



The Stolen Turnips, the Magic Tablecloth, the Sneezing Goat, and the Wooden Whistle

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Russian

Easy

34 min read

This is the story which old Peter used to tell whenever either Vanya or Maroosia was cross. This did not often happen; but it would be no use to pretend that it never happened at all. Sometimes it was Vanya who scolded Maroosia, and sometimes it was Maroosia who scolded Vanya. Sometimes there were two scoldings going on at once. And old Peter did not like crossness in the hut, whoever did the scolding. He said it spoilt his tobacco and put a sour taste in the tea. And, of course, when the children remembered that they were spoiling their grandfather's tea and tobacco they stopped just as quickly as they could, unless their tongues had run right away with them—which happens sometimes, you know, even to grown-up people. This story used to be told in two ways. It was either the tale of an old man who was bothered by a cross old woman, or the tale of an old woman who was bothered by a cross old man. And the moment old Peter began the story both children would ask at once, "Which is the cross one?"—for then they would know which of them old Peter thought was in the wrong.

“This time it’s the old woman,” said their grandfather; “but, as like as not, it will be the old man next.”

And then any quarrelling there was came to an end, and was forgotten before the end of the story. This is the story.

An old man and an old woman lived in a little wooden house. All round the house there was a garden, crammed with flowers, and potatoes, and beetroots, and cabbages. And in one corner of the house there was a narrow wooden stairway which went up and up, twisting and twisting, into a high tower. In the top of the tower was a dovecot, and on the top of the dovecot was a flat roof.

Now, the old woman was never content with the doings of the old man. She scolded all day, and she scolded all night. If there was too much rain, it was the old man’s fault; and if there was a drought, and all green things were parched for lack of water, well, the old man was to blame for not altering the weather. And though he was old and tired, it was all the same to her how much work she put on his shoulders. The garden was full. There was no room in it at all, not even for a single pea. And all of a sudden the old woman sets her heart on growing turnips.

“But there is no room in the garden,” says the old man.

“Sow them on the top of the dovecot,” says the old woman.

“But there is no earth there.”

“Carry earth up and put it there,” says she.

So the old man laboured up and down with his tired old bones, and covered the top of the dovecot with good black earth. He could only take up a very little at a time, because he was old and weak, and because the stairs were so narrow and dangerous that he had to hold on with both hands and carry the earth in a bag which he held in his teeth. His teeth were strong enough, because he had been biting crusts all his life. The old woman left him nothing else, for she took all the crumb for herself. The old man did his best, and by evening the top of the dovecot was covered with earth, and he had sown it with turnip seed.

Next day, and the day after that and every day, the old woman scolded the old man till he went up to the

dovecot to see how those turnip seeds were getting on.

“Are they ready to eat yet?”

“They are not ready to eat.”

“Is the green sprouting?”

“The green is sprouting.”

And at last there came a day when the old man came down from the dovecot and said: “The turnips are doing finely—quite big they are getting; but all the best ones have been stolen away.”

“Stolen away?” cried the old woman, shaking with rage. “And have you lived all these years and not learned how to keep thieves from a turnip bed, on the top of a dovecot, on the top of a tower, on the top of a house? Out with you, and don’t you dare to come back till you have caught the thieves.”

The old man did not dare to tell her that the door had been bolted, although he knew it had, because he had bolted it himself. He hurried away out of the house, more because he wanted to get out of earshot of her scolding than because he had any hope of finding the thieves. “They may be birds,” thinks he, “or the little brown squirrels. Who else could climb so high without using the stairs? And how is an old man like me to get hold of them, flying through the tops of the high trees and running up and down the branches?”

And so he wandered away without his dinner into the deep forest.

But God is good to old men. Hasn’t He given me two little pigeons, who nearly always are as merry as all little pigeons should be? And God led the old man through the forest, though the old man thought he was just wandering on, trying to lose himself and forget the scolding voice of the old woman.

And after he had walked a long way through the dark green forest, he saw a little hut standing under the pine trees. There was no smoke coming from the chimney, but there was such a chattering in the hut you could hear it far away. It was like coming near a rookery at evening, or disturbing a lot of starlings. And as the old man came slowly nearer to the hut, he thought he saw little faces looking at him through the window and peeping through the door. He could not be sure, because they were gone so quickly. And all the time the chattering

went on louder and louder, till the old man nearly put his hands to his ears.

And then suddenly the chattering stopped. There was not a sound—no noise at all. The old man stood still. A squirrel dropped a fir cone close by, and the old man was startled by the fall of it, because everything else was so quiet.

“Whatever there is in the hut, it won’t be worse than the old woman,” says the old man to himself. So he makes the sign of the holy Cross, and steps up to the little hut and takes a look through the door.

There was no one to be seen. You would have thought the hut was empty.

The old man took a step inside, bending under the little low door. Still he could see nobody, only a great heap of rags and blankets on the sleeping-place on the top of the stove. The hut was as clean as if it had only that minute been swept by Maroosia herself. But in the middle of the floor there was a scrap of green leaf lying, and the old man knew in a moment that it was a scrap of green leaf from the top of a young turnip.

And while the old man looked at it, the heap of blankets and rugs on the stove moved, first in one place and then in another. Then there was a little laugh. Then another. And suddenly there was a great stir in the blankets, and they were all thrown back helter-skelter, and there were dozens and dozens of little queer children, laughing and laughing and laughing, and looking at the old man. And every child had a little turnip, and showed it to the old man and laughed.

Just then the door of the stove flew open, and out tumbled more of the little queer children, dozens and dozens of them. The more they came tumbling out into the hut, the more there seemed to be chattering in the stove and squeezing to get out one over the top of another. The noise of chattering and laughing would have made your head spin. And everyone of the children out of the stove had a little turnip like the others, and waved it about and showed it to the old man, and laughed like anything.

“Ho,” says the old man, “so you are the thieves who have stolen the turnips from the top of the dovecot?”

“Yes,” cried the children, and the chatter rattled as fast as hailstones on the roof. “Yes! yes! yes! We stole the turnips.”

“How did you get on to the top of the dovecot when the door into the house was bolted and fast?”

At that the children all burst out laughing, and did not answer a word.

“Laugh you may,” said the old man; “but it is I who get the scolding when the turnips fly away in the night.”

“Never mind! never mind!” cried the children. “We’ll pay for the turnips.”

“How can you pay for them?” asks the old man. “You have got nothing to pay with.”

All the children chattered together, and looked at the old man and smiled. Then one of them said to the old man, “Are you hungry, grandfather?”

“Hungry!” says the old man. “Why, yes, of course I am, my dear. I’ve been looking for you all day, and I had to start without my dinner.”

“If you are hungry, open the cupboard behind you.”

The old man opened the cupboard.

“Take out the tablecloth.”

The old man took out the tablecloth.

“Spread it on the table.”

The old man spread the tablecloth on the table.

“Now!” shouted the children, chattering like a thousand nests full of young birds, “we’ll all sit down and have dinner.”

They pulled out the benches and gave the old man a chair at one end, and all crowded round the table ready to begin.

“But there’s no food,” said the old man.

How they laughed!

“Grandfather,” one of them sings out from the other end of the table, “you just tell the tablecloth to turn inside out,”

“How?” says he.

“Tell the tablecloth to turn inside out. That’s easy enough.”

“There’s no harm in doing that,” thinks the old man; so he says to the tablecloth as firmly as he could, “Now then you, tablecloth, turn inside out!”

The tablecloth hove itself up into the air, and rolled itself this way and that as if it were in a whirlwind, and then suddenly laid itself flat on the table again. And somehow or other it had covered itself with dishes and plates and wooden spoons with pictures on them, and bowls of soup and mushrooms and kasha, and meat and cakes and fish and ducks, and everything else you could think of, ready for the best dinner in the world.

The chattering and laughing stopped, and the old man and those dozens and dozens of little queer children set to work and ate everything on the table.

“Which of you washes the dishes?” asked the old man, when they had all done.

The children laughed.

“Tell the tablecloth to turn outside in.”

“Tablecloth,” says the old man, “turn outside in.”

Up jumped the tablecloth with all the empty dishes and dirty plates and spoons, whirled itself this way and that in the air, and suddenly spread itself out flat again on the table, as clean and white as when it was taken out of the cupboard. There was not a dish or a bowl, or a spoon or a plate, or a knife to be seen; no, not even a crumb.

“That’s a good tablecloth,” says the old man.

“See here, grandfather,” shouted the children: “you take the tablecloth along with you, and say no more about

those turnips.”

“Well, I’m content with that,” says the old man. And he folded up the tablecloth very carefully and put it away inside his shirt, and said he must be going.

“Good-bye,” says he, “and thank you for the dinner and the tablecloth.”

“Good-bye,” say they, “and thank you for the turnips.”

The old man made his way home, singing through the forest in his creaky old voice until he came near the little wooden house where he lived with the old woman. As soon as he came near there he slipped along like any mouse. And as soon as he put his head inside the door the old woman began,—

“Have you found the thieves, you old fool?”

“I found the thieves.”

“Who were they?”

“They were a whole crowd of little queer children.”

“Have you given them a beating they’ll remember?”

“No, I have not.”

“What? Bring them to me, and I’ll teach them to steal my turnips!”

“I haven’t got them.”

“What have you done with them?”

“I had dinner with them.”

Well, at that the old woman flew into such a rage she could hardly speak. But speak she did—yes, and shout too and scream—and it was all the old man could do not to run away out of the cottage. But he stood still and listened, and thought of something else; and when she had done he said, “They paid for the turnips.”

“Paid for the turnips!” scolded the old woman. “A lot of children! What did they give you? Mushrooms? We can get them without losing our turnips.”

“They gave me a tablecloth,” said the old man; “it’s a very good tablecloth.”

He pulled it out of his shirt and spread it on the table; and as quickly as he could, before she began again, he said, “Tablecloth, turn inside out!”

The old woman stopped short, just when she was taking breath to scold with, when the tablecloth jumped up and danced in the air and settled on the table again, covered with things to eat and to drink. She smelt the meat, took a spoonful of the soup, and tried all the other dishes.

“Look at all the washing up it will mean,” says she.

“Tablecloth, turn outside in!” says the old man; and there was a whirl of white cloth and dishes and everything else, and then the tablecloth spread itself out on the table as clean as ever you could wish.

“That’s not a bad tablecloth,” says the old woman; “but, of course, they owed me something for stealing all those turnips.”

The old man said nothing. He was very tired, and he just laid down and went to sleep.

As soon as he was asleep the old woman took the tablecloth and hid it away in an iron chest, and put a tablecloth of her own in its place. “They were my turnips,” says she, “and I don’t see why he should have a share in the tablecloth. He’s had a meal from it once at my expense, and once is enough.” Then she lay down and went to sleep, grumbling to herself even in her dreams.

Early in the morning the old woman woke the old man and told him to go up to the dovecot and see how those turnips were getting on.

He got up and rubbed his eyes. When he saw the tablecloth on the table, the wish came to him to have a bite of food to begin the day with. So he stopped in the middle of putting on his shirt, and called to the tablecloth, “Tablecloth, turn inside out!”

Nothing happened. Why should anything happen? It was not the same tablecloth.

The old man told the old woman. "You should have made a good feast yesterday," says he, "for the tablecloth is no good any more. That is, it's no good that way; it's like any ordinary tablecloth."

"Most tablecloths are," says the old woman. "But what are you dawdling about? Up you go and have a look at those turnips."

The old man went climbing up the narrow twisting stairs. He held on with both hands for fear of falling, because they were so steep. He climbed to the top of the house, to the top of the tower, to the top of the dovecot, and looked at the turnips. He looked at the turnips, and he counted the turnips, and then he came slowly down the stairs again wondering what the old woman would say to him.

"Well," says the old woman in her sharp voice, "are they doing nicely? Because if not, I know whose fault it is."

"They are doing finely," said the old man; "but some of them have gone. Indeed, quite a lot of them have been stolen away."

"Stolen away!" screamed the old woman. "How dare you stand there and tell me that? Didn't you find the thieves yesterday? Go and find those children again, and take a stick with you, and don't show yourself here till you can tell me that they won't steal again in a hurry."

"Let me have a bite to eat," begs the old man. "It's a long way to go on an empty stomach."

"Not a mouthful!" yells the old woman. "Off with you. Letting my turnips be stolen every night, and then talking to me about bites of food!"

So the old man went off again without his dinner, and hobbled away into the forest as quickly as he could to get out of earshot of the old woman's scolding tongue.

As soon as he was out of sight the old woman stopped screaming after him, and went into the house and opened the iron chest and took out the tablecloth the children had given the old man, and laid it on the table instead of her own. She told it to turn inside out, and up it flew and whirled about and flopped down flat again, all covered with good things. She ate as much as she could hold. Then she told the tablecloth to turn outside in,

and folded it up and hid it away again in the iron chest.

Meanwhile the old man tightened his belt, because he was so hungry. He hobbled along through the green forest till he came to the little hut standing under the pine trees. There was no smoke coming from the chimney, but there was such a chattering you would have thought that all the Vanyas and Maroosias in Holy Russia were talking to each other inside.

He had no sooner come in sight of the hut than the dozens and dozens of little queer children came pouring out of the door to meet him. And every single one of them had a turnip, and showed it to the old man, and laughed and laughed as if it were the best joke in the world.

"I knew it was you," said the old man.

"Of course it was us," cried the children. "We stole the turnips."

"But how did you get to the top of the dovecot when the door into the house was bolted and fast?"

The children laughed and laughed and did not answer a word.

"Laugh you may," says the old man; "but it is I who get the scolding when the turnips fly away in the night."

"Never mind! never mind!" cried the children. "We'll pay for the turnips."

"All very well," says the old man; "but that tablecloth of yours—it was fine yesterday, but this morning it would not give me even a glass of tea and a hunk of black bread."

At that the faces of the little queer children were troubled and grave. For a moment or two they all chattered together, and took no notice of the old man. Then one of them said,—

"Well, this time we'll give you something better. We'll give you a goat."

"A goat?" says the old man.

"A goat with a cold in its head," said the children; and they crowded round him and took him behind the hut where there was a gray goat with a long beard cropping the short grass.

“It’s a good enough goat,” says the old man; “I don’t see anything wrong with him.”

“It’s better than that,” cried the children. “You tell it to sneeze.”

The old man thought the children might be laughing at him, but he did not care, and he remembered the tablecloth. So he took off his hat and bowed to the goat. “Sneeze, goat,” says he.

And instantly the goat started sneezing as if it would shake itself to pieces. And as it sneezed, good gold pieces flew from it in all directions, till the ground was thick with them.

“That’s enough,” said the children hurriedly; “tell him to stop, for all this gold is no use to us, and it’s such a bother having to sweep it away.”

“Stop sneezing, goat,” says the old man; and the goat stopped sneezing, and stood there panting and out of breath in the middle of the sea of gold pieces.

The children began kicking the gold pieces about, spreading them by walking through them as if they were dead leaves. My old father used to say that those gold pieces are lying about still for anybody to pick up; but I doubt if he knew just where to look for them, or he would have had better clothes on his back and a little more food on the table. But who knows? Some day we may come upon that little hut somewhere in the forest, and then we shall know what to look for.

The children laughed and chattered and kicked the gold pieces this way and that into the green bushes. Then they brought the old man into the hut and gave him a bowl of kasha to eat, because he had had no dinner. There was no magic about the kasha; but it was good enough kasha for all that, and hunger made it better. When the old man had finished the kasha and drunk a glass of tea and smoked a little pipe, he got up and made a low bow and thanked the children. And the children tied a rope to the goat and sent the old man home with it. He hobbled away through the forest, and as he went he looked back, and there were the little queer children all dancing together, and he heard them chattering and shouting: “Who stole the turnips? We stole the turnips. Who paid for the turnips? We paid for the turnips. Who stole the tablecloth? Who will pay for the tablecloth? Who will steal turnips again? We will steal turnips again.”

But the old man was too pleased with the goat to give much heed to what they said; and he hobbled home

through the green forest as fast as he could, with the goat trotting and walking behind him, pulling leaves off the bushes to chew as they hurried along.

The old woman was waiting in the doorway of the house. She was still as angry as ever.

“Have you beaten the children?” she screamed. “Have you beaten the children for stealing my good turnips?”

“No,” said the old man; “they paid for the turnips.”

“What did they pay?”

“They gave me this goat.”

“That skinny old goat! I have three already, and the worst of them is better than that.”

“It has a cold in the head,” says the old man.

“Worse than ever!” screams the old woman.

“Wait a minute,” says the old man as quickly as he could, to stop her scolding.—“Sneeze, goat.”

And the goat began to shake itself almost to bits, sneezing and sneezing and sneezing. The good gold pieces flew all ways at once. And the old woman threw herself after the gold pieces, picking them up like an old hen picking up corn. As fast as she picked them up more gold pieces came showering down on her like heavy gold hail, beating her on her head and her hands as she grubbed after those that had fallen already.

“Stop sneezing, goat,” says the old man; and the goat stood there tired and panting, trying to get its breath. But the old woman did not look up till she had gathered everyone of the gold pieces. When she did look up, she said,—

“There’s no supper for you. I’ve had supper already.”

The old man said nothing. He tied up the goat to the doorpost of the house, where it could eat the green grass. Then he went into the house and lay down, and fell asleep at once, because he was an old man and had done a lot of walking.

As soon as he was asleep the old woman untied the goat and took it away and hid it in the bushes, and tied up one of her own goats instead. "They were my turnips," says she to herself, "and I don't see why he should have a share in the gold." Then she went in, and lay down grumbling to herself.

Early in the morning she woke the old man.

"Get up, you lazy fellow," says she; "you would lie all day and let all the thieves in the world come in and steal my turnips. Up with you to the dovecot and see how my turnips are getting on."

The old man got up and rubbed his eyes, and climbed up the rickety stairs, creak, creak, creak, holding on with both hands, till he came to the top of the house, to the top of the tower, to the top of the dovecot, and looked at the turnips.

He was afraid to come down, for there were hardly any turnips left at all.

And when he did come down, the scolding the old woman gave him was worse than the other two scoldings rolled into one. She was so angry that she shook like a rag in the high wind, and the old man put both hands to his ears and hobbled away into the forest.

He hobbled along as fast as he could hobble, until he came to the hut under the pine trees. This time the little queer children were not hiding under the blankets or in the stove, or chattering in the hut. They were all over the roof of the hut, dancing and crawling about. Some of them were even sitting on the chimney. And everyone of the little queer children was playing with a turnip. As soon as they saw the old man they all came tumbling off the roof, one after another, head over heels, like a lot of peas rolling off a shovel.

"We stole the turnips!" they shouted, before the old man could say anything at all.

"I know you did," says the old man; "but that does not make it any better for me. And it is I who get the scolding when the turnips fly away in the night."

"Never again!" shouted the children.

"I'm glad to hear that," says the old man.

“And we’ll pay for the turnips.”

“Thank you kindly,” says the old man. He hadn’t the heart to be angry with those little queer children.

Three or four of them ran into the hut and came out again with a wooden whistle, a regular whistle-pipe, such as shepherds use. They gave it to the old man.

“I can never play that,” says the old man. “I don’t know one tune from another; and if I did, my old fingers are as stiff as oak twigs.”

“Blow in it,” cried the children; and all the others came crowding round, laughing and chattering and whispering to each other. “Is he going to blow in it?” they asked. “He is going to blow in it.” How they laughed!

The old man took the whistle, and gathered his breath and puffed out his cheeks, and blew in the whistle-pipe as hard as he could. And before he could take the whistle from his lips, three lively whips had slipped out of it, and were beating him as hard as they could go, although there was nobody to hold them. Phew! phew! phew! The three whips came down on him one after the other.

“Blow again!” the children shouted, laughing as if they were mad. “Blow again—quick, quick, quick!—and tell the whips to get into the whistle.”

The old man did not wait to be told twice. He blew for all he was worth, and instantly the three whips stopped beating him. “Into the whistle!” he cried; and the three lively whips shot up into the whistle, like three snakes going into a hole. He could hardly have believed they had been out at all if it had not been for the soreness of his back.

“You take that home,” cried the children. “That’ll pay for the turnips, and put everything right.”

“Who knows?” said the old man; and he thanked the children, and set off home through the green forest.

“Good-bye,” cried the little queer children. But as soon as he had started they forgot all about him. When he looked round to wave his hand to them, not one of them was thinking of him. They were up again on the roof of the hut, jumping over each other and dancing and crawling about, and rolling each other down the roof and climbing up again, as if they had been doing nothing else all day, and were going to do nothing else till the end

of the world.

The old man hobbled home through the green forest with the whistle stuck safely away into his shirt. As soon as he came to the door of the hut, the old woman, who was sitting inside counting the gold pieces, jumped up and started her scolding.

“What have the children tricked you with this time?” she screamed at him.

“They gave me a whistle-pipe,” says the old man, “and they are not going to steal the turnips any more.”

“A whistle-pipe!” she screamed. “What’s the good of that? It’s worse than the tablecloth and the skinny old goat.”

The old man said nothing.

“Give it to me!” screamed the old woman. “They were my turnips, so it is my whistle-pipe.”

“Well, whatever you do, don’t blow in it,” says the old man, and he hands over the whistle-pipe.

She wouldn’t listen to him.

“What?” says she; “I must not blow my own whistle-pipe?”

And with that she put the whistle-pipe to her lips and blew.

Out jumped the three lively whips, flew up in the air, and began to beat her—phew! phew! phew!—one after another. If they made the old man sore, it was nothing to what they did to the cross old woman.

“Stop them! Stop them!” she screamed, running this way and that in the hut, with the whips flying after her beating her all the time. “I’ll never scold again. I am to blame. I stole the magic tablecloth, and put an old one instead of it. I hid it in the iron chest.” She ran to the iron chest and opened it, and pulled out the tablecloth.

“Stop them! Stop them!” she screamed, while the whips laid it on hard and fast, one after the other. “I am to blame. The goat that sneezes gold pieces is hidden in the bushes. The goat by the door is one of the old ones. I wanted all the gold for myself.”

All this time the old man was trying to get hold of the whistle-pipe. But the old woman was running about the

hut so fast, with the whips flying after her and beating her, that he could not get it out of her hands. At last he grabbed it. "Into the whistle," says he, and put it to his lips and blew.

In a moment the three lively whips had hidden themselves in the whistle. And there was the cross old woman, kissing his hand and promising never to scold any more.

"That's all right," says the old man; and he fetched the sneezing goat out of the bushes and made it sneeze a little gold, just to be sure that it was that goat and no other. Then he laid the tablecloth on the table and told it to turn inside out. Up it flew, and came down again with the best dinner that ever was cooked, only waiting to be eaten. And the old man and the old woman sat down and ate till they could eat no more. The old woman rubbed herself now and again. And the old man rubbed himself too. But there was never a cross word between them, and they went to bed singing like nightingales.

"Is that the end?" Maroosia always asked.

"Is that all?" asked Vanya, though he knew it was not.

"Not quite," said old Peter; "but the tale won't go any quicker than my old tongue."

In the morning the old woman had forgotten about her promise. And just from habit, she set about scolding the old man as if the whips had never jumped out of the whistle. She scolded him for sleeping too long, sent him upstairs, with a lot of cross words after him, to go to the top of the dovecot to see how those turnips were getting on.

After a little the old man came down.

"The turnips are coming on grandly," says he, "and not a single one has gone in the night. I told you the children said they would not steal any more."

"I don't believe you," said the old woman. "I'll see for myself. And if any are gone, you shall pay for it, and pay for it well."

Up she jumped, and tried to climb the stairs. But the stairs were narrow and steep and twisting. She tried and tried, and could not get up at all. So she gets angrier than ever, and starts scolding the old man again.

“You must carry me up,” says she.

“I have to hold on with both hands, or I couldn’t get up myself,” says the old man.

“I’ll get in the flour sack, and you must carry me up with your teeth,” says she; “they’re strong enough.”

And the old woman got into the flour sack.

“Don’t ask me any questions,” says the old man; and he took the sack in his teeth and began slowly climbing up the stairs, holding on with both hands.

He climbed and climbed, but he did not climb fast enough for the old woman.

“Are we at the top?” says she.

The old man said nothing, but went on, climbing up and up, nearly dead with the weight of the old woman in the sack which he was holding in his teeth.

He climbed a little further, and the old woman screamed out,—

“Are we at the top now? We must be at the top. Let me out, you old fool!”

The old man said nothing; he climbed on and on.

The old woman raged in the flour sack. She jumped about in the sack, and screamed at the old man,—

“Are we near the top now? Answer me, can’t you! Answer me at once, or you’ll pay for it later. Are we near the top?”

“Very near,” said the old man.

And as he opened his mouth to say that the sack slipped from between his teeth, and bump, bump, bumpety bump, the old woman in the sack fell all the way to the very bottom, bumping on every step. That was the end

of her.

After that the old man lived alone in the hut. When he wanted tobacco or clothes or a new axe, he made the goat sneeze some gold pieces, and off he went to the town with plenty of money in his pocket. When he wanted his dinner he had only to lay the tablecloth. He never had any washing up to do, because the tablecloth did it for him. When he wanted to get rid of troublesome guests, he gave them the whistle to blow. And when he was lonely and wanted company, he went to the little hut under the pine trees and played with the little queer children.

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