

## The Miser

A miser had buried his gold in a secret place in his garden. Every day, he went to the spot, dug up the treasure, and counted it piece by piece to make sure it was all there. He made so many trips that a thief, who had been observing him, guessed what it was the miser had hidden and, one night, quietly dug up the treasure and made off with it.

When the miser discovered his loss, he was overcome with grief and despair. He groaned and cried and tore his hair. A passerby heard his cries and asked what had happened. "My gold! O my gold!" cried the miser, wildly. "Someone has robbed me!"

"Your gold! There in that hole? Why did you put it there? Why did you not keep it in the house where you could easily get it when you had to buy things?"

"Buy!" screamed the miser angrily. "Why, I never touched the gold. I couldn't think of spending any of it."

The stranger picked up a large stone and threw it into the hole. "If that is the case," he said, "cover up that stone. It is worth just as much to you as the treasure you lost!"

**Moral:** A possession is worth no more than the use we make of it.

## The Donkey and His Shadow

A traveler had hired a donkey to carry him to a distant part of the country. The owner of the donkey went with the traveler, walking beside him to drive the donkey and point out the way. The road led across a treeless plain where the sun beat down fiercely. So intense did the heat become that the traveler at last decided to stop for a rest, and as there was no other shade to be found, the traveler sat down in the shadow of the donkey. Now the heat had affected the driver as much as it had the traveler and even more, for he had been walking. Wishing also to rest in the shade cast by the donkey, he began to quarrel with the traveler, saying he had hired the donkey and not the shadow it cast. The two soon came to blows, and while they were fighting, the donkey took to its heels.

**Moral:** In quarreling about the shadow, we often lose the substance.

## The Goose With the Golden Eggs

There was once a countryman who possessed the most wonderful goose you can imagine, for every day when he visited the nest, the goose had laid a beautiful, glittering, golden egg. The countryman took the eggs to market and soon began to get rich. But it was not long before he grew impatient with the goose because she gave him only a single golden egg a day. He was not getting rich fast enough. Then one day, after he had finished counting his money, the idea came to him that he could get all the golden eggs at once by killing the goose and cutting it open. But when the deed was done, not a single golden egg did he find, and his precious goose was dead.

**Moral:** Those who have plenty want more and so lose all they have.

## The Fisherman and the Little Fish

A poor fisherman, who lived on the fish he caught, had bad luck one day and caught nothing but a very small fry.

The fisherman was about to put it in his basket when the little fish said, "Please spare me, Mr. Fisherman! I am so small it is not worthwhile to carry me home. When I am bigger, I shall make you a much better meal."

But the fisherman quickly put the fish into his basket. "How foolish I should be," he said, "to throw you back. However small you may be, you are better than nothing at all."

**Moral:** A small gain is worth more than a large promise.

## The Woman and Her Hen

A woman had a hen that laid an egg every day. The fowl was of a superior breed, and the eggs were very fine and sold for a good price. The woman thought that by giving the hen double as much food as she had been in the habit of giving her, the bird might be brought to lay two eggs a day instead of one. So the quantity of food was doubled accordingly, and the hen grew very fat and quit laying altogether.

**Moral:** Greediness may override itself.