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Dick Whittington And His Cat

Unknown writer

At the time of King Edward The Third there lived a poor orphan boy in a country village far away from London. His name was Dick Whittington. His biggest wish was to go to London. One day a big chariot drove through the village. Dick heard that the chariot was on its way to London and asked the coachman if he could walk beside the chariot. The coachman looked at the poor boy and felt pity. 'Walk along,' his answer was.



And that's how Dick arrived in London. Without shelter and starving he took a seat in front of the door of a rich merchant, named Fitzwarren. When the chef saw him lying there, she yelled: 'Get away you lazy boy!' But at that moment lord Fitzwarren arrived home. He saw poor Dick lying there and asked him in a kind voice: 'Boy, why are you lying there?'



'I don't have a job, I don't have a home and I don't have any food,' answered Dick. 'Then you will come work for me in the kitchen,' said lord Fitzwarren. The chef had a bad temper and was mean to Dick everyday.



The lackey on the other hand was a very kind man. He taught Dick how to read and write. Sometimes he would give Dick half a nickel.

Alice, the daughter of Fitzwarren, also lived in the house. Alice was very sweet, but also a bit clumsy. Lord Fitzwarren asked Dick to keep a little eye on her. Alice was very happy with Dick's help. She lost her purse, but Dick found it and brought it back. She accidentally let her parrot escape, but Dick caught it.

Dick was allowed to sleep in the attic and got a bed. But there were many rats and mice. They crawled over his face and in his sheets. He was saving his nickels to buy a cat. The cat chased away the rats and mice. Dick could finally sleep peacefully.



One day Fitzwarren gathered everyone from the house together. A lot of money could be earned with ship trade. Everybody who wanted a share from the trade could put in some money. Only Dick didn't have any money. So Alice gave her father some coins. 'For Dick,' she said. But Fitzwarren didn't think it was sufficient. Dick had to give something of his own. 'Give the cat,' said Fitzwarren.

With tears in his eyes, Dick gave the cat to the captain of the ship.



That morning Dick wanted to leave the house. He was sick of the mean streak of the chef. Now that he was missing his cat so badly, she seemed to tease him even more.

So he walked in the morning all the way to the London borough Highgate. There he sat down on a stone, who people to this day call 'the stone of Whittington'. He thought he heard the church bells of the Bow Church. They said: 'Return, Whittington! Return and become Lord of London!'

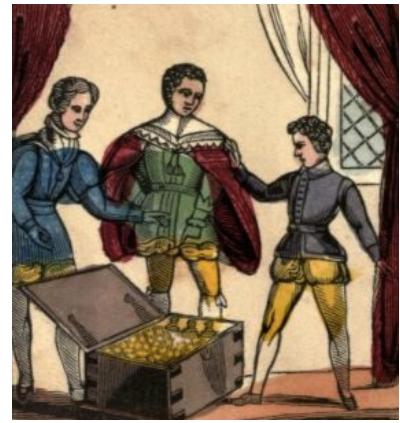


This caused Dick's return home. In the meantime the ship had been at sea for a very long time and arrived at the coast of Barbary. The people were very friendly. The crew of the ship was invited for a feast with the king and queen. The most delicious meals were brought to the table. But as soon as the food arrived, it was eaten by rats and mice.

'Doesn't that bother you?', the captain asked the royal pair. 'It surely does,' answered the king. 'But there's nothing I can do.' 'Let me solve your problem,' said the captain. 'I will bring you my cat. It will chase the rats and mice away.' 'If you can solve this problem, I will be very grateful. I shall load your ship with gold,' promised the queen. The cat was brought in and the mice and rats quickly sped away.



The ship went back to the harbor of London loaded with gold and other valuables. The captain visited Lord Fitzwarren and told him how the cat had caused for the big fortune. The biggest part of the fortune was meant for Dick. Dick put on new clothes and cut his hair and he looked very attractive. He wanted to marry Alice. With his fortune he could take good care of her and lavish her with beautiful gifts.



Shortly after the wedding was celebrated grandly, the most important people of London were in attendance. And just like that Dick Whittington became Lord and mayor of London. Whittington donated a big portion of his wealth to the city. With his money a church was built, a new ward in the hospital for single mothers was opened and the library was set up. He also arranged for shelter for students in his own house.

Lord Whittington and Alice had several children and lived happily ever after.

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