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The Stick Horse

Maud Lindsay

There was once a little boy who was too tired to walk; or at least he thought he was. He and his mother and the baby were at his grandmother's house and it was time to go home, but he sat down on the doorstone and felt very sure that he could not go a step farther.

"Somebody will have to carry me," he said.

"Well," said his mother, who had the baby in her arms, "what shall we do?"

And I am sure I do not know what they would have done if the little boy's grandmother had not come out just then to see what the matter was.

"If he cannot walk he must ride," she said; and she went into the house and got the old hearth broom, and the mop handle, and one of Grandfather's walking-sticks and brought them all out to the little boy.

"Now," said she, "will you ride a slow and steady gray horse, or a sleek-as-satin bay horse, or will you ride a black horse that is spirited and gay?"

"I like black horses best," said the little boy; "and I will ride that one, please."

"Very well," said Grandmother; and she took Grandfather's walking-stick and gave it to the little boy. "This is a very fast horse," she said. "I should not be surprised if you got home before your mother and the baby; but do be careful."

"I will," promised the little boy; and away he rode on the stick horse, gallop, gallop, gallop!

By the time Mother and the baby came out of Grandmother's gate the little boy was at the corner. When they reached the corner he had passed the big elm tree that grew by the sidewalk. When he rode up the little hill beyond the elm, trot, trot, trot, they almost caught up with him; but when they went down on the other side he was far ahead.



Gallop, gallop, gallop—almost before the little boy knew it himself he was at home; and when Mother and the baby got there the stick horse was hitched to the red rose bush, and the little boy sat on the doorstep laughing.

"I got home first. I got home first. I can ride fast on my black horse," said the little boy.



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