

THE MILKMAID AND HER PAIL

A Fable

Adapted by Carole L. Cooney

Setting: A pathway to town

Characters:

Narrator

Milkmaid

Joey

Sneezer

Narrator: Once upon a time a milkmaid was walking to town with a pail of milk upon her head. Suddenly little Joey ran up to her.

Joey: Milkmaid, oh, Milkmaid, where are you going?

Milkmaid: To town, of course, you little ruffian, to sell this pail of milk I'm carrying.

Joey: Milkmaid, oh, Milkmaid, what will you do with the money you get?

Milkmaid: Are you speaking to me?

Joey: Yes, m'am.

Milkmaid: Well... I think I will buy a fine hen who will lay plenty of eggs. But I won't eat the eggs.

Joey: Milkmaid, oh, Milkmaid, you won't get fat if you eat the eggs.

Milkmaid: *What – did - you - say?!*

Joey: Uh... uh... I said, uh... why won't you eat the eggs?

Milkmaid: What a silly question. I'm not going to eat the eggs because I'll let them hatch into chicks. Why else would I not eat the eggs! Now, enough of your questions. Be off with you!

Narrator: Joey ran giggling to his friend, Sneezer, who was sitting by the side of the road.

Joey: (Laughing) That snooty milkmaid looks funny carrying a pail of milk on her head. Hey, Sneezer, go ask her some more questions.

Sneezer: (achoo!) Aw, I don't want to.

Joey: Come on, Sneezer. She won't bite you. (laughing)

Narrator: Sneezer slowly rises from the road and walks shyly up to the milkmaid.

Sneezer: Milkmaid, (achoo) Milkmaid, please stop. (achoo) What are you going to do with the... with the... (achoo) with the chicks when they're grown? (achoo)

Milkmaid: More questions? You silly boys. Of course, I'll take them to the village to sell them at a good price!

Joey: (whispering) Ask her some *more* questions, Sneezer!

Sneezer: (achoo) Milkmaid, oh, Milkmaid, what will you do... what will you do...(achoo) with the money you get?

Milkmaid: Oh, these questions are getting me upset. I must move along before the milk seller closes. Why do you care what I do with the money I get?

Sneezer: Well, uh... (looking at Joey) I... I... (achoo) don't care but uh... *he does.* (points to Joey)

Narrator: Joey jumps up and runs to the milkmaid.

Joey: Milkmaid, oh, Milkmaid, please answer this last question. It's just a teeny tiny one. Please, oh, please.

Milkmaid: Oh, all right.

Joey: Milkmaid, oh, Milkmaid, what will you do with the money you get from selling the chicks?

Milkmaid: I will buy a beautiful gown, a shawl and shoes and colorful ribbons for my beautiful curly hair. You'll see how everyone will look at me. They'll think I'm gorgeous!

Narrator: With that answer, the milkmaid begins to walk like a queen. When she gives her head a little toss to show off her beautiful curly hair, the pail of milk falls to the ground spilling all over the road. Very embarrassed, she quickly picks up the pail and runs all the way home in tears.

Narrator: And the moral of the story is:

Don't count your chicks before they are hatched.