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The Steadfast Tin Soldier

Hans Christian Andersen

The birthday boy's eyes began to shine. On the table was a box containing 25 tin soldiers. The tin soldiers wore a fancy uniform in red and blue colours. They also all had a heroic rifle. One soldier was missing a leg. The boy did not mind at all. It made this soldier special and extremely tough.



The one-legged soldier looked around. On the table was a cardboard castle with a sweet little dancer inside. She was wearing a beautiful dress. In her hair she wore a golden bow. Bam! The soldier instantly fell in love. She is the perfect woman for me," the soldier sighed, unable to take his eyes off her.



Evening came. The boy had to go to bed. He put his special soldier on the windowsill. The people went to sleep, but not the toys. It was now their time to have fun. Only the one-legged soldier didn't move. He kept staring at the girl. How he would have liked to take her in his arms, but he was far too shy to ask. A little devil in a box saw the soldier looking at the dancer with infatuation. Stop it', he ordered the soldier. The little devil was secretly crazy about the girl himself. And he knew her longer than the soldier. Stop, or you will regret it', the little devil threatened. Stop it immediately!



In the morning something bad happened. The window flew open. It is not certain whether this was due to a gust of wind...or did the little devil have something to do with it? The tin soldier fell from the window sill and landed on the pavement. There the soldier lay, and as if it wasn't bad enough, it started to rain. Two boys saw the soldier and took him away. Let's make a boat out of paper,' one of the boys shouted with excitement. Then we'll put the soldier in it and let him sail

into the street gutter. No sooner said than done. The tin soldier sailed with the little boat in the pouring rain water along the edge of the pavement and right into the sewer. An ugly rat was waiting for him there. You have to pay me to sail here,' the rat hissed. But the soldier had no money and bravely managed to get away from the rat at great speed.

The paper boat became wetter and wetter. They were now sailing towards the sea. Finally, the boat could not hold the soldier any longer. The tin soldier slowly sank to the bottom. There swam a very fat fish. Gulp, gulp, and the tin soldier was gone! The fish thought it was a tasty snack.



But the story does not end there. The fish was caught and sold at the market. There walked the boy's mother. She would make something tasty tonight. And this was a nice fish. While preparing the fish, she found the tin soldier. That was quite surprising!



The boy was overjoyed to be back with his tin soldier, who was very happy as well. Now that he had survived all these dangers, he dared to ask the dancer to marry him. The boy had also put them very close together. The little devil saw this and was shocked. He jumped out of his box and knocked the tin soldier right into the woodstove. He also bumped the dancer. She spun and fell into the arms of the soldier. At last they were together forever! The next day, the boy never saw his soldier or the dancer again. But what he did find in the stove was a beautiful tin heart with a golden bow.



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