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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Little Tommy Tittlemouse

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Little Tommy Tittlemouse sat by the fire one evening saying:

“Three times seven, I cannot see
Why you always puzzle me.”

As he looked into the grate he saw a red flame curl up, and up, and soon a Funny Fairy dressed in red and white jumped up on one of the logs and cried:

“You’re never going to pass your grade,
If you keep on like this, I am afraid.”

Tommy was just going to answer when the Funny Fairy jumped out of the fire and called:

“Number Fairy bright and airy,
By fire-light, come out to-night.”

Then, the Number Fairy came whisk! bound, out of the fire. She wore a black dress with white numbers upon it.

The numbers they went from her head to her toes
She was very learned as you may well suppose.

She shook her finger at Tommy and cried:

“To learn the three’s you’re surely able,
Come and recite the entire table.”

Tommy stood on one foot and then on the other, and could not get farther than “three times four,” to save his life.



The Funny Fairy felt sorry for him so he cried:

“Reader Fairy, bright and airy,
By fire-light, come out to-night.”

The Reader Fairy came out with a hop, skip and bound. She had words printed all over her coat. She bowed to Tommy and said of him:

“This little mortal reads like a fairy,
He can even read a dictionary.”

Tommy was pleased you may be sure, for he was the best reader in his class.

The Funny Fairy called next:

“Writing Fairy, bright and airy,
By fire-light, come out to-night.”

The Writing Fairy came out with letters all over him, whistling and singing:

“He has the neatest copy-book,
In the school-room, come and look.”

Tommy knew that he did write neatly. The Funny Fairy said:

“Be it fancy, fact, or fable,
He must really learn his table.”

Then the most surprising thing happened.

The Number Fairy took his hand and ran with him out of the house, away, away, away, to Number Land.

They met funny little Fairies everywhere with numbers all over them.

Four little Number Fairies offered him the cutest cookies with sugar upon them saying:

“Two cakes and two cakes, answer quick,
Ho, ho, do you know your arithmetic?”

Tommy shook his head and passed sadly by the cakes, but in a minute the Number Fairies offered him bananas, saying:

“Three times seven is quite a trick,
Can you do it by arithmetic?”

Tommy could not answer, so they went hurrying by.

Next he was offered some rosy red apples and the Fairies said:

“Why can’t you answer up this season,
Will you really tell the reason?”

Tommy replied:

“I really never do seem able,
To get on with the ‘three times’ table.”

Then the Number Fairies set up a shout and cried:

“This little boy would like to please,
So we will help him count by 3’s.”

The Fairies jumped about and formed a ring round him, shouting:

“Three, six, nine,
That is fine,
Twelve, fifteen, eighteen,
Time to be unseen!”

Then they began to sing the table to a little fairy tune and Tommy joined them.

Now, the most wonderful part of the most wonderful part of the story is yet to come.

In rolled a big, round table, and three times three chairs.

The fairies and Tommy sat down.

In the center of a table was a wee fairy, with a figure three on her cap. She

waved her wand at each Fairy, and Tommy in turn, and called for, "3 times 3" and "3 times 6" and "3 times 11."

Each time when any one answered correctly, down floated a plate of Fairy food smoking hot.

To the surprise of all, Tommy cried:

"Three times seven is twenty-one,
Really I do call this fun."

Just as he was putting his fork into his plate a great cry arose.

"Your table now you understand,
But you cannot eat in Fairyland!"

In less than a twinkling of an eye he was whisked back home, and was sitting by the fire, but the Funny Fairy sat beside him, saying:

"If you had tasted Fairy food,
To come back home you never could,
To learn your numbers you are able,
By aid of a little Fairy table."

Then the Funny Fairy cut out many circles, and put a number in the center of each one. He put numbers all round the circles, too. Whenever Tommy multiplied any number in the outside of the circle by the number in the center, down on the circle floated a plate of fairy food, but he was never quick enough to catch it to eat.

He said:

"The tables seem so real to me,
I'll learn more quickly now you see."

By and by he fell asleep by the fire, and the Funny Fairy went back into the grate and sat on a log singing:

"To study now he's learned the trick,
He'll soon be bright in arithmetic."

Next day Tommy knew the "threes," and soon he learned all the tables. He said:

"I love funny things and fables,
I learned numbers by fairy tables."

The Funny Fairy seemed to be around often. He sang:

“If you’re in earnest in what you’re about
The fairies will often help you out.”

Tommy tried to find the Fairy, but he had vanished.



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