

## THE ADVENTURES OF TOM THUMB, PART I

Once there lived a magician named Merlin, and he was the magician for the court of the great King Arthur. Now Merlin was the most learned and skillful enchanter the world had ever seen and could take any form he pleased.

1. An enchanter is the same as:

- A) a wise man
- B) a magician
- C) a court jester

(B) An enchanter is a magician.

Once, he was traveling around the country as a poor old beggar, and he came to the home of a ploughman and his wife, and upon finding out that he was hungry, they invited him in, and the wife prepared good, hot soup for him.

2. As a beggar, Merlin happened upon the home of a:

- A) farmer
- B) shoemaker
- C) carpenter

(A) A ploughman is a person who ploughs, or a farmer.

As he ate, Merlin could not help but notice that the man and his wife were unhappy, for they both wanted a child very much.

"Why, I wouldn't mind," the wife said, "if he was no bigger than my husband's thumb!"

And straightaway, Merlin decided to grant her wish.

3. The ploughman and his wife had:

- A) no children
- B) one child
- C) several children

(A) They were unhappy because they had no children.

When the baby was born, he was so tiny that he could curl up for a nap in his mother's hand, and his regular cradle was a walnut shell lined with blue silk.

4. The baby was so tiny that he slept in a:

- A) teacup
- B) handkerchief
- C) nutshell

(C) He slept in a walnut shell.

Now the queen of the fairies came to see the little fellow, and she

fluttered down to kiss him and said, "You shall be called 'Tom Thumb.'"

Then she sent for some of the other fairies, and they dressed Tom in an oak-leaf hat, with a shirt of silk web that the spiders spun, and trousers of feathers of all different colors. And his little shoes were of mouse's skin, tanned with the downy hair inside.

5. Why do you think the queen of the fairies named the tiny baby Tom Thumb?

- A) He was no bigger than a thumb.
- B) He was all thumbs.
- C) He had no thumbs.

(A) She gave him this name because of his small size.

Time passed, but Tom never grew any bigger than his father's thumb!

Now when Tom started playing with the other boys, they played with cherry stones because they had no marbles as we have now.

6. What do you think cherry stones are?

- A) small red pebbles
- B) cherry pits
- C) the stones near a cherry tree

(B) Cherry stones are cherry pits.

And when Tom would lose all of his cherry stones in the game, he would slip inside another boy's bag and put some of the boy's cherry stones in his pocket, slip out of the bag, and so continue the game. He was a very cunning little boy, as you can see.

7. Tom was a very cunning little boy; this means he was very:

- A) clever
- B) dishonest
- C) small

(A) He was very clever.

One day, however, he was coming out of a bag, and the boy caught him and jerked the strings tight with Tom inside! "Now, little Tom," said the boy, "I've caught you and you shall pay for stealing!"

And with that, he shook the bag and Tom went flying around inside, hit by the cherry stones and badly bruised. He screamed and cried . . .

. . . and finally, the boy let him out. And poor Tom went limping home, having learned a very important lesson-the hard way.

8. Since Tom went limping home, he probably hurt his:

- A) head

- B) arms
- C) legs

(C) You limp when your feet or legs are injured or hurt.

A short time later, Tom's mother was making a pudding, and Tom, being very curious, climbed up to the edge of the bowl.

And when his mother's back was turned, his foot slipped, and he fell into the batter-head and ears!

And to make things worse, without his mother even noticing, she poured the batter into the pudding bag and put Tom and the pudding into the pot to boil!

Tom couldn't cry out because of the thick batter, but he kicked and squirmed and kicked some more . . .

. . . until his mother thought that the pudding was bewitched and threw it out the back door-bag and all!

9. Tom's mother thought her pudding was bewitched, or:

- A) spoiled
- B) enchanted
- C) cooked

(B) To bewitch something is to cast a magic spell on it.

A poor tinker who was passing by picked up the pudding and put it in his pack.

By this time Tom could cry out because the pudding was more solid, so he screamed and kicked some more, which frightened the tinker, and he threw the pudding down and ran away.

10. The tinker threw the pudding bag away because:

- A) he was no longer hungry
- B) it was too heavy for him to carry
- C) he was scared

(C) Tom's kicks and screams scared the tinker.

Well, the pudding bag broke all to pieces in the fall, and Tom crawled out. But how dreadful he looked, with batter hanging to his clothes. Oh, he really was a mess.

But when he got home, his mother picked him up and put him in a teacup for a bath.

And how Tom splashed! He loved to take baths.

Then he put on a fresh, clean nightgown and was sound asleep in no time.