

Classic Tales Unit

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Little Match Girl

Hans Christian Anderson



It was New Year's Eve and dreadfully cold. The snow fell quickly in the darkening light as evening came on. In the cold and the darkness, there walked along the street a poor little girl, **bareheaded** and with no shoes on. When she left home she had slippers on, it is true, but they were much too large for her feet. Her mother had used those slippers till then, but the poor little girl lost them running across the street when two **carriages** were passing quickly by. When she looked for them, one was not to be found, and a boy grabbed the other and ran away with it.

So on the little girl went with her bare feet, that were red and blue with cold. In an old **apron** that she wore she had **bundles** of matches and she also carried a bundle in her hand. No one had bought so much as a bunch all long day and no one had given her even a penny.

Poor little girl! Shivering with cold and hunger she crept along, feeling miserable.

The snowflakes fell on her long hair, which hung in pretty curls about her neck, but she did not think of her beauty or of the cold. Lights shone from every window, and she could smell the beautiful smell of **roast goose** being cooked for New Year's Eve in all the houses. She could not stop thinking about it.

In a corner between two houses, she sat down. She tucked her little feet in underneath herself, but still she grew colder and colder. She did not dare to go home, as she had not sold any matches and could not bring any money. Her father would certainly not be pleased. Besides, it was cold enough at home, as they had only a roof above them that was full of holes.



Where the light fell upon the wall it became transparent.

Now her little hands were nearly frozen with cold. She thought that maybe a match might warm her fingers if she lit it. So at last she drew one out. She struck it and how it blazed and burned! It gave out a warm, bright flame like a little candle, as she held her hands over it. A wonderful little light it was. It really seemed to the little girl as if she sat in front of a great iron stove with a lovely fire inside it. So nicely it burned that the little girl stretched out her feet to warm them. How comfortable she was! But then the flame went out, the stove vanished, and nothing remained but the little burned match in her hand.

She rubbed another match against the wall. It burned brightly, and where the light fell on the wall she could suddenly see right through it into the room. A snow-white cloth was spread upon the table, on which were laid beautiful **china plates**, while a stuffed roast goose cooked away and made a most delicious smell. And what was more **delightful** still, and wonderful, the goose jumped from the dish, with knife and fork still in its breast, and **waddled** along the floor straight towards the little girl.

But the match went out then, and nothing was left to her but the thick, **damp** wall.

She lit another match. And now she was under a most beautiful Christmas tree, larger and far more prettily decorated than the one she had seen through the glass doors at the rich merchant's.

Hundreds of candles were burning on the green branches, and little painted figures, like she had seen in shop windows, looked down on her. The child stretched out her hands to them, but then the match went out.

Still the lights of the Christmas tree burned higher and higher into sky until she saw one fall, forming a long trail of fire.

"Now some one is dying," murmured the child softly, for her grandmother, the person who had loved her the most, and who was now dead, had told her that whenever a star falls a soul goes up to heaven.

She struck yet another match against the wall. It lit and in its brightness her dear old grandmother appeared before her, **beaming** love and kindness.

“Oh, grandmother,” cried the child, “take me with you. I know you will go away when the match burns out. You, too, will vanish, like the warm stove, the splendid New Year’s feast, the beautiful Christmas tree.” And to make sure her grandmother would not disappear, she lit a whole bundle of the matches against the wall.

And they burned with such a brilliant light that it became brighter than the midday sun. Her grandmother had never looked so grand and beautiful. She took the little girl in her arms and both flew joyfully together, climbing higher and higher, far above the earth, away from cold and hunger, to heaven.

They found her the next morning, leaning against the wall, with red cheeks and smiling mouth—frozen to death on the last evening of the old year.

“She wanted to warm herself, the poor little thing,” people said. “I wonder why she looks so happy?” some people asked. No one imagined what beautiful things she had seen, or how happily she had gone with her grandmother into the new year.

Comprehension Questions:

- 1) When and where does this story take place? Describe the setting in detail. (**2 or more**)
- 2) Why is the young girl barefooted? (**1 or more**)
- 3) Describe the weather and how it makes the young girl feel. Be as detailed as possible. (**3 or more**)
- 4) What does the little girl do to warm herself up and why? (**1 or more**)
- 5) Why does the young girl not go home? (**1 or more**)

Vocabulary Extensions:

Complete a vocabulary page for two of the bolded words in the reading that you are unfamiliar with.

Text Connection Activities:

(Pick one of the following)

1. Illustrate the beautiful Christmas tree that appears when the second match is struck.
 2. Write a summary of the story: who, what, when, where, why, how, etc.
 3. Is this story happy or sad? Explain how it makes you feel and what it makes you think about. (10 or more!)
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Little Red Hen

Old English Folktale

Retold by Florence White Williams



Little Red Hen lived in a

barnyard. She spent almost all of

her time walking about the barnyard

in her

picketty-pecketty

fashion,

scratching

everywhere

for

worms.

She dearly loved fat, delicious worms and felt they were absolutely necessary to the health of her children.

As often as she

found a worm

she would call

“Chuck-chuck-chuck!” to her chickies.

When they were gathered about her, she would **distribute** choice morsels of her tid-bit. A busy little body was she!

A cat usually napped lazily in the barn door, not even bothering herself to scare the rat who ran here and there as he pleased.

And as for the pig who lived in the **sty**—he did not care what happened so long as he could eat and grow fat.

One day the Little Red Hen found a Seed. It was a Wheat Seed, but the Little Red Hen was so **accustomed** to bugs and worms that she supposed this to be some new and perhaps very delicious kind of meat. She bit it gently and found that it resembled a worm in no way whatsoever as to taste although because it was long and slender, a Little Red Hen might easily be fooled by its appearance.

Carrying it about, she made many **inquiries** as to what it might be. She found it was a Wheat Seed and that, if planted, it would grow up and when **ripe** it could be made into flour and then into bread.

When she discovered

that, she knew it ought
to be planted. She was
so busy hunting food for
herself and her family
that, naturally, she
thought she ought not
to take time to plant it.

So she thought of the Pig—upon whom time must hang heavily and of the Cat who had nothing to do, and of the great fat Rat with his **idle** hours, and she called loudly:

“Who will plant the Seed?”

But the Pig said, “Not I,”

and the Cat said, “Not I,”

and the Rat said, “Not I.”

“Well, then,” said the Little Red Hen, “I will.”

And she did.

She went on with her daily duties through the long summer days, scratching for worms and feeding her chicks, while

the Pig grew fat,

and the Cat grew fat,

and the Rat grew fat,

and the wheat grew tall and ready for **harvest**.

So one day the Little Red Hen chanced to notice how large the wheat was and that the grain was ripe, so she ran about calling briskly:
“Who will cut the Wheat?”

The Pig said, “Not I,”

the Cat said, “Not I,”

and the Rat said, “Not I.”

“Well, then,”

said the Little Red Hen,

“I will.”

And she did.

She got the **sickle** from among the farmer’s tools in the barn and proceeded to cut off all of the big plant of wheat.

On the ground lay the nicely cut Wheat, ready to be gathered and **threshed**, but the newest and yellowest and **downiest** of Mrs. Hen’s chicks set up a “peep-peep-peeping” in their most vigorous fashion, proclaiming to the world at large, but most particularly to their mother, that she was neglecting them.

Poor Little Red Hen! She felt quite **bewildered** and hardly knew where to turn.

Her attention was sorely divided between her duty to her children and her duty to the Wheat, for which she felt responsible. So, again, in a very hopeful tone, she called out, “Who will thresh the Wheat?”

But the Pig, with a grunt, said, “Not I,”

and the Cat, with a meow, said, “Not I,”

and the Rat, with a squeak, said, “Not I.”

So the Little Red Hen, looking, it must be admitted, rather discouraged, said, “Well, I will, then.”

And she did.

Of course, she had to feed her chickies first, though, and when she had gotten them all to sleep for their afternoon nap, she went out and threshed the wheat. Then she called out: “Who will carry the wheat to the **mill** to be ground?”

Turning their backs with snippy glee,

that Pig said, “Not I,”

and that Cat said, “Not I,”

and that Rat said, “Not I.”

So the good Little Red Hen could do nothing but say, “I will then.”

And she did.

Carrying the sack of Wheat, she **trudged** off to the distant mill. There she ordered the Wheat ground into beautiful white flour. When the miller brought her the flour she walked slowly

back all the way

to her own barnyard

in her own

picketty-pecketty

fashion.

She even managed, in spite of her load, to catch a nice juicy worm now and then and had one left for the babies when she reached them. Those **cunning** little fluff-balls were so glad to see their mother. For the first time, they really appreciated her.

After this really **strenuous** day Mrs. Hen retired to her **slumbers** earlier than usual—indeed, before the colors came into the sky to herald the setting of the sun, her usual bedtime hour.

She would have liked to sleep late in the morning, but her chicks, joining in the morning chorus of the hen yard, drove away all hopes of such a luxury.

Even as she sleepily half opened one eye, the thought came to her that to-day that Wheat must, somehow, be made into bread.

She was not in the habit of making bread, although, of course, anyone can make it if he or she follows the recipe with care, and she knew perfectly well that she could do it if necessary.

So after her children were fed and made sweet and fresh for the day, she hunted up the Pig, the Cat and the Rat. Still confident that they would surely help her some day she sang out, “Who will make the bread?”

Alas for the Little Red Hen! Once more her hopes were dashed! For

the Pig said, “Not I,”

the Cat said, “Not I,”

and the Rat said, “Not I.”

So the Little Red Hen said once more, “I will then,” and she did.

Feeling that she might have known all the time that she would have to do it all herself, she went and put on a fresh apron and spotless

cook's cap. First of all she set the dough, as was proper. When it was time she brought out the **moulding board** and the baking tins, moulded the bread, divided it into loaves, and put them into the oven to bake. All the while the Cat sat lazily by, giggling and chuckling.

And close at hand the **vain** Rat powdered his nose and admired himself in a mirror.

In the distance could be heard the long-drawn snores of the **dozing** Pig.

At last the great moment arrived. A delicious **odor** was wafted upon the autumn breeze. Everywhere the barnyard **citizens** sniffed the air with delight.

The Red Hen **ambled** in her picketty-pecketty way toward the source of all this excitement.

Although she appeared to be perfectly calm, in reality she could only with difficulty restrain an impulse to dance and sing, for had she not done all the work on this wonderful bread?

Small wonder that she was the most excited person in the barnyard! She did not know whether the bread would be fit to eat, but—joy of joys!—when the lovely brown loaves came out of the oven, they were done to perfection.

Then, probably because she had **acquired** the habit, the Red Hen called:

“Who will eat the Bread?”

All the animals in the barnyard were watching hungrily and smacking their lips in **anticipation**, and

the Pig said, “I will,”

the Cat said, “I will,”

the Rat said, "I will."

But the Little Red Hen said,

"No, you won't. I will."

And she did.

Comprehension Questions:

- 1) Describe the Little Red Hen with adjectives. Why kind of character is she and why? (**2 or more**)
- 2) What does the Little Red Hen dearly love, and why? (**2 or more**)
- 3) How does the Wheat Seed change the Little Red Hen's daily life?
- 4) Describe the Pig, Rat, and Cat and defend your descriptions. (**3 or more**)
- 5) What is the moral, or lesson, of the story? (**2 or more**)

Vocabulary Extensions:

Define 3 unknown words from the text and then use them in a sentence.

Text Connection Activities:

(Pick one of the following)

1. Illustrate the Little Red Hen baking the bread.
 2. Describe a time when you felt like the Little Red Hen. Why did you feel that way? What were you doing or trying to do? (**10 or more**)
 3. Do you think people can change? Think about the Pig, Rat, and Cat. Will they now change their ways? Why or why not? (**5 or more**)
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The People Could Fly

By Virginia Hamilton



They say the people could fly. Say that long ago in **Africa**, some of the people knew magic. And they would walk up on the air like climbin' up on a gate. And they flew like blackbirds over the fields. Black, shiny wings flappin' against the blue up there.

Then, many of the people were captured for Slavery. The ones that could fly **shed their wings**. They couldn't take their wings across the water on slave ships. Too crowded, don't you know.

The folks were full of **misery**, then. Got sick with the up and down of the sea. So they forgot about flyin' when they could no longer breathe the sweet scent of Africa.

Say the people who could fly kept their power, although they shed their wings. They looked the same as the other people from Africa

who had been coming over, who had dark skin. Say you couldn't tell anymore one who could fly from one who couldn't.

One such who could was an old man, call him Toby. And standin' tall, yet afraid, was a young woman who once had wings. Call her Sarah. Now Sarah carried a babe tied to her back. She **trembled** to be so hard worked and **scorned**.

The slaves **labored** in the fields from sunup to sundown. The owner of the slaves callin' himself their Master. Say he was a hard lump of clay. A hard, glinty coal. A hard rock pile, wouldn't be moved. His Overseer on horseback pointed out the slaves who were slowin' down. So the one called Driver cracked his whip over the slow ones to make them move faster. That whip was a slice-open cut of pain. So they did move faster. Had to.

Sarah **hoed** and chopped the row as the babe on her back slept. Say the child grew hungry. That babe started up bawling too loud. Sarah couldn't stop to feed it. Couldn't stop to soothe and quiet it down. She let it cry. She didn't want to. She had no heart to croon to it.

"Keep that thing quiet," called the Overseer. He pointed his finger at the babe. The woman **scrunched** low.

The Driver cracked his whip across the babe anyhow. The babe hollered like any hurt child, and the woman fell to the earth.

The old man that was there, Toby, came and helped her to her feet.

"I must go soon," she told him.

"Soon," he said.

Sarah couldn't stand up straight any longer. She was **too** weak. The sun burned her face. The babe cried and cried, "Pity me, oh, pity me," say it sounded like. Sarah was so sad and starvin', she sat down in the row.

“Get up, you black cow,” called the Overseer. He pointed his hand, and the Driver’s whip snarled around Sarah’s legs. Her sack dress tore into rags. Her legs bled onto the earth. She couldn’t get up.

Toby was there when there was no one to help her and the babe.

“Now before it’s too late,” panted Sarah. “Now, Father!”

“Yes, Daughter, the time is come,” Toby answered. Go, as you know how to go!”

He raised his arms, holding them out to her. “*Kum...yali, kum buba tambe,*” and more magic words, said so quickly, they sounded like whispers and sighs.

The young woman lifted one foot on the air. Then the other. She flew clumsily at first, with the child now held tightly in her arms. The she felt the magic, the African mystery. Say she rose just as **free as a bird. As light as a feather.**

The Overseer rode after her, hollerin’. Sarah flew over the fences. She flew over the woods. Tall trees could not snag her. Nor could the Overseer. **She flew like an eagle** now, until she was gone from sight. No one dared speak about it. Couldn’t believe it. But it was, because they that was there saw that it was.

Say the next day was dead hot in the fields. A young man slave fell from the heat. The Driver come and whipped him. Toby come over and spoke words to the fallen one.

The words of ancient Africa once heard are never remembered completely. The young man forgot them as soon as he heard them. They went way inside him. He got up and rolled over on the air. He rode it awhile. And he flew away.

Another and another fell from the heat. Toby was there. He cried out to the fallen and reached his arms out to them. “*Kum kunka yali, kum...tambe!*” Whispers and sighs. And they too rose on the air. They rode the hot breezes. The ones flyin’ were black and shinin’ sticks,

wheelin' above the head of the Overseer. They crossed the rows, the fields, the fences, the streams, and were away.

"Seize the old man!" cried the Overseer. "I heard him say the magic words. Seize him!" The one callin' himself Master come runnin'. The Driver got his ship ready to curl around old Toby and tie him up. The slave owner took his hip gun from its place. He meant to kill old black Toby.

But Toby just laughed. Say he threw back his head and said, "Hee, hee! Don't you know who I am? Don't you know some of us in this field?" He said it to their faces. "We are ones who fly!"

And he sighed the ancient words that were a dark promise. He said them all around to the others in the field under the whip, "...*buba yali...buba tambe...*"

There was a great outcryin'. The bent backs straightened up. Old and young who were called slaves and could fly joined hands. Say like they would ring-sing. But they didn't shuffle in a circle. They didn't sing. They rose on the air. They flew in a flock that was black against the heavenly blue. Black crows or black shadows. It didn't matter, they went so high. Way above the **plantation**, way over the slavery land. Say they flew away to *Freedom*

And the old man, old Toby, flew behind them, takin' care of them. He wasn't cryin'. He wasn't laughin'. He was the **seer**. His gaze fell on the plantation where the slave who could not fly waited. "Take us with you!" Their looks spoke it, but they were afraid to shout it. Toby couldn't take them with him.

Hadn't the time to teach them to fly. They must wait for a chance to run.

"Goodie-bye!" the old man called Toby spoke to them, poor souls! And he was flyin' gone.

So they say. The Overseer told it. The one called Master said it was a lie, a trick of the light. The Driver kept his mouth shut.

The slaves who could not fly told about the people who could fly to their children. When they were free. When they sat close before the fire in the free land, they told it. They did so love firelight and *Freedom*, and tellin’.

They say that the children of the ones who could not fly told their children. And now, me, I have told it to you.
Afterword

Comprehension Questions:

- 1) Why is the old man Toby such an important character? Why is he important to the plot of the story? (**2 or more**)
- 2) How are the slaves treated? Give an example to support your answer. (**3 or more**)
- 3) What happens to Sarah and her babe when it won’t stop crying? (**2 or more**)
- 4) Is this story fiction or non-fiction? How do you know? (**2 or more**)

Vocabulary Extensions:

Look up 3 bolded words from the story and illustrate them.

Text Connection Activities:

(Pick one of the following)

1. Illustrate the slaves flying in the air over the plantation.
 2. If you were a slave like Sarah and Toby and couldn’t fly, how would you escape to *freedom*? (10 or more)
 3. Draw a picture of Africa using a map. Label some important rivers and countries.
-

The Hunting of the Great Bear

-An Iroquois Legend



There were four hunters who were brothers. No hunters were as good as they at following a trail. They never gave up once they began tracking their **quarry**.

One day, in the moon when the cold nights return, an urgent message came to the village of the four hunters. A great bear, one so large and powerful that many thought it must be some kind of monster, had appeared. The people of the village whose hunting grounds the monster had **invaded** were afraid. The children no longer went out to play in the woods. The **longhouses** of the village were guarded each night by men with weapons who stood by the entrances. Each morning, when the people went outside, they found the huge tracks of the bear in the midst of their village. They knew that soon it would become even more bold.

Picking up their spears and calling to their small dog, the four hunters set forth for that village, which was not far away. As they came closer they noticed how quiet the woods were. There were no signs of rabbits or deer and even the birds were silent. On a great pine

tree they found the scars where the great bear had reared up on **hind** legs and made deep scratches to mark its territory. The tallest of the brothers tried to touch the highest of the scratch marks with the tip of his spear. "It is as the people feared," the first brother said. "This one we are to hunt is Nyah-gwahéh, a monster bear."

"But what about the magic that the Nyah-gwahéh has?" said the second brother.

The first brother shook his head. "That magic will do it no good if we find its track."

"That's so," said the third brother. "I have always heard that from the old people. Those creatures can only chase a hunter who has not yet found its trail. When you find the track of the Nyah-gwahéh and begin to chase it, then it must run from you."

"Brothers," said the fourth hunter who was the fattest and laziest, "did we bring along enough food to eat? It may take a long time to catch this big bear. I'm feeling hungry."

Before long, the four hunters and their small dog reached the village. It was a sad sight to see. There was no fire burning in the center of the village and the doors of all the longhouses were closed. Grim men stood on guard with clubs and spears and there was no **game** hung from the racks or skins stretched for tanning. The people looked hungry.

The elder **sachem** of the village came out and the tallest of the four hunters spoke to him.

"Uncle," the hunter said, "we have come to help you get rid of the monster."

Then the fattest and laziest of the four brothers spoke. "Uncle," he said, "is there some food we can eat? Can we find a place to rest before we start chasing this big bear. I'm tired."

The first hunter shook his head and smiled. "My brother is only

joking, Uncle." he said. " We are going now to pick up the monster bear's trail."

"I am not sure you can do that, Nephews," the elder sachem said. "Though we find tracks closer and closer to the doors of our lodges each morning, whenever we try to follow those tracks they disappear."

The second hunter knelt down and patted the head of their small dog. "Uncle," he said, that is because they do not have a dog such as ours." He pointed to the two black circles above the eyes of the small dog. "Four-Eyes can see any tracks, even those many days old."

"May Creator's protection be with you," said the elder sachem.

"Do not worry. Uncle," said the third hunter. "Once we are on a trail we never stop following until we've finished our hunt." "That's why I think we should have something to eat first," said the fourth hunter, but his brothers did not listen. They nodded to the elder sachem and began to leave. Sighing, the fattest and laziest of the brothers lifted up his long spear and **trudged** after them.

They walked, following their little dog. It kept lifting up its head, as if to look around with its four eyes. The trail was not easy to find.

"Brothers," the fattest and laziest hunter complained, "don't you think we should rest. We've been walking a long time." But his brothers paid no attention to him. Though they could see no tracks, they could feel the presence of the Nyah-gwahéh. They knew that if they did not soon find its trail, it would make its way behind them. Then they would be the hunted ones.

The fattest and laziest brother took out his **pemmican** pouch. At least he could eat while they walked along. He opened the pouch and shook out the food he had prepared so carefully by pounding together strips of meat and berries with maple sugar and then drying them in the sun. But instead of pemmican, pale squirming things fell out into his hands. The magic of the Nyah-gwahéh had changed the food into worms.

"Brothers," the fattest and laziest of the hunters shouted, "let's hurry up and catch that big bear! Look what it did to my pemmican. Now I'm getting angry."

Meanwhile, like a pale giant shadow, the Nyah-gwahéh was moving through the trees close to the hunters. Its mouth was open as it watched them and its huge teeth shone, its eyes flashed red. Soon it would be behind them and on their trail.

Just then, though, the little dog lifted its head and yelped. "Eh-heh!" the first brother called.

"Four-Eyes has found the trail," shouted the second brother.

"We have the track of the Nyah-gwahéh," said the third brother.

"Big Bear," the fattest and laziest one yelled, "we are after you, now!"

Comprehension Questions:

- 1) What was the urgent message that came to the hunters? (**1 or more**)
- 2) Why do they compare the great bear to a monster? (**2 or more**)
- 3) What weapon do the hunters use when they are tracking down their quarry? (**1 or more**)
- 4) Describe what the brothers find when they reach the village. (**2 or more**)

Vocabulary Extensions:

Look up a Pemmican Pouch on your iPad. Draw a picture of a pemmican pouch.

Text Connection Activities:

(Pick one of the following)

1. Illustrate Nyah -gwaheh based on the details from the text.
 2. If you were hunting a great bear, what weapons would you use and why? (**5 or more**)
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(Part 2)

Fear filled the heart of the great bear for the first time and it began to run. As it broke from the cover of the pines, the four hunters saw it, a gigantic white shape, so pale as to appear almost naked. With loud hunting cries, they began to run after it. The great bear's **strides** were long and it ran more swiftly than a deer. The four hunters and their little dog were swift also though and they did not fall behind. The trail led through the swamps and the **thickets**. It was easy to read, for the bear pushed everything aside as it ran, even knocking down big trees. On and on they ran, over hills and through valleys. They came to the slope of a mountain and followed the trail higher and higher, every now and then catching a **glimpse** of their quarry over the next rise.

Now though the lazy hunter was getting tired of running. He pretended to fall and twist his ankle.

"Brothers," he called, "I have sprained my ankle. You must carry me."

So his three brothers did as he asked, two of them carrying him by turns while the third hunter carried his spear. They ran more slowly now because of their heavy load, but they were not falling any further behind. The day had turned now into night, yet they could still see the white shape of the great bear ahead of them. They were at the top of the mountain now and the ground beneath them was very dark as they ran across it. The bear was tiring, but so were they. It was not easy to carry their fat and lazy brother. The little dog, Four-Eyes, was close behind the great bear, nipping at its tail as it ran.

"Brothers," said the fattest and laziest one. "put me down now. I think my leg has gotten better."

The brothers did as he asked. Fresh and rested, the fattest and laziest one grabbed his spear and dashed ahead of the others. Just as the great bear turned to bite at the little dog, the fattest and laziest

hunter **leveled** his spear and thrust it into the heart of the Nyah-Gwaheh. The monster bear fell dead.

By the time the other brothers caught up, the fattest and laziest hunter had already built a fire and was cutting up the big bear.

"Come on, brothers," he said. "Let's eat. All this running has made me hungry!"

So they cooked the meat of the great bear and its fat **sizzled** as it dripped from their fire. They ate until even the fattest and laziest one was satisfied and leaned back in **contentment**. Just then, though, the first hunter looked down at his feet.

"Brothers," he exclaimed, "look below us!"

The four hunters looked down. Below them were thousands of small sparkling lights in the darkness which they realized, was all around them.

"We aren't on a mountain top at all," said the third brother. "We are up in the sky." And it was so. The great bear had indeed been magical. Its feet had taken it high above the earth as it tried to escape the four hunters. However, their **determination** not to give up the chase had carried them up that strange trail.

Just then their little dog yipped twice.

"The great bear!" said the second hunter. "Look!"

The hunters looked. There, where they had piled the bones of their feast the Great Bear was coming back to life and rising to its feet. As they watched, it began to run again, the small dog close on its heels.

"Follow me," shouted the first brother. Grabbing up their spears, the four hunters again began to chase the great bear across the skies.

So it was, the old people say, and so it still is. Each autumn the hunters chase the great bear across the skies and kill it. Then, as they

cut it up for their meal, the blood falls down from the heavens and colors the leaves of the maple trees scarlet. They cook the bear and the fat dripping from their fires turns the grass white.

If you look carefully into the skies as the seasons change, you can read that story. The great bear is the square shape some call the bowl of the Big Dipper. The hunters and their small dog (which you can just barely see) are close behind, the dipper's handle. When autumn comes and that constellation turns upside down, the old people say. "Ah, the lazy hunter has killed the bear." But as the moons pass and the sky moves once more towards spring, the bear slowly rises back on its feet and the chase begins again.

Comprehension Questions:

- 1) Why is the dog called Four-Eyes? (**1 or more**)

- 2) How would you describe the lazy brother? Is he good or bad? Why? (**3 or more**)

- 4) What season does the following sentence hint at: "They cook the bear and the fat dripping from their fires turns the grass white." (**1 or more**)

- 5) Why do the brothers believe they can catch the bear when no one else has been successful? Use the text to defend your answer. (**2 or more**)

Vocabulary Extensions:

Look up 3 unknown words from the story and use them in sentences.

Text Connection Activities:

(Pick one of the following)

1. Look up pictures of the Big Dipper on your iPad. Draw an illustration of the constellation.
 2. What is another constellation that you are familiar with? Read about it online and write down two fun facts.
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The Wind in the Willows “The River Bank”

Kenneth Grahame



The Mole had been working very hard all the morning, spring-cleaning his little home. First with brooms, then with dusters; then on ladders and steps and chairs, with a brush and a pail of **whitewash**; till he had dust in his throat and eyes, and splashes of whitewash all over his black fur, and an **aching** back and **weary** arms. Spring was moving in the air above and in the earth below and around him, penetrating even his dark and lowly little house with its spirit of divine **discontent** and longing. It was small wonder, then, that he suddenly flung down his brush on the floor, said 'Bother!' and 'O blow!' and also 'Hang spring-cleaning!' and bolted out of the house without even waiting to put on his coat.

Something up above was calling him **imperiously**, and he made for the steep little tunnel which answered in his case to the **gaveled carriage-drive** owned by animals whose residences are nearer to the sun and air. So he scraped and scratched and scrabbled and scrooged and then he scrooged again and scrabbled and scratched and scraped, working busily with his little paws and muttering to himself, 'Up we

go! Up we go!' till at last, pop! his snout came out into the sunlight, and he found himself rolling in the warm grass of a great **meadow**.

'This is fine!' he said to himself. 'This is better than whitewashing!' The sunshine struck hot on his fur, soft breezes caressed his heated brow, and after the seclusion of the cellarage he had lived in so long the carol of happy birds fell on his dulled hearing almost like a shout. Jumping off all his four legs at once, in the joy of living and the delight of spring without its cleaning, he pursued his way across the meadow till he reached the **hedge** on the further side.

It all seemed too good to be true. Hither and thither through the meadows he rambled busily, along the hedgerows, across the copses, finding everywhere birds building, flowers budding, leaves thrusting—everything happy, and progressive, and occupied. And instead of having an uneasy conscience pricking him and whispering 'whitewash!' he somehow could only feel how jolly it was to be the only idle dog among all these busy citizens. After all, the best part of a holiday is perhaps not so much to be resting yourself, as to see all the other fellows busy working.

He thought his happiness was complete when, as he meandered aimlessly along, suddenly he stood by the edge of a full-fed river. Never in his life had he seen a river before—this sleek, **sinuous**, full-bodied animal, chasing and chuckling, gripping things with a gurgle and leaving them with a laugh, to fling itself on fresh playmates that shook themselves free, and were caught and held again. All was a-shake and a-shiver—glints and gleams and sparkles, rustle and swirl, chatter and bubble. The Mole was bewitched, entranced, fascinated.

By the side of the river he trotted as one trots, when very small, by the side of a man who holds one spell-bound by exciting stories; and when tired at last, he sat on the bank, while the river still chattered on to him, a babbling procession of the best stories in the world, sent from the heart of the earth to be told at last to the insatiable sea. As he sat on the grass and looked across the river, a dark hole in the bank opposite, just above the water's edge, caught his eye, and dreamily he fell to considering what a nice snug dwelling-place it

would make for an animal with few wants and fond of a riverside residence, above flood level and remote from noise and dust.

As he gazed, something bright and small seemed to twinkle down in the heart of it, vanished, then twinkled once more like a tiny star. But it could hardly be a star in such an unlikely situation; and it was too glittering and small for a glow-worm. Then, as he looked, it winked at him, and so declared itself to be an eye; and a small face began gradually to grow up round it, like a frame round a picture.

Comprehension Questions:

- 1) What is Mole doing at the beginning of the story that causes him to get dirty and weary? (**1 or more**)
- 2) How does Mole feel once his snout reaches the sunlight? How do you know? Use evidence from the text. (**3 or more**)
- 3) Make a prediction as to what is living in the dark hole across the bank. Explain your thinking. (**2 or more**)
- 4) Is this story fiction or non-fiction? How do you know? (**2 or more**)

Vocabulary Extensions:

Illustrate a meadow with a discontent, achy mole in the center.

Text Connection Activities:

(Pick one of the following)

1. What are some activities that you can participate in when you are near a flowing river bank? (list 3 or more and describe each activity you list)
 2. Do you enjoy spring cleaning? What are some spring cleaning chores that you do at your house? (10 or more)
-

(Part 2)

A brown little face, with whiskers.

A grave round face, with the same twinkle in its eye that had first attracted his notice.

Small neat ears and thick silky hair.

It was the **Water Rat!**

Then the two animals stood and regarded each other cautiously.

'Hullo, Mole!' said the Water Rat.

'Hullo, Rat!' said the Mole.

'Would you like to come over?' inquired the Rat presently.

'Oh, its all very well to TALK,' said the Mole, rather pettishly, he being new to a river and riverside life and its ways.

The Rat said nothing, but stooped and unfastened a rope and hauled on it; then lightly stepped into a little boat, which the Mole had not observed. It was painted blue outside and white within, and was just the size for two animals; and the Mole's whole heart went out to it at once, even though he did not yet fully understand its uses.

The Rat **sculled** smartly across and made fast. Then he held up his forepaw as the Mole stepped **gingerly** down. 'Lean on that!' he said. 'Now then, step lively!' and the Mole to his surprise and rapture found himself actually seated in the **stern** of a real boat.

'This has been a wonderful day!' said he, as the Rat shoved off and took to the sculls again. 'Do you know, I've never been in a boat before in all my life.'

'What?' cried the Rat, open-mouthed: 'Never been in a—you never—well I—what have you been doing, then?'

'Is it so nice as all that?' asked the Mole shyly, though he was quite prepared to believe it as he leant back in his seat and surveyed the cushions, the oars, the rowlocks, and all the fascinating fittings, and felt the boat sway lightly under him.

'Nice? It's the ONLY thing,' said the Water Rat solemnly, as he leant forward for his stroke. 'Believe me, my young friend, there is NOTHING—absolute nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats. Simply messing,' he went on dreamily: 'messing—about—in—boats; messing—'

'Look ahead, Rat!' cried the Mole suddenly.

It was too late. The boat struck the bank full tilt. The dreamer, the joyous oarsman, lay on his back at the bottom of the boat, his heels in the air.

'—about in boats—or WITH boats,' the Rat went on, picking himself up with a pleasant laugh. 'In or out of 'em, it doesn't matter. Nothing seems really to matter, that's the charm of it. Whether you get away, or whether you don't; whether you arrive at your destination or whether you reach somewhere else, or whether you never get anywhere at all, you're always busy, and you never do anything in particular. Look here! If you've really nothing else on hand this morning, supposing we drop down the river together, and have a long day of it?'

The Mole waggled his toes from sheer happiness, spread his chest with a sigh of full contentment, and leaned back blissfully into the soft cushions. 'WHAT a day I'm having!' he said. 'Let us start at once!' 'Hold hard a minute, then!' said the Rat. He looped the painter through a ring in his landing-stage, climbed up into his hole above, and after a short interval reappeared staggering under a fat, **wicker luncheon-basket**.

'Shove that under your feet,' he observed to the Mole, as he passed it down into the boat. Then he untied the painter and took the sculls again.

'What's inside it?' asked the Mole, wriggling with curiosity.

'There's cold chicken inside it,' replied the Rat briefly; 'cold ham cold beef, pickled **gherkins**, salad, French rolls, sandwiches, potted meat, ginger beer, lemonade, soda, water—'

'O stop, stop,' cried the Mole in excitement: 'This is too much!'

'Do you really think so?' enquired the Rat seriously. 'It's only what I always take on these little **excursions!**'

The Mole never heard a word he was saying. Absorbed in the new life he was entering upon, **intoxicated** with the sparkle, the ripple, the scents and the sounds and the sunlight, he trailed a paw in the water and dreamed long waking dreams. The Water Rat, like the good little fellow he was, sculled steadily on.

'I beg your pardon,' said the Mole, pulling himself together with an effort. 'You must think me very rude; but all this is so new to me. So—this—is—a—River!'

'THE River,' corrected the Rat.

'And you really live by the river? What a jolly life!'

'By it and with it and on it and in it,' said the Rat. 'It's brother and sister to me, and aunts, and company, and food and drink, and (naturally) washing. It's my world, and I don't want any other. What it hasn't got is not worth having, and what it doesn't know is not worth knowing.'

'But isn't it a bit **dull** at times?' the Mole ventured to ask. 'Just you and the river, and no one else to pass a word with?'

'No one else to—well, I mustn't be hard on you,' said the Rat. 'You're new to it, and of course you don't know. The bank is so crowded nowadays that many people are moving away altogether: O no, it isn't what it used to be, at all. **Otters, kingfishers, dabchicks, moorhens,**

all of them about all day long and always wanting you to DO something—as if a fellow had no business of his own to attend to!

'What lies over THERE' asked the Mole, waving a paw towards a background of woodland that darkly framed the water-meadows on one side of the river.

'That? O, that's just the **Wild Wood**,' said the Rat shortly. 'We don't go there very much, we river-bankers.'

'Aren't they—aren't they very NICE people in there?' said the Mole, a trifle nervously.

'W-e-ll,' replied the Rat, 'let me see. The squirrels are all right. AND the rabbits—some of 'em, but rabbits are a mixed lot. And then there's **Badger**, of course. He lives right in the heart of it; wouldn't live anywhere else, either, if you paid him to do it. Dear old Badger! Nobody interferes with HIM. They'd better not,' he added significantly.

'Why, who SHOULD interfere with him?' asked the Mole.

'Well, of course—there—are others,' explained the Rat in a hesitating sort of way.

'Weasels—and stoats—and foxes—and so on. They're all right in a way—I'm very good friends with them—pass the time of day when we meet, and all that—but they break out sometimes, there's no denying it, and then—well, you can't really trust them, and that's the fact.'

'And beyond the Wild Wood again?' he asked: 'Where it's all blue and dim, and one sees what may be hills or perhaps they mayn't, and something like the smoke of towns, or is it only cloud-drift?'

'Beyond the Wild Wood comes the Wide World,' said the Rat. 'And that's something that doesn't matter, either to you or me. I've never been there, and I'm never going, nor you either, if you've got any sense at all. Don't ever refer to it again, please. Now then! Here's our **backwater** at last, where we're going to lunch.'

Leaving the main stream, they now passed into what seemed at first sight like a little land-locked lake. Green turf sloped down to either edge, brown snaky tree-roots gleamed below the surface of the quiet water, while ahead of them the silvery shoulder and foamy tumble of a weir, arm-in-arm with a restless dripping mill-wheel, that held up in its turn a grey-gabled mill-house, filled the air with a soothing murmur of sound, dull and smothery, yet with little clear voices speaking up cheerfully out of it at intervals. It was so very beautiful that the Mole could only hold up both forepaws and gasp, 'O my! O my! O my! O my!'

Comprehension Questions:

- 1) Why does Mole ask Water Rat so many questions? (**1 or more**)
- 2) Is Water Rat proud of his home? Why or why not? Use text evidence to defend your answer. (**3 or more**)
- 3) Which animals in the Wild Wood cannot be trusted? (**1 or more**)
- 4) What are some of the items that Water Rat packed in the wicker picnic basket? (**1 or more**)

Vocabulary Extensions:

Pick two of the following words to look up and define. Then, use the words in a sentence: stern, dull, excursions, wicker basket.

Text Connection Activities:

(Pick one of the following)

1. Reread the description of Water Rat's boat and draw and illustration of the boat on the river.
 2. The Wild Wood sounds like an interesting place. Write about an interesting place that you have visited in your life. (10 or more)
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(Part Three)

The Rat brought the boat alongside the bank, made her fast, helped the still awkward Mole safely ashore, and swung out the luncheon-

basket. The Mole begged as a favor to be allowed to unpack it all by himself; and the Rat was very pleased to **indulge** him, and to sprawl at full length on the grass and rest, while his excited friend shook out the table-cloth and spread it, took out all the mysterious packets one by one and arranged their contents in due order, still gasping, 'O my! O my!' at each item. When all was ready, the Rat said, 'Now, pitch in, old fellow!' and the Mole was indeed very glad to obey, for he had started his spring-cleaning at a very early hour that morning, as people WILL do, and had not paused for bite or sup; and he had been through a very great deal since that distant time which now seemed so many days ago.

'What are you looking at?' said the Rat presently, when the edge of their hunger was somewhat dulled, and the Mole's eyes were able to wander off the table-cloth a little.

'I am looking,' said the Mole, 'at a streak of bubbles that I see traveling along the surface of the water. That is a thing that strikes me as funny.'

'Bubbles? Oho!' said the Rat, and chirruped cheerily in an inviting sort of way.

A broad glistening muzzle showed itself above the edge of the bank, and the Otter hauled himself out and shook the water from his coat.

'Why didn't you invite me, Ratty?' asked Otter.

'This was an **impromptu** affair,' explained the Rat. 'By the way—my friend Mr. Mole.'

'Proud, I'm sure,' said the Otter, and the two animals were friends forthwith.

'Such a rumpus everywhere!' continued the Otter. 'All the world seems out on the river to-day. I came up this backwater to try and get a moment's peace, and then stumble upon you fellows!'

There was a rustle behind them, proceeding from a hedge wherein last year's leaves still clung thick, and a stripy head, with high shoulders behind it, peered forth on them.

'Come on, old Badger!' shouted the Rat.

The Badger trotted forward a pace or two; then grunted, 'H'm! Company,' and turned his back and disappeared from view.

'That's JUST the sort of fellow he is!' observed the disappointed Rat. 'Simply hates Society! Now we shan't see any more of him to-day. Well, tell us, WHO'S out on the river?'

'Toad's out, for one,' replied the Otter. 'In his brand-new **wager-boat**; new togs, new everything!'

The two animals looked at each other and laughed.

'Once, it was nothing but sailing,' said the Rat, 'Then he tired of that and took to punting. Nothing would please him but to punt all day and every day, and a nice mess he made of it. Last year it was house-boating, and we all had to go and stay with him in his house-boat, and pretend we liked it. He was going to spend the rest of his life in a house-boat. It's all the same, whatever he takes up; he gets tired of it, and starts on something fresh.'

'Such a good fellow, too,' remarked the Otter reflectively: 'But no stability—especially in a boat!'

From where they sat they could get a glimpse of the main stream across the island that separated them; and just then a wager-boat flashed into view, the rower—a short, stout figure—splashing badly and rolling a good deal, but working his hardest. The Rat stood up and hailed him, but Toad—for it was he—shook his head and settled sternly to his work.

'He'll be out of the boat in a minute if he rolls like that,' said the Rat, sitting down again.

'Of course he will,' chuckled the Otter. 'Did I ever tell you that good story about Toad and the lock-keeper? It happened this way. Toad....'

A May-fly swerved unsteadily following the current. A swirl of water and a 'cloop!' and the May-fly was visible no more.

Neither was the Otter.

The Mole looked down. The voice was still in his ears, but the **turf** whereon he had sprawled was clearly **vacant**. Not an Otter to be seen, as far as the distant horizon.

But again there was a streak of bubbles on the surface of the river.

'Well, well,' said the Rat, 'I suppose we ought to be moving. I wonder which of us had better pack the luncheon-basket?' He did not speak as if he was frightfully eager for the treat.

'O, please let me,' said the Mole. So, of course, the Rat let him.

Packing the basket was not quite such pleasant work as unpacking' the basket. It never is. But the Mole was bent on enjoying everything, and although just when he had got the basket packed and strapped up tightly he saw a plate staring up at him from the grass, and when the job had been done again the Rat pointed out a fork which anybody ought to have seen, and last of all, behold! the mustard pot, which he had been sitting on without knowing it—still, somehow, the thing got finished at last, without much loss of temper.

The afternoon sun was getting low as the Rat sculled gently homewards in a dreamy mood, murmuring poetry-things over to himself, and not paying much attention to Mole. But the Mole was very full of lunch, and self-satisfaction, and pride, and already quite at home in a boat (so he thought) and was getting a bit restless besides: and presently he said, 'Ratty! Please, I want to row, now!'

The Rat shook his head with a smile. 'Not yet, my young friend,' he said—'wait till you've had a few lessons. It's not so easy as it looks.'

The Mole was quiet for a minute or two. But he began to feel more and more jealous of Rat, sculling so strongly and so easily along, and his pride began to whisper that he could do it every bit as well. He jumped up and seized the sculls, so suddenly, that the Rat, who was gazing out over the water and saying more poetry-things to himself, was taken by surprise and fell backwards off his seat with his legs in the air for the second time, while the triumphant Mole took his place and grabbed the sculls with entire confidence.

'Stop it, you SILLY mole!' cried the Rat, from the bottom of the boat. 'You can't do it! You'll have us over!'

The Mole flung his sculls back with a flourish, and made a great dig at the water. He missed the surface altogether, his legs flew up above his head, and he found himself lying on the top of Rat. Greatly alarmed, he made a grab at the side of the boat, and the next moment—
Sploosh!

Over went the boat, and he found himself struggling in the river. O my, how cold the water was, and O, how VERY wet it felt. How it sang in his ears as he went down, down, down! How bright and welcome the sun looked as he rose to the surface coughing and spluttering! How black was his despair when he felt himself sinking again! Then a firm paw gripped him by the back of his neck. It was the Rat, and he was evidently laughing—the Mole could FEEL him laughing.

The Rat got hold of a scull and shoved it under the Mole's arm; then he did the same by the other side of him and, swimming behind, propelled the helpless animal to shore, hauled him out, and set him down on the bank, a squashy, pulpy lump of misery.

When the Rat had rubbed him down a bit, and wrung some of the wet out of him, he said, 'Now, then, old fellow! Trot up and down the towing-path as hard as you can, till you're warm and dry again, while I dive for the luncheon-basket.'

So the **dismal** Mole, wet without and ashamed within, trotted about till he was fairly dry, while the Rat plunged into the water again,

recovered the boat, righted her and made her fast, fetched his floating property to shore by degrees, and finally dived successfully for the luncheon-basket and struggled to land with it.

When all was ready for a start once more, the Mole, limp and dejected, took his seat in the stern of the boat; and as they set off, he said in a low voice, broken with emotion, 'Ratty, my generous friend! I am very sorry indeed for my foolish and ungrateful conduct. My heart quite fails me when I think how I might have lost that beautiful luncheon-basket. Will you overlook it this once and forgive me, and let things go on as before?'

'That's all right, bless you!' responded the Rat cheerily. 'What's a little wet to a Water Rat? I'm more in the water than out of it most days. Don't you think any more about it; and, look here! I really think you had better come and stop with me for a little time. It's very plain and rough, you know—not like Toad's house at all—but you haven't seen that yet; still, I can make you comfortable. And I'll teach you to row, and to swim, and you'll soon be as handy on the water as any of us.'

The Mole was so touched by his kind manner of speaking that he could find no voice to answer him; and he had to brush away a tear or two with the back of his paw. But the Rat kindly looked in another direction, and presently the Mole's spirits revived again.

When they got home, the Rat made a bright fire in the **parlour**, and planted the Mole in an arm-chair in front of it, having fetched down a dressing-gown and slippers for him, and told him river stories till supper-time. Very thrilling stories they were, too, to an earth-dwelling animal like Mole. Supper was a most cheerful meal; but very shortly afterwards a terribly sleepy Mole had to be escorted upstairs by his **considerate** host, to the best bedroom, where he soon laid his head on his pillow in great peace and contentment, knowing that his new-found friend the River was lapping the sill of his window.

This day was only the first of many similar ones for the Mole, each of them longer and full of interest as the ripening summer moved onward. He learnt to swim and to row, and entered into the joy of running water.

Comprehension Questions:

- 1) What does Mole do that causes the boat to sink? Why did he do it?
(**2 or more**)
- 2) Is Water Rat a good or a bad friend? Explain your thinking using examples from the text. (**3 or more**)
- 3) Where is the setting at the end of the story? (**1 or more**)

Vocabulary Extensions:

What is a synonym for *dismal*?

Text Connection Activities:

(Pick one of the following)

1. Describe a time when your friends forgave you for doing something selfish. (10 or more)
 2. Would you rather live in the Wild Wood, away from society or on the River Bank with lots of animals? Explain your reasoning. (10 or more)
-