossy green ground. At a certain point, the two children found they really were alone: the woodcutter had plucked up enough courage to desert    
them, had mumbled an excuse and was gone.   
   
Night fell but the woodcutter did not return. Gretel began to sob bitterly. Hansel too felt scared but he tried to hide his feelings and comfort his sister.   
   
"Don't cry, trust me! I swear I'll take you home even if Father doesn't come back for us!" Luckily the moon was full that night and Hansel waited till its cold light filtered through the trees.   
   
"Now give me your hand!" he said. "We'll get home safely, you'll see!" The tiny white pebbles gleamed in the moonlight, and the children found their way home. They crept through a half open window, without wakening their parents. Cold, tired but thankful to be home again, they slipped into bed.   
   
Next day, when their stepmother discovered that Hansel and Gretel had returned, she went into a rage. Stifling her anger in front of the children, she locked her bedroom door, reproaching her husband for failing to carry out her orders. The weak woodcutter protested, torn as he was between shame and fear of disobeying his cruel wife. The wicked stepmother kept Hansel and Gretel under lock and key all day with nothing for supper but a sip of water and some hard bread. All night, husband and wife quarreled, and when dawn came, the woodcutter led the children out into the forest.   
   
Hansel, however, had not eaten his bread, and as he walked through the trees, he left a trail of crumbs behind him to mark the way. But the little boy had forgotten about the hungry birds that lived in the forest. When they saw him, they flew along behind and in no time at all, had eaten all the crumbs. Again, with a lame excuse, the woodcutter left his two children by    
themselves.   
   
"I've left a trail, like last time!" Hansel whispered to Gretel, consolingly. But when night fell, they saw to their horror, that all the crumbs had gone.   
   
"I'm frightened!" wept Gretel bitterly. "I'm cold and hungry and I want to go home!"   
   
"Don't be afraid. I'm here to look after you!" Hansel tried to encourage his sister, but he too shivered when he glimpsed frightening shadows and evil eyes around them in the darkness. All night the two children huddled together for warmth at the foot of a large tree.   
   
When dawn broke, they started to wander about the forest, seeking a path, but all hope soon faded. They were well and truly lost. On they walked and walked, till suddenly they came upon a strange cottage in the middle of a glade.   
   
"This is chocolate!" gasped Hansel as he broke a lump of plaster from the wall.   
   
"And this is icing!" exclaimed Gretel, putting another piece of wall in her mouth. Starving but delighted, the children began to eat pieces of candy broken off the cottage.

 "Isn't this delicious?" said Gretel, with her mouth full. She had never tasted anything so nice.   
   
"We'll stay here," Hansel declared, munching a bit of nougat. They were just about to try a piece of the biscuit door when it quietly swung open.   
   
"Well, well!" said an old woman, peering out with a crafty look. "And haven't you children a sweet tooth?"   
   
"Come in! Come in, you've nothing to fear!" went on the old woman. Unluckily for Hansel and Gretel, however, the sugar candy cottage belonged to an old witch, her trap for catching unwary victims. The two children had come to a really nasty place.   
   
"You're nothing but skin and bones!" said the witch, locking Hansel into a cage. I shall fatten you up and eat you!"   
   
"You can do the housework," she told Gretel grimly, "then I'll make a meal of you too!" As luck would have it, the witch had very bad eyesight, an when Gretel smeared butter on her glasses, she could see even less.   
   
"Let me feel your finger!" said the witch to Hansel every day to check if he was getting any fatter. Now, Gretel had brought her brother a chicken bone, and when the witch went to touch his finger, Hansel held out the bone.   
   
"You're still much too thin!" she complained. When will you become plump?" One day the witch grew tired of waiting.   
 "Light the oven," she told Gretel. "We're going to have a tasty roasted boy today!" A little later, hungry and impatient, she went on: "Run and see if the oven is hot enough." Gretel returned, whimpering: "I can't tell if it is hot enough or not." Angrily, the witch screamed at the little girl: "Useless child! All right, I'll see for myself." But when the witch bent down to peer inside the oven and check the heat, Gretel gave her a tremendous push and slammed the oven door shut. The witch had come to a fit and proper end. Gretel ran to set her brother free and they made quite sure that the oven door was tightly shut behind the witch. Indeed, just to be on the safe side, they fastened it firmly with a large padlock. Then they stayed for several days to eat some more of the house, till they discovered amongst the witch's belongings, a huge chocolate egg. Inside lay a casket of gold coins.   
   
"The witch is now burnt to a cinder," said Hansel, "so we'll take this treasure with us." They filled a large basket with food and set off into the forest to search for the way home. This time, luck was with them, and on the second day, they saw their father come out of the house towards them, weeping.   
   
"Your stepmother is dead. Come home with me now, my dear children!" The two children hugged the woodcutter.   
   
"Promise you'll never ever desert us again," said Gretel, throwing her arms round her father's neck. Hansel opened the casket.   
   
"Look, Father! We're rich now . . . You'll never have to chop wood again."   
   
And they all lived happily together ever after.

|  |
| --- |
|  |

**Goldilocks and the Three Bears**

**Once** upon a time there were Three Bears, who lived together in a house of their own, in a wood. One of them was a Little, Small, Wee Bear; and one was a Middle-sized Bear, and the other was a Great, Huge Bear. They each had a pot for their porridge, a little pot for the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and a middle-sized pot for the Middle Bear, and a great pot for the Great, Huge Bear. And they each had a chair to sit in; a little chair for the Little, Small, Wee Bear; and a middle-sized chair for the Middle Bear; and a great chair for the Great, Huge Bear. And they each had a bed to sleep in; a little bed for the Little, Small, Wee Bear; and a middle-sized bed for the Middle Bear; and a great bed for the Great, Huge Bear.

One day, after they had made the porridge for their breakfast, and poured it into their porridge-pots, they walked out into the wood while the porridge was cooling, that they might not burn their mouths, by beginning too soon to eat it. And while they were walking, a little girl named Goldilocks came to the house. First she looked in at the window, and then she peeped in at the keyhole; and seeing nobody in the house, she lifted the latch. The door was not fastened, because the Bears were good Bears, who did nobody any harm, and never suspected that anybody would harm them.

So Goldilocks opened the door, and went in; and well pleased she was when she saw the porridge on the table. If she had been a good little girl, she would have waited till the Bears came home, and then, perhaps, they would have asked her to breakfast; for they were good Bears — a little rough or so, as the manner of Bears is, but for all that very good-natured and hospitable. But she was an impatient little girl and set about helping herself.

So first she tasted the porridge of the Great, Huge Bear, and that was too hot for her; and she said a bad word about that. And then she tasted the porridge of the Middle Bear, and that was too cold for her; and she said a bad word about that, too. And then she went to the porridge of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and tasted that; and that was neither too hot nor too cold, but just right; and she liked it so well that she ate it all up: but Goldilocks said a bad word about the little porridge-pot, because it did not hold enough for her.

Then Goldilocks sat down in the chair of the Great, Huge Bear, and that was too hard for her. And then she sat down in the chair of the Middle Bear, and that was too soft for her. And then she sat down in the chair of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and that was neither too hard, nor too soft, but just right. So she seated herself in it, and there she sate till the bottom of the chair came out, and down she came, plump upon the ground.

Then the little girl went upstairs into the bed-chamber in which the three Bears slept. And first she lay down upon the bed of the Great, Huge Bear; but that was too high at the head for her. And next she lay down upon the bed of the Middle Bear, and that was too high at the foot for her. And then she lay down upon the bed of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, and that was neither too high at the head nor at the foot, but just right. So she covered herself up comfortably, and lay there till she fell fast asleep.

By this time the Three Bears thought their porridge would be cool enough, so they came home to breakfast. Now the Goldilocks had left the spoon of the Great, Huge Bear, standing in his porridge.

**‘Somebody has been at my porridge!’** said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice. And when the Middle Bear looked at his, he saw that the spoon was standing in it, too. They were wooden spoons; if they had been silver ones, the naughty old Woman would have put them in her pocket.

**‘Somebody has been at my porridge!’** said the Middle Bear in his middle voice.

Then the Little, Small, Wee Bear looked at his, and there was the spoon in the porridge-pot, but the porridge was all gone.

**‘Somebody has been at my porridge, and has eaten it all up!’** said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Upon this the Three Bears, seeing that someone had entered their house, and eaten up the Little, Small, Wee Bear’s breakfast, began to look about them. Now Goldilocks had not put the hard cushion straight when she rose from the chair of the Great, Huge Bear.

**‘Somebody has been sitting in my chair!’** said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And Goldilocks had squatted down the soft cushion of the Middle Bear.

**‘Somebody has been sitting in my chair!’** said the Middle Bear, in his middle voice.

And you know what the little girl had done to the third chair.

**‘Somebody has been sitting in my chair and has sate the bottom out of it!’** said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Then the three Bears thought it necessary that they should make further search; so they went upstairs into their bed-chamber. Now Goldilocks had pulled the pillow of the Great, Huge Bear out of its place.

**‘Somebody has been lying in my bed!’** said the Great, Huge Bear, in his great, rough, gruff voice.

And she had pulled the bolster of the Middle Bear out of its place.

**‘Somebody has been lying in my bed!’** said the Middle Bear, in his middle voice.

And when the Little, Small, Wee Bear came to look at his bed, there was the bolster in its right place, and the pillow in its place upon the bolster; and upon the pillow was Goldilock’s head — which was not in its place, for she had no business there.

**‘Somebody has been lying in my bed — and here she is!’** said the Little, Small, Wee Bear, in his little, small, wee voice.

Goldilocks had heard in her sleep the great, rough, gruff voice of the Great, Huge Bear; but she was so fast asleep that it was no more to her than the roaring of wind or the rumbling of thunder. And she had heard the middle voice of the Middle Bear, but it was only as if she had heard someone speaking in a dream. But when she heard the little, small, wee voice of the Little, Small, Wee Bear, it was so sharp, and so shrill, that it awakened her at once. Up she started; and when she saw the Three Bears on one side of the bed, she tumbled herself out at the other, and ran to the window.

Now the window was open, because the Bears, like good, tidy Bears as they were, always opened their bed-chamber window when they got up in the morning. Out the little girl jumped; and whether she broke her neck in the fall; or ran into the wood and was lost there; or found her way out of the wood, and was taken up by the constable and sent to the House of Correction for a vagrant as she was, I cannot tell. But the Three Bears never saw anything more of her.

**The Three Little Pigs**

There was an old sow with three little pigs, and as she had not enough to keep them, she sent them out to seek their fortune. The first that went off met a man with a bundle of straw, and said to him, "Please, man, give me that straw to build me a house." Which the man did, and the little pig built a house with it.

Presently came along a wolf, and knocked at the door, and said, "Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

To which the pig answered, "No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin."

The wolf then answered to that, "Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in." So he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew his house in, and ate up the little pig.

The second little pig met a man with a bundle of furze [sticks], and said, "Please, man, give me that furze to build a house." Which the man did, and the pig built his house.

Then along came the wolf, and said, "Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin."

"Then I'll puff, and I'll huff, and I'll blow your house in." So he huffed, and he puffed, and he puffed, and he huffed, and at last he blew the house down, and he ate up the little pig.

The third little pig met a man with a load of bricks, and said, "Please, man, give me those bricks to build a house with." So the man gave him the bricks, and he built his house with them.

So the wolf came, as he did to the other little pigs, and said, "Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin."

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

Well, he huffed, and he puffed, and he huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and huffed; but he could *not* get the house down. When he found that he could not, with all his huffing and puffing, blow the house down, he said, "Little pig, I know where there is a nice field of turnips."

"Where?" said the little pig.

"Oh, in Mr. Smith's home field, and if you will be ready tomorrow morning I will call for you, and we will go together and get some for dinner."

"Very well," said the little pig, "I will be ready. What time do you mean to go?"

"Oh, at six o'clock."

Well, the little pig got up at five, and got the turnips before the wolf came (which he did about six) and who said, "Little pig, are you ready?"

The little pig said, "Ready! I have been and come back again, and got a nice potful for dinner."

The wolf felt very angry at this, but thought that he would be up to the little pig somehow or other, so he said, "Little pig, I know where there is a nice apple tree."

"Where?" said the pig.

"Down at Merry Garden," replied the wolf, "and if you will not deceive me I will come for you, at five o'clock tomorrow and get some apples."

Well, the little pig bustled up the next morning at four o'clock, and went off for the apples, hoping to get back before the wolf came; but he had further to go, and had to climb the tree, so that just as he was coming down from it, he saw the wolf coming, which, as you may suppose, frightened him very much.

When the wolf came up he said, "Little pig, what! Are you here before me? Are they nice apples?"

"Yes, very," said the little pig. "I will throw you down one." And he threw it so far, that, while the wolf was gone to pick it up, the little pig jumped down and ran home.

The next day the wolf came again, and said to the little pig, "Little pig, there is a fair at Shanklin this afternoon. Will you go?"

"Oh yes," said the pig, "I will go. What time shall you be ready?"

"At three," said the wolf. So the little pig went off before the time as usual, and got to the fair, and bought a butter churn, which he was going home with, when he saw the wolf coming. Then he could not tell what to do. So he got into the churn to hide, and by so doing turned it around, and it rolled down the hill with the pig in it, which frightened the wolf so much, that he ran home without going to the fair. He went to the pig's house, and told him how frightened he had been by a great round thing which came down the hill past him.

Then the little pig said, "Ha, I frightened you, then. I had been to the fair and bought a butter churn, and when I saw you, I got into it, and rolled down the hill."

Then the wolf was very angry indeed, and declared he *would* eat up the little pig, and that he would get down the chimney after him. When the little pig saw what he was about, he hung on the pot full of water, and made up a blazing fire, and, just as the wolf was coming down, took off the cover, and in fell the wolf; so the little pig put on the cover again in an instant, boiled him up, and ate him for supper, and lived happily ever afterwards.

**The Emperor’s New Clothes**

Many years ago there was an Emperor so exceedingly fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on being well dressed. He cared nothing about reviewing his soldiers, going to the theatre, or going for a ride in his carriage, except to show off his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day, and instead of saying, as one might, about any other ruler, "The King's in council," here they always said. "The Emperor's in his dressing room."

In the great city where he lived, life was always gay. Every day many strangers came to town, and among them one day came two swindlers. They let it be known they were weavers, and they said they could weave the most magnificent fabrics imaginable. Not only were their colors and patterns uncommonly fine, but clothes made of this cloth had a wonderful way of becoming invisible to anyone who was unfit for his office, or who was unusually stupid.

"Those would be just the clothes for me," thought the Emperor. "If I wore them I would be able to discover which men in my empire are unfit for their posts. And I could tell the wise men from the fools. Yes, I certainly must get some of the stuff woven for me right away." He paid the two swindlers a large sum of money to start work at once.

They set up two looms and pretended to weave, though there was nothing on the looms. All the finest silk and the purest old thread which they demanded went into their traveling bags, while they worked the empty looms far into the night.

"I'd like to know how those weavers are getting on with the cloth," the Emperor thought, but he felt slightly uncomfortable when he remembered that those who were unfit for their position would not be able to see the fabric. It couldn't have been that he doubted himself, yet he thought he'd rather send someone else to see how things were going. The whole town knew about the cloth's peculiar power, and all were impatient to find out how stupid their neighbors were.

"I'll send my honest old minister to the weavers," the Emperor decided. "He'll be the best one to tell me how the material looks, for he's a sensible man and no one does his duty better."

So the honest old minister went to the room where the two swindlers sat working away at their empty looms.

"Heaven help me," he thought as his eyes flew wide open, "I can't see anything at all". But he did not say so.

Both the swindlers begged him to be so kind as to come near to approve the excellent pattern, the beautiful colors. They pointed to the empty looms, and the poor old minister stared as hard as he dared. He couldn't see anything, because there was nothing to see. "Heaven have mercy," he thought. "Can it be that I'm a fool? I'd have never guessed it, and not a soul must know. Am I unfit to be the minister? It would never do to let on that I can't see the cloth."

"Don't hesitate to tell us what you think of it," said one of the weavers.

"Oh, it's beautiful -it's enchanting." The old minister peered through his spectacles. "Such a pattern, what colors!" I'll be sure to tell the Emperor how delighted I am with it."

"We're pleased to hear that," the swindlers said. They proceeded to name all the colors and to explain the intricate pattern. The old minister paid the closest attention, so that he could tell it all to the Emperor. And so he did.

The swindlers at once asked for more money, more silk and gold thread, to get on with the weaving. But it all went into their pockets. Not a thread went into the looms, though they worked at their weaving as hard as ever.

The Emperor presently sent another trustworthy official to see how the work progressed and how soon it would be ready. The same thing happened to him that had happened to the minister. He looked and he looked, but as there was nothing to see in the looms he couldn't see anything.

"Isn't it a beautiful piece of goods?" the swindlers asked him, as they displayed and described their imaginary pattern.

"I know I'm not stupid," the man thought, "so it must be that I'm unworthy of my good office. That's strange. I mustn't let anyone find it out, though." So he praised the material he did not see. He declared he was delighted with the beautiful colors and the exquisite pattern. To the Emperor he said, "It held me spellbound."

All the town was talking of this splendid cloth, and the Emperor wanted to see it for himself while it was still in the looms. Attended by a band of chosen men, among whom were his two old trusted officials-the ones who had been to the weavers-he set out to see the two swindlers. He found them weaving with might and main, but without a thread in their looms.

"Magnificent," said the two officials already duped. "Just look, Your Majesty, what colors! What a design!" They pointed to the empty looms, each supposing that the others could see the stuff.

"What's this?" thought the Emperor. "I can't see anything. This is terrible!

Am I a fool? Am I unfit to be the Emperor? What a thing to happen to me of all people! - Oh! It's *very* pretty," he said. "It has my highest approval." And he nodded approbation at the empty loom. Nothing could make him say that he couldn't see anything.

His whole retinue stared and stared. One saw no more than another, but they all joined the Emperor in exclaiming, "Oh! It's *very* pretty," and they advised him to wear clothes made of this wonderful cloth especially for the great procession he was soon to lead. "Magnificent! Excellent! Unsurpassed!" were bandied from mouth to mouth, and everyone did his best to seem well pleased. The Emperor gave each of the swindlers a cross to wear in his buttonhole, and the title of "Sir Weaver."

Before the procession the swindlers sat up all night and burned more than six candles, to show how busy they were finishing the Emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the cloth off the loom. They made cuts in the air with huge scissors. And at last they said, "Now the Emperor's new clothes are ready for him."

Then the Emperor himself came with his noblest noblemen, and the swindlers each raised an arm as if they were holding something. They said, "These are the trousers, here's the coat, and this is the mantle," naming each garment. "All of them are as light as a spider web. One would almost think he had nothing on, but that's what makes them so fine."

"Exactly," all the noblemen agreed, though they could see nothing, for there was nothing to see.

"If Your Imperial Majesty will condescend to take your clothes off," said the swindlers, "we will help you on with your new ones here in front of the long mirror."

The Emperor undressed, and the swindlers pretended to put his new clothes on him, one garment after another. They took him around the waist and seemed to be fastening something - that was his train-as the Emperor turned round and round before the looking glass.

"How well Your Majesty's new clothes look. Aren't they becoming!" He heard on all sides, "That pattern, so perfect! Those colors, so suitable! It is a magnificent outfit."

Then the minister of public processions announced: "Your Majesty's canopy is waiting outside."

"Well, I'm supposed to be ready," the Emperor said, and turned again for one last look in the mirror. "It is a remarkable fit, isn't it?" He seemed to regard his costume with the greatest interest.

The noblemen who were to carry his train stooped low and reached for the floor as if they were picking up his mantle. Then they pretended to lift and hold it high. They didn't dare admit they had nothing to hold.

So off went the Emperor in procession under his splendid canopy. Everyone in the streets and the windows said, "Oh, how fine are the Emperor's new clothes! Don't they fit him to perfection? And see his long train!" Nobody would confess that he couldn't see anything, for that would prove him either unfit for his position, or a fool. No costume the Emperor had worn before was ever such a complete success.

"But he hasn't got anything on," a little child said.

"Did you ever hear such innocent prattle?" said its father. And one person whispered to another what the child had said, "He hasn't anything on. A child says he hasn't anything on."

"But he hasn't got anything on!" the whole town cried out at last.

The Emperor shivered, for he suspected they were right. But he thought, "This procession has got to go on." So he walked more proudly than ever, as his noblemen held high the train that wasn't there at all.

**Little Red Riding Hood**

Once upon a time, there was a little girl who lived in a village near the forest.  Whenever she went out, the little girl wore a red riding cloak, so everyone in the village called her Little Red Riding Hood.

One morning, Little Red Riding Hood asked her mother if she could go to visit her grandmother as it had been awhile since they'd seen each other.

"That's a good idea," her mother said.  So they packed a nice basket for Little Red Riding Hood to take to her grandmother.

When the basket was ready, the little girl put on her red cloak and kissed her mother goodbye.

"Remember, go straight to Grandma's house," her mother cautioned.  "Don't dawdle along the way and please don't talk to strangers!  The woods are dangerous."

"Don't worry, mommy," said Little Red Riding Hood, "I'll be careful."

But when Little Red Riding Hood noticed some lovely flowers in the woods, she forgot her promise to her mother.  She picked a few, watched the butterflies flit about for awhile, listened to the frogs croaking and then picked a few more.

Little Red Riding Hood was enjoying the warm summer day so much, that she didn't notice a dark shadow approaching out of the forest behind her...

Suddenly, the wolf appeared beside her.

"What are you doing out here, little girl?" the wolf asked in a voice as friendly as he could muster.

"I'm on my way to see my Grandma who lives through the forest, near the brook,"  Little Red Riding Hood replied.

Then she realized how late she was and quickly excused herself, rushing down the path to her Grandma's house.

The wolf, in the meantime, took a shortcut...

The wolf, a little out of breath from running, arrived at Grandma's and knocked lightly at the door.

"Oh thank goodness dear!  Come in, come in!  I was worried sick that something had happened to you in the forest," said Grandma thinking that the knock was her granddaughter.

The wolf let himself in.  Poor Granny did not have time to say another word, before the wolf gobbled her up!

The wolf let out a satisfied burp, and then poked through Granny's wardrobe to find a nightgown that he liked.  He added a frilly sleeping cap, and for good measure, dabbed some of Granny's perfume behind his pointy ears.

A few minutes later, Red Riding Hood knocked on the door.  The wolf jumped into bed and pulled the covers over his nose.  "Who is it?" he called in a cackly voice.

"It's me, Little Red Riding Hood."

"Oh how lovely!  Do come in, my dear," croaked the wolf.

When Little Red Riding Hood entered the little cottage, she could scarcely recognize her Grandmother.

"Grandmother!  Your voice sounds so odd.  Is something the matter?" she asked.

"Oh, I just have touch of a cold," squeaked the wolf adding a cough at the end to prove the point.

"But Grandmother!  What big ears you have," said Little Red Riding Hood as she edged closer to the bed.

"The better to hear you with, my dear," replied the wolf.

"But Grandmother!  What big eyes you have," said Little Red Riding Hood.

"The better to see you with, my dear," replied the wolf.

"But Grandmother!  What big teeth you have," said Little Red Riding Hood her voice quivering slightly.

"The better to eat you with, my dear," roared the wolf and he leapt out of the bed and began to chase the little girl.

Almost too late, Little Red Riding Hood realized that the person in the bed was not her Grandmother, but a hungry wolf.

She ran across the room and through the door, shouting, "Help!  Wolf!" as loudly as she could.

A woodsman who was chopping logs nearby heard her cry and ran towards the cottage as fast as he could.

He grabbed the wolf and made him spit out the poor Grandmother who was a bit frazzled by the whole experience, but still in one piece.

"Oh Grandma, I was so scared!"  sobbed Little Red Riding Hood, "I'll never speak to strangers or dawdle in the forest again."

"There, there, child.  You've learned an important lesson.  Thank goodness you shouted loud enough for this kind woodsman to hear you!"

The woodsman knocked out the wolf and carried him deep into the forest where he wouldn't bother people any longer.

Little Red Riding Hood and her Grandmother had a nice lunch and a long chat.

**Jack and the Beanstalk**

Once upon a time, there lived a widow woman and her son, Jack, on their small farm in the country.

Every day, Jack would help his mother with the chores – chopping the wood, weeding the garden and milking the cow.  But despite all their hard work, Jack and his mother were very poor with barely enough money to keep themselves fed.

"What shall we do, what shall we do?" said the widow, one spring day.  “We don’t have enough money to buy seed for the farm this year!  We must sell our cow, Old Bess.”

So Jack took the cow's halter in his hand, walked through the garden gate and headed off toward town.  He hadn't gone far when he met a funny-looking, old man.

"Where are you off to this fine morning?" asked the man.

"I'm going to market to sell our cow, Bessy."

“Well what a helpful son you are!” exclaimed the man, “I have a special deal for such a good boy like you.”

The little, old man looked around to make sure no one was watching and then opened his hand to show Jack what he held.

“Beans?” asked Jack, looking a little confused.

“Three magical bean seeds to be exact, young man.  One, two, three!  So magical are they, that if you plant them over-night, by morning they grow right up to the sky,” promised the funny little man.  “And because you’re such a good boy, they’re all yours in trade for that old milking cow.”

"Really?" said Jack, "and you’re quite sure they’re magical?"

"I am indeed!  And if it doesn't turn out to be true you can have your cow back."

"Well that sounds fair," said Jack, as pocketed the beans and headed back home to show his mother.

"Back already, Jack?" asked his mother; "I see you haven't got Old Bess -- you've sold her so quickly.  How much did you get for her?"

Jack smiled and reached into his pocket, "Just look at these beans, mother; they're magical, plant them over-night and----"

"What!" cried Jack's mother.  "Oh, silly boy!  How could you give away our milking cow for three measly beans.”  And with that she did the worst thing Jack had ever seen her do – she burst into tears.

Jack ran upstairs to his little room in the attic, so sorry he was, and threw the beans angrily out the window thinking, “How could I have been so foolish – I’ve broken my mother’s heart.”  After much tossing and turning, at last Jack dropped off to sleep.

When Jack woke up the next morning, his room looked strange.  The sun was shining into part of it like it normally did, and yet all the rest was quite dark and shady.  So Jack jumped up and dressed himself and went to the window.  And what do you think he saw?  Why, the beans he had thrown out of the window into the garden had sprung up into a big beanstalk which went up and up and up until it reached the sky.

Using the leaves and twisty vines like the rungs of a ladder, Jack climbed and climbed until at last, he reached the sky.  And when he got there he found a long, broad road winding its way through the clouds to a tall, square castle off in the distance.

Jack ran up the road toward the castle and just as he reached it, the door swung open to reveal a horrible lady giant, with one great eye in the middle of her forehead.

As soon as Jack saw her he turned to run away, but she caught him, and dragged him into the castle.

"Don’t be in such a hurry, I’m sure a growing boy like you would like a nice, big breakfast," said the great, big, tall woman, "It’s been so long since I got to make breakfast for a boy.”

Well, the lady giant wasn't such a bad sort, after all -- even if she was a bit odd.  She took Jack into the kitchen, and gave him a chunk of cheese and a glass of milk.  But Jack had only taken a few bites when thump! thump! thump! the whole house began to tremble with the noise of someone coming.

"Goodness gracious me!  It's my husband," said the giant woman, wringing her hands, "what on earth shall I do?  There's nothing he likes better than boys broiled on toast and I haven't any bread left.  Oh dear, I never should have let you stay for breakfast.  Here, come quick and jump in here."  And she hurried Jack into a large copper pot sitting beside the stove just as her husband, the giant, came in.

He ducked inside the kitchen and said, "I’m ready for my breakfast -- I'm so hungry I could eat three cows.  Ah, what's this I smell?

Fee-fi-fo-fum,  
I smell the blood of an Englishman,  
Be he alive, or be he dead  
I'll have his bones to grind my bread.

"Nonsense, dear," said his wife, "we haven’t had a boy for breakfast in years.  Now you go and wash up and by the time you come back breakfast'll be ready for you."

Jack was about to make a run for it when the woman stopped him.  "Wait until he's asleep," she said, "he always has a little snooze after breakfast."

Jack peeked out of the copper pot just as the giant returned to the kitchen carrying a basket filled with golden eggs and a sickly-looking, white hen.  The giant poked the hen and growled, “Lay” and the hen laid an egg made of gold which the giant added to the basket.

After his breakfast, the giant went to the closet and pulled out a golden harp with the face of a sad, young girl.  The giant poked the harp and growled, “Play” and the harp began to play a gentle tune while her lovely face sang a lullaby.  Then the giant began to nod his head and to snore until the house shook.

When he was quite sure the giant was asleep, Jack crept out of the copper pot and began to tiptoe out of the kitchen.  Just as he was about to leave, he heard the sound of the harp-girl weeping.  Jack bit his lip, sighed and returned to the kitchen.  He grabbed the sickly hen and the singing harp, and began to tiptoe back out.  But this time the hen gave a cackle which woke the giant, and just as Jack got out of the house he heard him calling, "Wife, wife, what have you done with my white hen and my golden harp?"

Jack ran as fast as he could and the giant, realizing he had been tricked, came rushing after – away from the castle and down the broad, winding road.  When he got to the beanstalk the giant was only twenty yards away when suddenly he saw Jack disappear – confused, the giant peered through the clouds and saw Jack underneath climbing down for dear life.  The giant stomped his foot and roared angrily, “Fee-fi-fo-fum…”

The giant swung himself down onto the beanstalk which shook with his weight.  Jack slipped, slid and climbed down the beanstalk as quickly as he could, and after him climbed the giant.

As he neared the bottom, Jack called out, "Mother! Please! Hurry, bring me an axe, bring me an axe."  And his mother came rushing out with Jack's wood chopping axe in her hand, but when she came to the enormous beanstalk she stood stock still with fright.

Jack jumped down, got hold of the axe and began to chop away at the beanstalk.  The giant felt the beanstalk shake and quiver so he stopped to see what was the matter.  Then Jack gave one last big chop with the axe, and the beanstalk began to topple over.  Then the giant fell down and broke his crown, and the beanstalk came toppling after.

The singing harp thanked Jack for rescuing her from the giant – she had hated being locked up in the closet all day and night and wanted nothing more than to sit in the farmhouse window and sing to the birds and the butterflies in the sunshine.

With a bit of patience and his mother’s help, it didn’t take long for Jack to get the sickly hen back in good health and the grateful hen continued to lay a fresh golden egg every day.

Jack used the money from selling the golden eggs to buy back Old Bess, purchase seed for the spring crop and to fix up his mother’s farm.  He even had enough left over to invite every one of his neighbours over for a nice meal, complete with music from the singing harp.

And so Jack, his mother, Old Bess, the golden harp and the white hen lived happy ever after.