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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Lazy Jerry Fox

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Jerry Fox was a young fellow, and he should have been willing to work, for he was strong and big. But Jerry Fox was lazy, and he slept most of the day and night-time as well until one day his mother and father thought it was time to make their son shift for himself.

"He will never amount to anything if we keep on feeding him," said old Mr. Fox. "I am not sure we have not already spoiled him."

"But what will he do?" asked Mrs. Fox. "He will never work, and I am afraid he will starve."

"No, he will not starve; when he gets good and hungry, he will hunt for his food just like all other young, lazy fellows," said Mr. Fox.

So they told Jerry Fox they were tired of supporting him in his laziness and that right off, now, they were going to stop.

"No breakfast for you," said his father, "unless you get up and hunt for it."

Jerry Fox opened his eyes wide; he could scarcely believe his ears. Had he really got to work like his father and mother and go out nights and hunt?

Jerry Fox liked to look at pictures, and somewhere he had seen a picture of a blind and lame man who sat on the ground and held out his hat for money, and the passers-by dropped pennies.

"I know what I will do," said Jerry Fox, getting out of bed. "I'll just play lame and blind and get rich, and I'll show father and mother I do not have to stoop to work."

It did not take Jerry Fox long to tie a cloth over his eyes and tie up one foot and limp off, leaning on a cane.

Of course, he had to go into another woods, for everyone in the woods about him knew just how lazy Jerry Fox was, and would laugh at him when they saw him rigged out in this way.

By and by, he came to a strange place, and down he sat and began to whine: "Please give me a penny; I am blind and lame. Please pity me and help a poor orphan."



One by one, the wood animals came out and looked at Jerry sitting on the ground, but not one offered to give him a penny. Jerry was growing very hungry, so he decided to ask for food instead of money and began to whine, "Please pity a poor, blind, hungry fellow and give him some food."

The wood animals this time hurried off home and returned with all sorts of food, and soon not only his hat was filled, but he had a basket of food as well. But the food they brought did not please Jerry Fox, and as soon as the wood animals were gone, he began to growl: "I don't like this kind of stuff. Why didn't they give me fat ducks and chicken and plum cake and custard pie? This old bread and stuff are only fit for the pigs."

Then Jerry Fox got up, and, forgetting his lameness, he ran over to a rock and threw all the food that had been given him behind it.

"I'll try again," he said. "I know someone must give me pennies." Jerry heard someone coming. "Please pity the blind and lame," he whined, "and give me a few pennies to buy food with."

But no one came along, and Jerry looked all around, for he had two little holes in the cloth over his eyes to peek through.

Of course, he did not look up over his head in the tree under which he was sitting. If he had, he would have seen old Mr. Owl looking at him.

Mr. Owl could not see very plainly in the daytime, but it was not so bright in the woods but that he could see Jerry. "I don't believe that fellow is blind or lame, either," said old Mr. Owl after he had watched Jerry Fox awhile.

After a while, Jerry grew so hungry that he decided he would eat some of the bread he threw behind the rock.

Up he jumped and pulled off the cloth that covered his eyes, and ran over to the rock.

"There is something strange here," said wise old Mr. Owl. "I'll just fly over to my friend, Mr. Bear, and see what he thinks about it."

Mr. Bear said he gave the poor beggar some bread and that all the wood animals did also, and then old Mr. Owl told him what he had seen and heard.

"We can soon find out," said Mr. Owl, "if you will take a nice fat hen over there and let it run down the path where the fellow is sitting."

So all the wood animals were told about the trick, and pretty soon Jerry Fox heard someone coming and began to cry, "Please pity the blind and lame and give me a few pennies to buy food with."

But instead of some of the wood animals, as Jerry expected would come along, he saw through the little peephole in the bandage a nice fat hen scratching among the leaves and sticks.

Jerry dropped his hat and sat up; he pulled off the bandage that covered his eyes, and the next second, he jumped to his feet and ran after the hen.

For the next minute or two, Jerry Fox thought all the animals in the world were after him. Out from behind the bushes, they came and rescued Mr. Bear's fat hen. Then with stones and sticks, they ran after Jerry Fox and drove him out of their woods and told him if he ever came there again, they would make him really lame.

Jerry did not stop running until he reached home. He was tired out and hungry, but he knew it was no use to go into his father's house, so he crept into a hole in the hill not far off and went to sleep.

When he awoke, it was moonlight, and Jerry knew he must get to work or starve. The beggar trick did not prove to be worth anything, and off he trotted over the hill to the farms on the other side, knowing that he must work if he would live, and Jerry Fox wanted to live very much indeed.

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