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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Little Gray Pony

There was once a man who owned a little gray pony. Every morning when the dewdrops were still hanging on the pink clover in the meadows, and the birds were singing their morning song, the man would jump on his pony and ride away, clippety, clippety, clap!

The pony's four small hoofs played the jolliest tune on the smooth pike road, the pony's head was always high in the air, and the pony's two little ears were always pricked up; for he was a merry gray pony, and loved to go clippety, clippety, clap!

The man rode to town and to country, to church and to market, up hill and down hill; and one day he heard something fall with a clang on a stone in the road. Looking back, he saw a horseshoe lying there. And when he saw it, he cried out:—

"What shall I do? What shall I do?

If my little gray pony has lost a shoe?"

Then down he jumped, in a great hurry, and looked at one of the pony's fore-feet; but nothing was wrong. He lifted the other forefoot, but the shoe was still there. He examined one of the hindfeet, and began to think that he was mistaken; but when he looked at the last foot, he cried again:—

"What shall I do? What shall I do?

My little gray pony has lost a shoe!"

Then he made haste to go to the blacksmith; and when he saw the smith, he called out to him:—

"Blacksmith! Blacksmith! I've come to you;
My little gray pony has lost a shoe!"

But the blacksmith answered and said:—

"How can I shoe your pony's feet,
Without some coal the iron to heat?"

The man was downcast when he heard this; but he left his little gray pony in the blacksmith's care, while he hurried here and there to buy the coal.

First of all he went to the store;
and when he got there, he said:

—

"Storekeeper! Storekeeper! I've
come to you;

My little gray pony has lost a
shoe!

And I want some coal the iron
to heat,

That the blacksmith may shoe
my pony's feet."

But the storekeeper answered and said:—

"Now, I have apples and candy to sell,

And more nice things than I can tell;

But I've no coal the iron to heat,

That the blacksmith may shoe your pony's feet."

Then the man went away sighing, and saying:—

"What shall I do? What shall I do?

My little gray pony has lost a shoe!"



By and by he met a farmer coming to town with a wagon full of good things; and he said:—
"Farmer! Farmer! I've come to you;
My little gray pony has lost a shoe!
And I want some coal the iron to heat,
That the blacksmith may shoe my pony's feet."
Then the farmer answered the man and said:—
"I've bushels of corn and hay and wheat
Something for you and your pony to eat;
But I've no coal the iron to heat,
That the blacksmith may shoe your pony's feet."
So the farmer drove away and left the man standing in the road, sighing and saying:—
"What shall I do? What shall I do?
My little gray pony has lost a shoe!"



In the farmer's wagon, full of good things, he saw corn, which made him think of the mill; so he hastened there, and called to the dusty miller:

—
"Miller! Miller! I've come to you;
My little gray pony has lost a shoe,
And I want some coal the iron to heat,
That the blacksmith may shoe my pony's feet."

The miller came to the door in surprise; and when he heard what was needed, he said:

—

"I have wheels that go round and round,
And stones to turn till the grain is ground,
But I've no coal the iron to heat,
That the blacksmith may shoe your pony's feet."

Then the man turned away sorrowfully and sat down on a rock near the roadside, sighing and saying:—

"What shall I do? What shall I do?
My little gray pony has lost a shoe!"

After a while a very old woman came down the road, driving a flock of geese to market; and when she came near the man, she stopped to ask him his trouble. He told her all about it; and when she had heard it all, she laughed till her geese joined in with a cackle; and she said:—

"If you would know where the coal is found,
You must go to the miner, who works in the ground."
Then the man sprang to his feet, and, thanking the old woman, he ran to the miner. Now the miner had been working many a long day down in the mine, under the ground, where it was so dark that he had to wear a lamp on the front of his cap to light him at his work! He had plenty of black coal ready and gave great lumps of it to the man, who took them in haste to the blacksmith.

The blacksmith lighted his great red fire, and hammered out four fine new shoes, with a cling! and a clang! and fastened them on with a rap! and a tap! Then away rode the man on his little gray pony,—clippety, clippety, clap!