



THE WOODEN BOY

Far, far away, there was a little wooden house by the edge of the woods. A skilled woodcarver lived there with his beloved wife. They had no children and they felt lonely in their house.

One night, the wife said to her husband: “Listen, you have such skilled hands and you have made so many different things out of wood, how about you carve us a little baby?”

The woodcarver thought it was a great idea, he got up early the next morning and started fulfilling his wife’s wishes. He took a nice piece of wood, sanded it down and in a few moments, he carved out a little baby boy. When he was finished, he brought the baby to his wife, and even though it was made of wood, she treated it like a real live baby. She held him lovingly, she rocked him in a little cradle and sang to him. And then, suddenly – a miracle! Something incredible happened – the song brought the little boy to life.

His parents gave him the best name they could think of – they decided to call him Woody.

The boy was growing like a weed, and when he was almost a young man, he asked his father to make him a fishing boat out of wood. His father started working on it right away and soon the boat was finished. Woody could go out on his boat to get food and be helpful to his parents. He fished in the sea every

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morning where the birds would sing to him and his caring mother would bring him lunch every day, singing from the sea shore:

“Come, my Woody, my dear boy.

Come to the shore and eat some more.”

And when Woody heard this tune, he would rush to meet her on the shore, greet her, eat his soup, and go out into the sea again.

But then one day, an evil witch who lived in a hut beyond the rocks heard the mother singing to her son. She listened in very carefully to remember all the words and then she spied some more to see at what time they ate lunch together.

One morning, she went to the shore and started hollering the song.

When Woody heard it, he thought that his mother was quite early that day, and also her voice sounded different. But he didn't want to disappoint her by being late, so he headed to the shore anyway.

As soon as he got out of his boat, the witch ran out from behind the rocks and threw herself on the surprised boy. She grabbed him very tightly because she was as strong as a bull, and she dragged him into her hut, where she lived together with her old warlock husband. When they came home, she ordered:

“Go and start a roaring fire. Today, we will have something delicious for lunch. We haven't roasted anyone for a while.” The warlock started loading wood into the oven, rubbing his hands impatiently.

“Watch this yummy boy, until the oven is scorching hot. I will be right back,” said the witch to the warlock and zoomed out of sight.

The warlock just kept throwing the wood into the oven, thinking about their delicious meal. Soon, the oven was burning hot, but the witch still wasn't coming back. The warlock didn't feel like waiting, so he took a shovel and said: “Come here, Woody. You just sit down right here.”

But the boy knew very well what the ugly warlock was up to. He gave him a baffled look, as if he really didn't know how to properly sit on a shovel. He tried both sides, but he wouldn't sit down, as if he didn't know how. He asked the warlock to show him how it's done.

The warlock was losing patience, and so he sat down on the shovel to show Woody

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how to do it. Woody didn't hesitate, he grabbed the shovel and threw the warlock right into the oven. He shut the oven door and ran away from the hut. When he was outside, he heard the witch's cackling voice coming from far away. He looked around, saw a very tall tree and climbed up. He sat on a branch and waited.

The witch entered her hut, looked around, but couldn't see the warlock or the boy. She started to suspect that something wasn't right, which turned out to be true when she found out that instead of Woody, her husband was roasting inside the oven. She was fuming and raging and stomping her feet and beating her broom on the ground, but she couldn't do anything. She ran out to catch that naughty little rascal. She could sniff him with her enormous nose and then she saw him sitting on a branch and swinging his feet. That made her even angrier and she became as red as a pepper. She wasn't about to climb a tree at her age! So she took an axe from the hut and started chopping down the tree without mercy. "Just you wait, you imp. I will show you what I can do. Don't you start thinking you can escape me!" she threatened and kept hitting her axe on the trunk of the mighty tree.

Woody wasn't calm at all. He was scared and tried to reach the uppermost branches at the top of the tree. The tree was already swinging when a flock of geese flew above his head.

Woody called them asking for help. "Geese, geese, please, take me with you, so I can reach my mom on your wings."

The geese flew on but they told him: "There's another flock behind us, they will take you."

Woody searched the blue sky and saw more geese flying far away. When they got closer, he implored them:

"Geese, geese, please, take me with you, so I can reach my mom on your wings." But this flock wouldn't stop for the poor boy, either. They just said: "There is one more goose flying behind us, she'll take you."

The tree was already swinging dangerously when the last goose reached Woody. He shouted at her desperately: "Goose, goose, please, take me with you, so I can reach my mom on your wings."

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The goose flew down to Woody and in the last second, she took him on her wings. As soon as he sat down on her, the tree came cracking down to the ground.

They flew above the woods and the fields, and then he finally saw his home yard with the wooden house. The grey goose let him down on the roof of the house and took off to be with the rest of her friends.

But there was nobody in the yard. Woody climbed down the ladder and looked through the window into the house.

Both his parents were sitting at the table with plates full of soup but they weren't eating one bit. They were just sitting there, silently gazing at their plates. Indeed, his mother even had tears rolling down her cheeks.

'Are they that sad for me or did something worse happen to them?' thought Woody and went into his family home.

"Mom, dad, why are you sitting so quietly? Don't tell me you are mourning me. Stop crying, I'm back, safe and sound. And also quite hungry," announced Woody. His parents could not believe their eyes. His mother's eyes filled with tears again, but now they were tears of joy, because her beloved son was back home.

And ever since then, they lived happily together. And they didn't need to be afraid of the evil witch because the tree she chopped down to get to Woody crushed her along with her hut.