

MAKING STONE SOUP

An Old Folk Story



In a land, not so far away, lived a young man who had come upon hard times. He was hungry and he did not know what to do.

While he was walking along the road a stranger came up to him and asked, “Why do you look so sad?”

“I’ve not eaten in three days. I’m very hungry and I don’t have any money to buy food. I’m hoping that someone will be generous and give me a little food,” the young man said.

“All I have is this round black stone. I’ll give it to you,” the traveler said, as he offered the stone to the young man.

“A stone? What am I to do with a stone?” the young man asked, looking at the stone, and wondering what he meant.

“This stone makes excellent soup. Just put it into hot water and watch what happens,” the man said, and then he went on his way.

The young man laughed.

“What a silly man he is. How can a stone make soup?” he said to himself.

He put the stone into his pocket. It was round and smooth.

A short time later, he walked into a town. The first house he came to, he knocked on the door.

When an old lady answered the door, he took off his hat and he bowed.

Then he asked, “Ma’am. I’ve been on a long journey and I’m very hungry. Do you have any food you could spare for a hungry traveler?”

“I only have a little salt and I need it for myself,” the old lady said, as she slammed the door closed.

The young man was not bothered by this. He went to the next house and knocked again.

When a young lady answered the door, he once again took off his hat and bowed.

Then he asked, “Ma’am. I’ve been on a long journey and I’m very hungry. Do you have any food you could spare for a hungry traveler?”

“I only have a little garlic and I need it for myself,” the young lady said, as she slammed the door closed.

The young man was not bothered by this.

He went to the third door and knocked again.

When an old man answered the door, the young man took off his hat and bowed to him.

Then he asked, “Sir. I’ve been on a long journey and I’m very hungry. Do you have any food you could spare for a hungry traveler?”

“I only have a few onions and I need them for myself,” the old man said as he slammed the door closed.

When he came to the fourth door he was little discouraged, but he knocked on the door anyway. A fat woman holding a child answered the door.

The young man took off his hat and bowed to her.

Then he asked, “Ma’am. I’ve been on a long journey and I’m very hungry. Do you have any food you could spare for a hungry traveler?”

“I only have a pot of water and I need it for myself,” the fat lady said as she slammed the door closed.

He was not upset by this.

As he walked away from the door, he noticed a pot in the front of the house with

water boiling inside. He came up with an idea that he was sure was going to work.

He turned to go back to the house, and he knocked on the door again.

When the fat woman answered the door again he quickly asked, “Ma’am. May I borrow your pot? I have a stone in my pocket and I would like to make stone soup for you. May I use it?”

“Yes, I have a large pot, but I’m using it to boil water right now,” she answered.

“Perfect, all I need is a pot and boiling water. Then I can make some very tasty stone soup,” the young man said with a smile on his face.

The fat woman looked at the stranger who was standing at her door. She was very curious about stone soup, and since she did not have any food to offer her child, she decided to let him use her pot.

The pot of water was in front of the house and close to the walk. The young man dropped the stone into the water and began to stir it with a large spoon.

The old lady from the first house came out to watch what he was doing. He dipped the spoon into the soup and tasted it.

“Almost perfect. It just needs a little salt, that’s all and then it will be done,” the young man said aloud.

Having heard what he said, the old lady offered, “I have some salt, I’ll get it and bring it to you.”

As people walked by, they noticed the young man making his stone soup.

The older gentleman he had talked to earlier, stopped and asked him, “What are you doing young man?”

“I’m making stone soup. It’s almost perfect, but it needs a little onion, that’s all,” the young man answered.

“I have some onions at home. I’ll bring them to you right away,” the old man said, as he left for his house.

The young woman he had talked to was also curious and asked, “What are you making?”

“I’m making stone soup. It’s almost done. It just needs some garlic. Then it will be perfect,” the young man said, as he tasted the soup again.

“I have some garlic, I’ll bring it right away,” the young lady said, as she went home to get the garlic.

Others stopped and asked the same question. He told one he needed pork. He told another he needed carrots, and still another he told he needed beans. Then, the soup would be perfect.

All of the citizens in the town brought him the needed items to make the soup just perfect.

He tasted the soup for the last time, and said, “It’s just right! I don’t need anything else.”

Everyone cheered for him. The townspeople shared the soup and agreed it was just perfect.

After the soup was gone, the young man picked up the round black stone and put it into his pocket. He was going to make stone soup again and again.

VOCABULARY: (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. hard times _____ | a. nomad, going from place to place |
| 2. generous _____ | b. depressed, dismayed |
| 3. traveler _____ | c. a little angry |
| 4. slam _____ | d. bubbling water |
| 5. discouraged _____ | e. out of money, no work |
| 6. upset _____ | f. kind, willing to help |
| 7. boil _____ | g. people who live in a town |
| 8. offer _____ | h. propose, submit |
| 9. citizens _____ | i. nosey, interested |
| 10. curious _____ | j. shut very hard |

TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| 1. A traveler gave him the stone. | T / F |
| 2. The stone was gray. | T / F |
| 3. He threw the stone away. | T / F |
| 4. The first house gave him salt when he knocked on the door. | T / F |
| 5. The pot was in the middle of the town. | T / F |
| 6. The old man gave him onions. | T / F |
| 7. The fat lady had a child in her arms. | T / F |
| 8. The young woman gave him the pot to use. | T / F |
| 9. The soup was perfect. | T / F |
| 10. Someone ate his stone. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. What did the traveler give to the young man? _____
 - a) some advice
 - b) some gold
 - c) a stone
 - d) a horse

2. Why did the young man go to the houses? _____
 - a) he was angry
 - b) he wanted some food
 - c) he wanted to make stone soup
 - d) all the above

3. Who gave him the garlic? _____
 - a) the young woman
 - b) the old woman
 - c) the fat woman
 - d) the old man

4. Who liked the stone soup? _____
 - a) everyone
 - b) the traveler
 - c) the pot
 - d) the stone

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. Who gave the young man the stone?

2. What did the young man do every time someone answered the door?

3. Where was the pot of boiling water?

4. What did the other townspeople give him?

5. What did the fat lady give him?

6. What did the old woman give him?

7. When he sipped the soup, what did he say before the soup was done?

8. Who had the soup with him?

9. What did he take with him when he left?

10. What was he going to do with the stone?
