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The Legend of Stingy Jack

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Once upon a time, in a small Irish village, there lived a mischievous man named Jack. Jack wasn't like most folks. He was clever—very clever. But he was also known for being a little too sneaky for his own good. People in the village called him "Stingy Jack" because, well, he never wanted to share or spend any of his own coins!

One chilly evening, Jack was wandering through the woods when he bumped into someone very strange. This wasn't your average person—it was the Devil himself! The Devil had heard all about Jack's tricky ways and came to see if the stories were true.

But Jack wasn't afraid. "How about we go to the pub for a drink?" Jack said, flashing a sly smile. The Devil, being curious, agreed. After they drank a bit, Jack, who didn't want to pay for anything (as usual!), came up with a sneaky plan.

"Hey," Jack said, "Why don't you turn into a shiny coin so we can pay the bartender? Then, when no one's looking, you can change back!" The Devil thought this was a clever idea, so he turned himself into a silver coin.

But just as the Devil changed shape, Jack popped the coin into his pocket—and in his pocket was a tiny silver cross! The cross trapped the Devil, and he couldn't escape. Jack laughed and said, "I'll let you out, but only if you promise not to bother me for a whole year!" The Devil, having no choice, agreed.

The year passed, and guess who showed up again? The Devil, of course! Jack, who was just as tricky as ever, didn't panic. Instead, he pointed to an apple tree and said, "I'm awfully hungry. Could you climb up and pick me an apple?" The Devil, thinking this was easy, climbed up the tree.

But while the Devil was picking apples, Jack quickly carved little crosses into the tree's bark. Once again, the Devil was stuck! "Let me down!" he cried. Jack grinned and said, "I'll let you down if you promise not to bother me for ten years and never, ever take my soul to Hell." The Devil grumbled, but he had no choice—he agreed once more.

Years passed, and eventually, Jack's trickster ways caught up with him. He grew old and tired, and one day, he closed his eyes for the last time. When Jack arrived at the gates of Heaven, he knocked politely. But when the gates opened,

a great booming voice said, “No, Jack! You’ve been too tricky for Heaven. You must go somewhere else.”

So Jack made his way to the gates of Hell. But the Devil, who still remembered all of Jack’s clever tricks, shook his head. “I promised never to take your soul, Jack. You can’t come here either!” And with that, the Devil tossed Jack a glowing coal from the fiery pits of Hell to light his way.

But Jack didn’t want to wander in the dark, so he found a large turnip, carved it out, and placed the glowing coal inside. From that day on, Jack roamed the world, holding his glowing lantern, searching for a place to rest.

People started calling him “Jack of the Lantern,” and as the years went by, the name became “Jack-o’-Lantern.”



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