

The Book of Children Short Stories

By: Stephanie G Wallace



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## Short Stories for Children

Please enjoy these great stories, fairy-tales, fables, and nursery rhymes for children. They help kids learn to read and make excellent bedtime stories! We have hundreds of great short stories for kids to enjoy.

The Three Little Pigs featured here has been adapted from a couple different sources and from childhood memory. The primary sources are English Fairy Tales, retold by Flora Annie Steel (1922) with illustrations by L. Leslie Brooke from the 1904 version. Once upon a time there was a dear little girl who was loved by everyone who looked at her, but most of all by her grandmother, and there was nothing that she would not have given to the child. Once she gave her a little cap of red velvet, which suited her so well that she would never wear anything else. So, she was always called Little Red Riding Hood.

The Tale of Peter Rabbit is a British children's book written and illustrated by Beatrix Potter that follows mischievous and disobedient young Peter Rabbit as he is chased about the garden of Mr. McGregor. He escapes and returns home to his mother, who puts him to bed after dosing him with chamomile tea. The tale was written for five-year-old Noel Moore, son of Potter's former governess Annie Carter Moore, in 1893. It was revised and privately printed by Potter in 1901 after several publishers' rejections, but was printed in a trade edition by Frederick Warne & Co. in 1902. The book was a success, and multiple reprints were issued in the years immediately following its debut. It has been translated into 36 languages, and with 45 million copies sold it is one of the best-selling books of all time. After her father unexpectedly dies, young Ella (Lily James) finds herself at the mercy of her cruel stepmother (Cate Blanchett) and stepsisters, who reduce her to scullery maid. Despite her circumstances, she refuses to despair. An invitation to a palace ball gives Ella hope that she might reunite with the dashing

stranger (Richard Madden) she met in the woods, but her stepmother prevents her from going. Help arrives in the form of a kindly beggar woman who has a magic touch for ordinary things. The Tale of Johnny Town-Mouse is a delightful story about a country mouse's accidental visit to town that turns into a friendship (1918). Would you rather live like Johnny Town-mouse or Timmy Willie? Tom Thumb is a character of English folklore. The History of Tom Thumb was published in 1621, and was the first fairy tale printed in English. The ugly duckling. It is a beautiful summer day. The sun shines warmly on an old house near a river. Behind the house a mother duck is sitting on ten eggs. Talk about a rigorous royalty identity test (one that mattress)! Hans Christian Andersen offers his literary tale about a young lady who must prove her worthiness to marry a prince. She could have simply offered, "I'll sleep on it." This classic fairytale was first published by Andersen in 1835. This famous children's story starts out on Christmas morning. A young boy finds a stuffed rabbit nestled in his stocking. He loves the rabbit but forgets about him when more glamorous and expensive Christmas presents arrive. But chance will intervene twice in this magical story about childhood toys and the transformative power of love. Jack and the Beanstalk first appeared as The Story of Jack Sprigging and the Enchanted Bean in 1734. Featured illustrations are by Arthur Rackham, 1918 edition of retold by Flora Annie Steel. HANSEL AND GRETEL. Once upon a time, on the edge of a great forest, there lived a very poor woodcutter with his wife and his two children, Hansel and Gretel. One of Hans Christian Andersen's most beloved fairy tale, The Little Mermaid (1837) is about a mermaid willing to give up her life in the sea and immortality in exchange for a human soul. "Snow White" is a nineteenth-century German fairy tale which is today known widely across the Western world. The Brothers Grimm published it in 1812 in the first edition of their collection Grimm's' Fairy Tales.

## Chapter 1 The Three Little Pigs

Once upon a time there was an old mother pig who had three little pigs and not enough food to feed them. So, when they were old enough, she sent them out into the world to seek their fortunes.

The first little pig was very lazy. He didn't want to work at all and he built his house out of straw. The second little pig worked a little bit harder but he was somewhat lazy too and he built his house out of sticks. Then, they sang and danced and played together the rest of the day.

The third little pig worked hard all day and built his house with bricks. It was a sturdy house complete with a fine fireplace and chimney. It looked like it could withstand the strongest winds.

The next day, a wolf happened to pass by the lane where the three little pigs lived; and he saw the straw house, and he smelled the pig inside. He thought the pig would make a mighty fine meal and his mouth began to water.

So, he knocked on the door and said:

But the little pig saw the wolf's big paws through the keyhole, so he answered back:

Then the wolf showed his teeth and said:

So, he huffed and he puffed and he blew the house down! The wolf opened his jaws very wide and bit down as hard as he could, but the first little pig escaped and ran away to hide with the second little pig.

The wolf continued down the lane and he passed by the second house made of sticks; and he saw the house, and he smelled the pigs inside, and his mouth began to water as he thought about the fine dinner they would make.

So, he knocked on the door and said:

But the little pigs saw the wolf's pointy ears through the keyhole, so they answered back:

So, the wolf showed his teeth and said:

So, he huffed and he puffed and he blew the house down! The wolf was greedy and he tried to catch both pigs at once, but he was too greedy and got neither! His big jaws clamped down on nothing but air and the two little pigs scrambled away as fast as their little hooves would carry them.

The wolf chased them down the lane he almost caught them. But they made it to the brick house and slammed the door closed before the wolf could catch them. The three little pigs they were very frightened, they knew the wolf wanted to eat them. And that was very, very true. The wolf hadn't eaten all day and he had worked up a large appetite chasing the pigs around and now he could smell all three of them inside and he knew that the three little pigs would make a lovely feast.

Well! he huffed and he puffed. He puffed and he huffed. And he huffed, huffed, and he puffed, puffed; but he could not blow the house down. At last, he was so out of breath that he couldn't huff and he couldn't puff anymore. So, he stopped to rest and thought a bit.

But this was too much. The wolf danced about with rage and swore he would come down the chimney and eat up the little pig for his supper. But while he was climbing on to the roof the little pig made up a blazing fire and put on a big pot full of water to boil. Then, just as the wolf was coming down the chimney, the little piggy off with the lid, and plump! in fell the wolf into the scalding water.

So, the little piggy put on the cover again, boiled the wolf up, and the three little pigs ate him for supper.

## Chapter 2 Little Red Riding Hood

Once upon a time there was a dear little girl who was loved by everyone who looked at her, but most of all by her grandmother, and there was nothing that she would not have given to the child. Once she gave her a little cap of red velvet, which suited her so well that she would never wear anything else. So, she was always called Little Red Riding Hood.

One day her mother said to her, "Come, Little Red Riding Hood, here is a piece of cake and a bottle of wine. Take them to your grandmother, she is ill and weak, and they will do her good. Set out before it gets hot, and when you are going, walk nicely and quietly and do not run off the path, or you may fall and break the bottle, and then your grandmother will get nothing. And when you go into her room, don't forget to say, good-morning, and don't peep into every corner before you do it."

I will take great care, said Little Red Riding Hood to her mother, and gave her hand on it.

The grandmother lived out in the wood, half a league from the village, and just as Little Red Riding Hood entered the wood, a wolf met her. Little Red Riding Hood did not know what a wicked creature he was, and was not at all afraid of him.

"Good-day, Little Red Riding Hood," said he.

"Thank you kindly, wolf."

"Wither away so early, Little Red Riding Hood?"

"To my grandmother's."

"What have you got in your apron?"

"Cake and wine. Yesterday was baking-day, so poor sick grandmother is to have something good, to make her stronger."

"Where does your grandmother live, Little Red Riding Hood?"

"A good quarter of a league farther on in the wood. Her house stands under the three-large oak-trees, the nut-trees are just below. You surely must know it," replied Little Red Riding Hood.

The wolf thought to himself, "What a tender young creature. What a nice plump mouthful, she will be better to eat than the old woman. I must act craftily, to catch both." So, he walked for a short time by the side of Little Red Riding Hood, and then he said, "see Little Red Riding Hood, how pretty the flowers are about here. Why do you not look round? I believe, too, that you do not hear how sweetly the little birds are singing. You walk gravely along as if you were going to school, while everything else out here in the wood is merry."

Little Red Riding Hood raised her eyes, and when she saw the sunbeams dancing here and there through the trees, and pretty flowers growing everywhere, she thought, suppose I take grandmother a fresh nosegay. That would please her too. It is so early in the day that I shall still get there in good time. And so, she ran from the path into the wood to look for flowers. And whenever she had picked one, she fancied that she saw a still prettier one farther on, and ran after it, and so got deeper and deeper into the wood.

Meanwhile the wolf ran straight to the grandmother's house and knocked at the door.

"Who is there?"

"Little Red Riding Hood," replied the wolf. "She is bringing cake and wine. Open the door."

"Lift the latch," called out the grandmother, "I am too weak, and cannot get up."

The wolf lifted the latch, the door sprang open, and without saying a word he went straight to the grandmother's bed, and devoured her. Then he put on her clothes, dressed himself in her cap, laid himself in bed and drew the curtains.

Little Red Riding Hood, however, had been running about picking flowers, and when she had gathered so many that she could carry no more, she remembered her grandmother, and set out on the way to her.

She was surprised to find the cottage-door standing open, and when she went into the room, she had such a strange feeling that she said to herself, oh dear, how uneasy I feel to-day, and at other times I like being with grandmother so much.

She called out, "Good morning," but received no answer. So, she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. There lay her grandmother with her cap pulled far over her face, and looking very strange.

"Oh, grandmother," she said, "what big ears you have."

"The better to hear you with, my child," was the reply.

"But, grandmother, what big eyes you have," she said.

"The better to see you with, my dear."

"But, grandmother, what large hands you have."

"The better to hug you with."

"Oh, but, grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have."

"The better to eat you with."

And scarcely had the wolf said this, then with one bound he was out of bed and swallowed up Little Red Riding Hood.

When the wolf had appeased his appetite, he lay down again in the bed, fell asleep and began to snore very loud. The huntsman was just passing the house, and thought to himself, how the old woman is snoring. I must just see if she wants anything.

So, he went into the room, and when he came to the bed, he saw that the wolf was lying in it. "Do I find you here, your old sinner," said he. "I have long sought you."

Then just as he was going to fire at him, it occurred to him that the wolf might have devoured the grandmother, and that she might still be saved, so he did not fire, but took a pair of scissors, and began to cut open the stomach of the sleeping wolf.

When he had made two snips, he saw the Little Red Riding Hood shining, and then he made two snips more, and the little girl sprang out, crying, "Ah, how frightened I have been. How dark it was inside the wolf."

And after that the aged grandmother came out alive also, but scarcely able to breathe. Little Red Riding Hood, however, quickly fetched great stones with which they filled the wolf's belly, and when he awoke, he wanted to run away, but the stones were so heavy that he collapsed at once, and fell dead.

Then all three were delighted. The huntsman drew off the wolf's skin and went home with it. The grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine which Little Red Riding Hood had brought, and revived, but Little Red Riding Hood thought to herself, if I live, I will never by myself leave the path, to run into the wood, when my mother has forbidden me to do so.

It is also related that once when Little Red Riding Hood was again taking cakes to the old grandmother, another wolf spoke to her, and tried to entice her from the path. Little Red Riding Hood, however, was on her guard, and went straight forward on her way, and told her grandmother that she had met the wolf, and that he had said good-morning to her, but with such a wicked look in his eyes, that if they had not been on the public road she was certain he would have eaten her up. "Well," said the grandmother, "we will shut the door, that he may not come in."

Soon afterwards the wolf knocked, and cried, "open the door, grandmother, I am Little Red Riding Hood, and am bringing you some cakes."

But they did not speak, or open the door, so the grey-beard stole twice or thrice round the house, and at last jumped on the roof, intending to wait until Little Red Riding Hood went home in the evening, and then to steal after her and devour her in the darkness. But the grandmother saw what was in his thoughts. In front of the house was a great stone trough, so she said to the child, take the pail, Little Red Riding Hood. I made some sausages yesterday, so carry the water in which I boiled them to the trough. Little Red Riding Hood carried until the great trough was quite full. Then the smell of the sausages reached the wolf, and he sniffed and peeped down, and at last stretched out his neck so far that he could no longer keep his footing and began to slip, and slipped down from the roof straight into the great trough, and was drowned. But Little Red Riding Hood went joyously home, and no one ever did anything to harm her again.

### **Chapter 3 The Tale of Peter Rabbit**

ONCE upon a time there were four little Rabbits, and their names were— Flops, Mops, Cotton-tail, and Peter.

They lived with their Mother in a sand-bank, underneath the root of a very big fir tree.

"NOW, my dears," said old Mrs. Rabbit one morning, "you may go into the fields or down the lane, but don't go into Mr. McGregor's garden: your Father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor."

"NOW run along, and don't get into mischief. I am going out."

THEN old Mrs. Rabbit took a basket and her umbrella, to the baker's. She bought a loaf of brown bread and five currant buns.

FLOPSY, Mops, and Cottontail, who were good little bunnies, went down the lane to gather blackberries;

BUT Peter, who was very naughty, ran straight away to Mr. McGregor's garden and squeezed under the gate!

FIRST, he ate some lettuces and some French beans; and then he ate some radishes;

AND then, feeling rather sick, he went to look for some parsley.

BUT round the end of a cucumber frame, whom should he meet but Mr. McGregor!

MR. McGregor was on his hands and knees planting out young cabbages, but he jumped up and ran after Peter, waving a rake and calling out, "Stop thief!"

PETER was most dreadfully frightened; he rushed all over the garden, for he had forgotten the way back to the gate.

He lost one of his shoes among the cabbages, and the other shoe amongst the potatoes.

AFTER losing them, he ran on four legs and went faster, so that I think he might have got away altogether if he had not unfortunately run into a gooseberry net, and got caught by the large buttons on his jacket. It was a blue jacket with brass buttons, quite new.

PETER gave himself up for lost, and shed big tears; but his sobs were overheard by some friendly sparrows, who flew to him in great excitement, and implored him to exert himself.

MR. McGregor came up with a sieve, which he intended to pop upon the top of Peter; but Peter wriggled out just in time, leaving his jacket behind him.

AND rushed into the toolshed, and jumped into a can. It would have been a beautiful thing to hide in, if it had not had so much water in it.

MR. McGregor was quite sure that Peter was somewhere in the toolshed, perhaps hidden underneath a flower-pot. He began to turn them over carefully, looking under each.

Presently Peter sneezed— "Kitsch!" Mr. McGregor was after him in no time,

AND tried to put his foot upon Peter, who jumped out of a window, upsetting three plants. The window was too small for Mr. McGregor, and he was tired of running after Peter. He went back to his work.

PETER sat down to rest; he was out of breath and trembling with fright, and he had not the least idea which way to go. Also, he was very damp with sitting in that can.

After a time, he began to wander about, going lip pity— lip pity—not very fast, and looking all around.

HE found a door in a wall; but it was locked, and there was no room for a fat little rabbit to squeeze underneath.

An old mouse was running in and out over the stone doorstep, carrying peas and beans to her family in the wood. Peter asked her the way to the gate, but she had such a large pea in her mouth that she could not answer. She only shook her head at him. Peter began to cry.

THEN he tried to find his way straight across the garden, but he became more and more puzzled. Presently, he came to a pond where Mr. McGregor filled his water-cans. A white cat was staring at some gold-fish; she sat very, very still, but now and then the tip of her tail twitched as if it were alive. Peter thought it best to go away without speaking to her; he had heard about cats from his cousin, little Benjamin Bunny.

HE went back towards the toolshed, but suddenly, quite close to him, he heard the noise of a hoe—scratch, scratch, scratch, scratch. Peter scattered underneath the bushes. But presently, as nothing happened, he came out, and climbed upon a wheelbarrow, and peeped over. The first thing he saw was Mr. McGregor hoeing onions. His back was turned towards Peter, and beyond him was the gate!

PETER got down very quietly off the wheelbarrow, and started running as fast as he could go, along a straight walk behind some black-currant bushes.

Mr. McGregor caught sight of him at the corner, but Peter did not care. He slipped underneath the gate, and was safe at last in the wood outside the garden.

MR. McGregor hung up the little jacket and the shoes for a scare-crow to frighten the blackbirds.

PETER never stopped running or looked behind him till he got home to the big fir-tree.

He was so tired that he flopped down upon the nice soft sand on the floor of the rabbit-hole, and shut his eyes. His mother was busy cooking; she wondered what he had done with his clothes. It was the second little jacket and pair of shoes that Peter had lost in a fortnight!

I AM sorry to say that Peter was not very well during the evening.

His mother put him to bed, and made some chamomile tea; and she gave a dose of it to Peter!

"One table-spoonful to be taken at bed-time."

BUT Flops, Mops, and Cotton-tail had bread and milk and blackberries, for supper.

## **Chapter 4 Cinderella**

ONCE there was a gentleman who married, for his second wife, the proudest and most haughty woman that was ever seen. She had, by a former husband, two daughters of her own humor, who were, indeed, exactly like her in all things. He had likewise, by another wife, a young daughter, but of unparalleled goodness and sweetness of temper, which she took from her mother, who was the best creature in the world.

No sooner were the ceremonies of the wedding over but the mother-in-law began to show herself in her true colors. She could not bear the good qualities of this pretty girl, and the less because they made her own daughters appear the more odious. She employed her in the meanest work of the house: she scoured the dishes, tables, etc., and scrubbed madam's chamber, and those of misses, her daughters; she lay up in a sorry garret, upon a wretched straw bed, while her sisters lay in fine rooms, with floors all inlaid, upon beds of the very newest fashion, and where they had looking-glasses so large that they might see themselves at their full length from head to foot.

The poor girl bore all patiently, and dared not tell her father, who would have rattled her off; for his wife governed him entirely. When she had done her work, she used to go into the chimney-corner, and sit down among cinders and ashes, which made her commonly be called Conference; but the youngest, who was not so rude and uncivil as the eldest, called her Cinderella. However, Cinderella, notwithstanding her mean apparel, was a hundred times handsomer than her sisters, though they were always dressed very richly.

It happened that the King's son gave a ball, and invited all persons of fashion to it. Our young misses were also invited, for they cut a very grand figure among the quality. They were mightily delighted at this invitation, and wonderfully busy in choosing out such gowns, petticoats, and head-clothes as might become them. This was a new trouble to Cinderella; for it was she who ironed her sisters' linen, and plaited their ruffles; they talked all day long of nothing but how they should be dressed.

"For my part," said the eldest, "I will wear my red velvet suit with French trimming."

"And I," said the youngest, "shall have my usual petticoat; but then, to make amends for that, I will put on my gold-flowered manteaux, and

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