

Fire! Fire! Burn Stick!



by Joseph Jacobs

An old woman was sweeping her house, and she found a little crooked sixpence. "What," said she, "shall I do with this little sixpence? I will go to market and buy a little pig."

As she was coming home she came to a stile; the piggy would not go over the stile.

She went a little farther, and she met a dog. So she said to the dog, "Dog bite pig; piggy won't go over the stile, and I shan't get home tonight." But the dog would not.

She went a little farther, and she met a stick. So she said, "Stick! Stick beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile, and I shan't get home tonight." But the stick would not.

She went a little farther, and she met a fire. So she said, "Fire! Fire! Burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile, and I shan't get home tonight." But the fire would not.

She went a little farther, and she met some water. So she said, "Water! Water! Quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile, and I shan't get home tonight." But the water would not.

She went a little farther, and she met an ox. So she said, "Ox! Ox! Drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile, and I shan't get home tonight." But the ox would not.

She went a little farther, and she met a butcher. So she said, "Butcher! Butcher! Kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile, and I shan't get home to-night." But the butcher would not.

She went a little farther, and she met a rope. So she said, "Rope! Rope! Hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile, and I shan't get home tonight." But the rope would not.

So she went a little farther, and she met a rat. So she said, "Rat! Rat! Gnaw rope; rope won't hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile and I shan't get home tonight." But the rat would not.

So she went a little farther, and she met a cat. So she said, "Cat! Cat! Kill rat; rat won't gnaw rope; rope won't hang butcher; butcher won't kill ox; ox won't drink water; water won't quench fire; fire won't burn stick; stick won't beat dog; dog won't bite pig; piggy won't get over the stile, and I shan't get home tonight."

But the cat said to her, "If you will go to yonder cow and fetch me a saucer of milk, I will kill the rat." So away went the old woman to the cow.

But the cow said to her, "If you will go to yonder haystack and fetch me a handful of hay, I'll give you the milk." So away went the old woman to the haystack; and she brought the hay to the cow.

As soon as the cow had eaten the hay she gave the old woman the milk, and away she went with it in a saucer to the cat.

As soon as the cat had lapped up the milk, the cat began to kill the rat; the rat began to gnaw the rope; the rope began to hang the butcher; the butcher began to kill the ox; the ox began to drink the water; the water began to quench the fire; the fire began to burn the stick; the stick began to beat the dog; the dog began to bite the pig; the little pig in a fright jumped over the stile; and so the old woman got home that night.