



Children's Classics

A Collection of Public Domain Stories and Cartoons for Kids

VOLUME 1

Storytelling is one of the most basic ways in which we entertain, share, and communicate with each other. From paintings on a cave wall and recalling legends around a campfire, to reading on your phone on the train and listening to an audiobook while you jog, the technology has changed the the basic idea is the same. Storytelling is particularly appropriate for children, where more complex stories and lessons can be distilled into basic concepts and delivered in fun and engaging ways. The following is a collection of classic children's stories told in a variety of formats, including text, audio, and video.

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Swinging

Swing, swing, swing,
Through the drowsy afternoon;
Swing, swing, swing,
Up I go to meet the moon.
Swing, swing, swing,
I can see as I go high
Far along the crimson sky;
I can see as I come down
The tops of houses in the town;
High and low,
Fast and slow,
Swing, swing, swing.

Swing, swing, swing,
See! the sun is gone away;
Swing, swing, swing,
Gone to make a bright new day.
Swing, swing, swing.
I can see as up I go
The poplars waving to and fro,
I can see as I come down
The lights are twinkling in the town,
High and low,
Fast and slow,
Swing, swing, swing.



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The Rainbow Maker



The children stood under an archway. Behind them was the blue sky; in front of them the clear, still lake that wandered and wound about the garden; above their heads the leaves of a tree whispered and told strange stories to the breeze.

“Poor tree! it is sighing for the blossoms the wind has carried away,” they said to each other, and they looked back at the garden. “And, poor flowers, too,” they said, “all your bright colours are gone, and your petals lie scattered on the ground; to-morrow they will be dead.” “Ah, no,” the flowers sighed, “the rainbow-maker will gather them up, and once more they will see the sun.” Before the children could answer, a tall fair maiden came down the pathway. They could see her plainly in the twilight. Her eyes were dim with gathering tears, but on her lips there was a smile that came and went and flickered round her mouth.

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All down her back hung her pale golden hair; round her neck was a kerchief of many colours; her dress was soft and white, and her snowy apron was gathered up in one hand. She looked neither to the right nor to the left. She did not utter a single word; and the children could hear no sound of her footstep, no rustling from her dress. She stooped, and picking up the fading petals, looked at them tenderly for a moment, while the tears fell slowly down her cheeks; but the smile hovered round her mouth; for she knew that they would shine again in the sight of their beloved sun. When her apron was quite full, she turned round and left the garden. Hand-in-hand the children followed. She went slowly on by the side of the lake, far, far away across the meadows and up the farthest hill, until at last she found her home behind a cloud just opposite the sun. There she sat all through the summer days making rainbows. When the children had watched her for a long long time, they went softly back to their own home. The rainbow-maker had not even seen them.

“Mother,” they said one day, “we know now where the colours go from the flowers. See, they are there,” and as they spoke they thought of the maiden sitting silently at work in her cloud-home. They knew that she was weeping at sending forth her most beautiful one, and yet smiling as she watched the soft archway she had made. “See, they are all there, dear mother,” the children repeated, looking at the falling rain and the shining sun, and pointing to the rainbow that spanned the river.

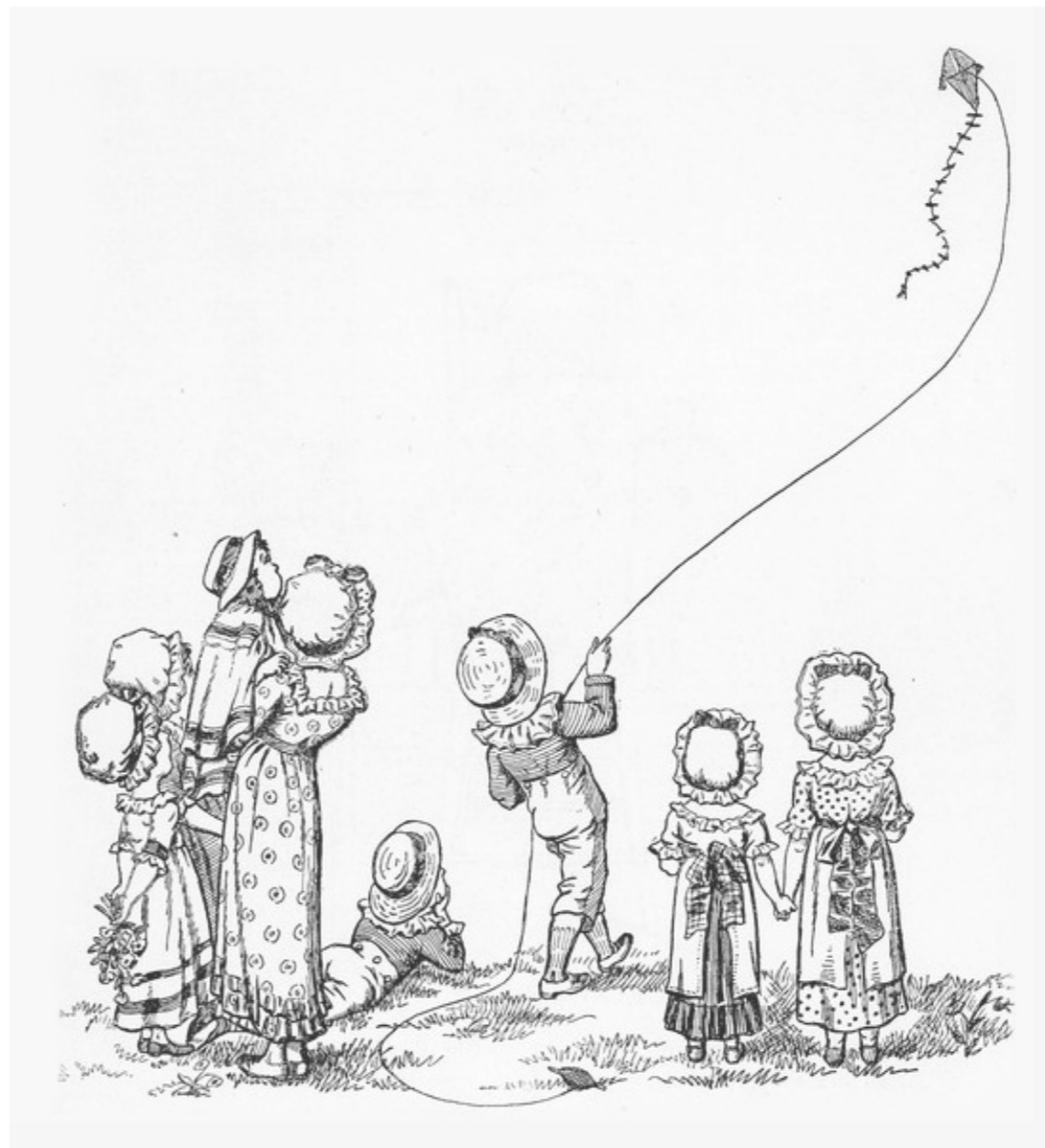
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The Kite

It was the most tiresome kite in the world, always wagging its tail, shaking its ears, breaking its string, sitting down on the tops of houses, getting stuck in trees, entangled in hedges, flopping down on ponds, or lying flat on the grass, and refusing to rise higher than a yard from the ground.



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I have often sat and thought about that kite, and wondered who its father and mother were. Perhaps they were very poor people, just made of newspaper and little bits of common string knotted together, obliged to fly day and night for a living, and never able to give any time to their children or to bring them up properly. It was pretty, for it had a snow-white face, and pink and white ears; and, with these, no one, let alone a kite, could help being pretty. But though the kite was pretty, it was not good, and it did not prosper; it came to a bad end, oh! a terrible end indeed. It stuck itself on a roof one day, a common red roof with a broken chimney and three tiles missing. It stuck itself there, and it would not move; the children tugged and pulled and coaxed and cried, but still it would not move. At last they fetched a ladder, and had nearly reached it when suddenly the kite started and flew away—right away over the field and over the heath, and over the far far woods, and it never came back again—never—never.

Dear, that is all. But I think sometimes that perhaps beyond the dark pines and the roaring sea the kite is flying still, on and on, farther and farther away, for ever and for ever.

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The Swallows

There were some children in the north looking at the swallows flying south. "Why are they going away?" the little one asked.

"The summer is over," the elder sister answered, "and if they stayed here they would be starved and die of cold, and so, when the summer goes, they journey south."



"Our mother and sisters are in the south," the little one said, as they looked after the birds. "Dear little swallows, tell mother that we are watching for her!" But they were already flying over the sea. The chilly winds tried to follow, but the swallows flew so swiftly they were not overtaken; they went on, with the summer always before them. They were tired many a time; once they

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stayed to rest upon the French coast, and once, in the Bay of Biscay, they clung to the rigging of a ship all through the night, but in the morning they went on again.

Far away in the south, two English children were looking from the turret window of an old castle.

“Here are the swallows,” they said; “perhaps they have come from England. Dear swallows, have you brought us a message?” they asked.

“It was very cold, we had no time for messages; [Pg 70] and we must not lose the track of summer,” the swallows twittered, and they flew on till they reached the African shore.

“Poor little swallows,” said the English children, as they watched the ship come into port that was to take them back to their own land; “they have to chase the summer and the sun, but we do not mind whether it is summer or winter, for if we only keep our hearts warm, the rest does not matter.”

“It is very good of the swallows to come to us,” the elder sister said, in the next spring, when she heard their first soft twitter beneath the eaves, “for the summer is in many places, and we are so far from the south.”

“Yes, it is very good of them to come,” the children answered; “dear little swallows, perhaps they love us!”

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The Coming of the King



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Tom and Jerry – Barnyard Bunk



SOURCES:

Very Short Stories and Verses For Children by Mrs. W.K. Clifford

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/30272>

The Coming of the King

<https://librivox.org/childrens-short-works-vol-019-by-various/>

Tom and Jerry, “Barnyard Bunk”

<http://publicdomainmovies.net/movie/tom-and-jerry-barnyard-bunk>