

THE STORY OF MR. VINEGAR

An English story

Adapted by Carole L. Cooney

Setting: The Vinegar home; The County Fair

Characters:

Narrator

Mr. Vinegar A Cow man

Mrs. Vinegar A Bagpiper

Mack, a thief A Gloved man

Jack, a thief Traveler with a cane

Zack, a thief Parrot

Narrator: Once upon a time, there was a strange house. It was strange because it was a vinegar bottle. Who could live there? Why, Mr. and Mrs. Vinegar! One day, Mrs. Vinegar was sweeping the living room when her broom swung sharply. It smacked into the wall bringing the entire house down with a loud crash.

Mrs. V: Oh, dear! Oh, dear! Now look what I've done! Mr. Vinegar, we're ruined because my broom knocked the house down and it has broken to bits.

Mr. V: Now, now, my dearie. There's nothing to worry about. I think it's time for us to have an adventure and seek our fortune. Look! Here's the front door. **OUR** front door! I can carry it to a safe place where we can spend the night.

Narrator: And so, Mr. and Mrs. Vinegar walked and walked until they came to a dark forest.

Mr. V: Ah! My dearie, look at this giant tree with its outspread branches. This is the perfect place for us to stay the evening.

Mrs. V: Be careful, Mr. Vinegar, as you climb up the tree. Oh, oh, let me help you lift the door up. (grunt and groan) Ah, that's a perfect place. Is it secure?

Mr. V: Yes, my dearie. Now climb up carefully and let's settle for the night.

Narrator: In the middle of the night, Mr. and Mrs. Vinegar heard some loud talking coming from the bottom of the tree.

Mack: All right guys, it's safe to open the bag and spread out the money.

Jack: How much do I get?

Mack: Here's five gold coins for you, Jack. And you, Zack, you get ten gold coins. As for me, I get the rest.

Jack: And how much is that, Mack?

Zack: Don't ask so many questions, Jack. Don't you trust Mack?

Jack: Yeah! Sure I do. Okay! Let's get out of here. Hey, what's that noise?

Narrator: Just then a great rumbling sound was heard. Mr. and Mrs. Vinegar were so frightened that they shook furiously, which loosened the door from its perch, making it fall to the ground. The thieves escaped just in time and ran far, far away. The next morning, Mr. Vinegar climbed down the tree and went to lift up the door.

Mr. V: What have we here? Dearie, come quickly. See what I've found under the door.

Mrs. V: Oh, Mr. Vinegar, it's our fortune. My, oh, my! I know what we shall do with these coins. Mr. Vinegar, take the coins to the Fair and buy a cow. I can make butter and cheese which you can sell and then we can live comfortably the rest of our lives!

Narrator: And so, Mr. Vinegar took the gold coins and hurried off to the Fairgrounds and asked directions to the cow shed.

Mr. V: Ahhh, what lovely cows I see. Oh, I'd be the happiest man alive if I had a cow like that. Mr. Cow man, I'd love to buy that excellent cow. How much for the cow with the brown spots?

Cowman: 30 gold coins will do, sir.

Mr. V: Why that's exactly what I have.

Narrator: And so, Mr. Vinegar took the rope and led his cow down the road. After a short walk, Mr. Vinegar saw a man playing bagpipes.

Bagpiper: (haraaannng, haraaannng!) Good day to you, sir!

Mr. V: What a beautiful instrument you have there. Oh, I should be the happiest man alive if I had such an instrument.

Bagpiper: Well, I'll trade you my bagpipe for your cow. Is it a done deal?

Mr. V: Indeed it is!

Narrator: And so Mr. Vinegar carried the bagpipes along the road trying to play a tune. He blew and blew but no sound was heard. The weather grew cold and Mr. Vinegar's hands began to turn blue.

Mr. V: Ouch! My fingers are getting frosty in this freezing weather. Oh, I'd be the happiest man alive if I had some warm gloves.

Narrator: Now, coming down the road was a traveler with thick woolen gloves.

Traveler: I heard what you said, sir. You want some gloves? What will you give me?

Mr. V: I have this wonderful bagpipe. It's yours for those fine gloves.

Traveler: It's a done deal!

Narrator: Mr. Vinegar felt very happy with his warm gloves but his body ached from all of the walking he had done. Coming toward him was a man with a strong cane.

Mr. V: Sir, I'd be the happiest man in the world if I had a strong cane like yours.

Cane man: Well, this cane has helped me walk many a mile, but it's yours if I can have your warm gloves.

Mr. V: I will gladly make the trade.

Narrator: And so, the trade was made. Mr. Vinegar walked with his cane into the forest where his wife was waiting. Suddenly, he heard a parrot squawking from a large tree overhead.

Parrot: (squawk! SQUAWK!) Mr. Vinegar, you are a foolish man! (laughing) You gave your coins for a cow, the cow for bagpipes, the bagpipes for gloves, the gloves for a cane and now what do you have? (squawk! SQUAWK!) YOU WERE NEVER SATISFIED! INDEED! YOU ARE A FOOLISH MAN!

Mr. V: Stop! Stop! I'll get you, you nasty parrot!

Narrator: And so, Mr. Vinegar angrily stomped his feet, twirled around and threw his cane toward the parrot. He missed! And the cane stuck in the branches of the tree. Slowly, Mr. Vinegar, slumped his head downward as he walked toward his wife without the coins, without the cow, without the bagpipes, without the gloves and without the cane.

WHAT LESSON DID YOU LEARN FROM THIS STORY?