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Little Bo-Peep

Joseph Martin Kronheim

"Little Bo-Peep has lost her sheep, and doesn't know where to find them. Leave them alone and they'll come home, wagging their tails behind them."

So goes the nursery rhyme of Bo-Peep.

Little Bo-Peep was a very nice little girl. Her cheeks shone like beautiful peaches, and her voice sounded as sweet as a silver bell. But although Little Bo-Peep was a good and beautiful girl, she sometimes suffered setbacks that made her very sad. One time, when she lost her sheep, she was indeed very sad.

This is how it happened:

One summer evening, as the sun was setting, Little Bo-Peep, who always had to get up very early in the morning, felt tired and sat down on a bench covered with daisies. Because she was very tired, she soon fell asleep.

Now, the "Bellwether," the leader of Bo-Peep's flock of sheep, was a foolish and stubborn sheep. I assume you know that all sheep will always follow the Bellwether, he is the leader of the flock and he always wears a bell around his neck.



It was very unfortunate, but Bo-Peep's Bellwether was very wild. He especially felt like wandering far into the woods. The rest of the sheep would of course follow him into the woods. When he saw that Little Bo-Peep had fallen asleep, the sheep started to frolic. He stood on his hind legs and made a big bow to his own shadow on the grass. Then he spun around like a top, constantly shaking his head and ringing his bell.

Soon, the rest of the flock also started to dance and frolic. After doing this for a while, they jumped into the woods after their leader. They wandered through the woods until they were quite tired. Then they stopped and looked, with a stupid expression on their faces, at their leader. But the Bellwether acted foolish, he just shook his head and rang his bell. The bell seemed to say: "You are lost, you are lost."

When Little Bo-Peep woke up, she noticed that her sheep were gone. Although she was so sad that she didn't know what to do, she kept walking further and

further into the woods. Along the way, she met people who were working with hoes and rakes. She asked them if they had seen her sheep. But the people laughed at her and said, "No, of course not." One man even got very angry and threatened to hit her.

Finally, she came to a pole on which an old Raven sat. He looked very wise, so Little Bo-Peep asked him if he had perhaps seen a flock of sheep. But he just shouted, "Caw, caw!"

So Bo-Peep continued her journey through the fields. She wandered through the land until evening fell and felt weak from hunger. She was very happy when she saw a light in the distance. As she walked on, she saw that the light shone from a window of a little house. But when she came to the door, it looked so dark and somber that she was actually afraid to go inside. She was about to leave again when an angry-looking old woman came out and dragged her into the house. She put the girl next to her son. The boy was very ugly with a large red face and red hair. The old woman told him that she had brought Bo-Peep for him so that she could become his wife. But Bo-Peep didn't like the boy at all and quickly ran away when the mother and son were sleeping.

But she didn't know where to go anymore and had almost given up hope of ever finding her flock of sheep when she heard something calling out from the tree above her: "Tuwit, tuwit, tuwoo, tuwoo".

It was a big owl, who, when he saw her, began flapping his wings with joy. At first, Bo-Peep was scared, but the owl seemed very friendly, so she followed him. He brought her to a little cottage where there was plenty of food and drink. Then, to her great surprise, he began to speak and told her his story:

"You must know, dear girl," said the owl, "that I am the daughter of a king and that I was actually a lovely princess. But I was turned into an owl by the old woman in the cottage because I refused to marry her ugly son.

I overheard the fairies say that one day a lovely girl would come to the forest looking for her sheep. She would help me regain my true form, and then I would become a princess again. You are that lovely girl, and I will take you to the place where you will find your sheep. But they have no tails. The elves will play with them tonight, but in the morning, each sheep will have its tail back, except for the foolish leader. You must swing his tail over my head three times, and then I will become a princess again."

The owl flew away and led Bo-Peep into the forest, saying, "You go to sleep, dear girl. I will watch over you." She couldn't say how long she slept, but suddenly the enchanted place was illuminated. The fairy queen was sitting on a bench and said that the sheep should be punished for running away. Then Bo-Peep saw all her sheep coming to the enchanted place. Each sheep had an elf sitting on its

back holding a sheep's tail in its hand.

After the elves had ridden around on the sheep for a while and had a lot of fun with them, the foolish game stopped. Each elf attached the tail back to the sheep, except for the leader's tail, which they hid in a tree.

When Bo-Peep woke up, she saw the owl flapping his wings again as if to remind her of her promise. So she took the tail out of the tree and swung it over the owl's head three times. Then the most beautiful princess you've ever seen appeared. The princess gave Bo-Peep a beautiful cottage, and the sheep never ran away from their kind owner again.

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