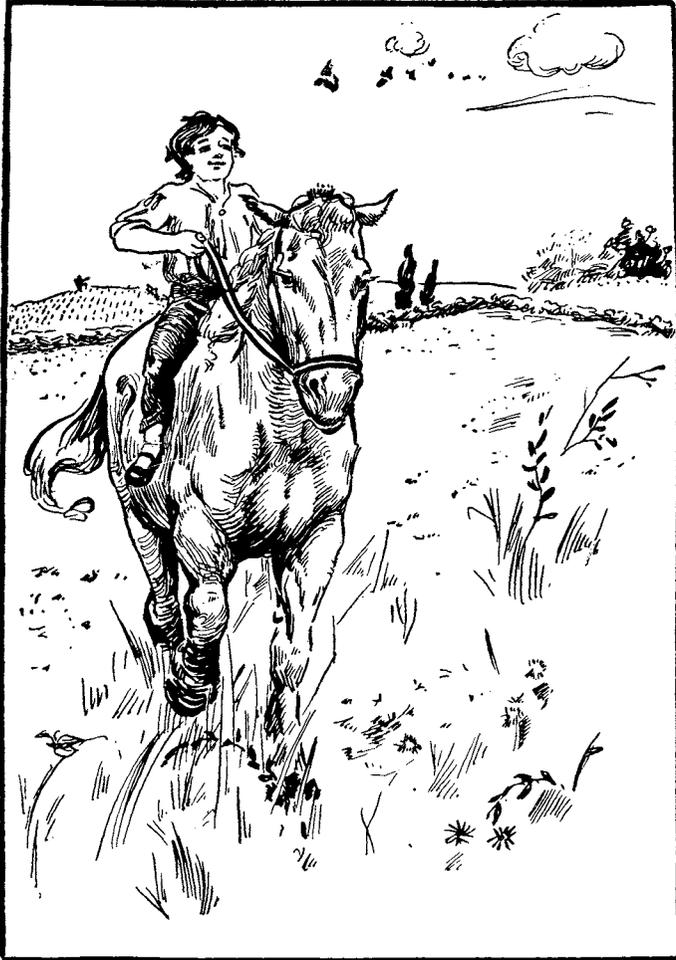


THE SANDMAN
More Farm Stories



HE HELD ON TIGHTLY BY THE ROPE

The Sandman
MORE FARM STORIES

BY

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To
the memory of
Little John
of long ago.

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THE CALF STORY



ONCE upon a time there was a farm-house, and it was painted white and had green blinds; and it stood not far from the road. In the fence was a wide gate, to let the wagons through to the barn. And the wagons, going through, had made a little track that led up past the kitchen door and past the shed and past the barn and past the orchard to the wheat-field.

In that farm-house lived Uncle Solomon and Uncle John; and little Charles and little John and their mother Aunt Deborah; and little Sam and his mother Aunt Phyllis. Uncle Solomon was Uncle John's father, and Uncle John was the father of little Charles and little John. And little Sam was Uncle Solomon's little boy.

One day in the summer, little Charles and little John were playing about not far from the kitchen door, and Uncle Solomon came along. He said, "Boys, I wish you would go to the barn and let the calf out into the cow-yard." So the little boys thought that would be fun, and they ran along past the shed, and up the place where the wagons went into the barn. And they both pushed

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hard on one of the big doors, and it slid back a little way, and they went in.

At one side of the barn, next to the cows' place, was a kind of pen. It had a fence of boards all around it, about as high as little John's head; and in one side of the fence was a gate. This pen was to put a horse or a cow or a calf in, and any horse or cow or calf that was in it wasn't tied at all, but was just loose, so it could walk around any way it wanted to. So they called the pen a loose-box, or a box stall; and it was about as big as a boy's little room that he sleeps in.

When the little boys went into the barn, a calf was in the loose-box, and they had to let the calf out into the cow-yard. So they opened the gate at the top of the sloping place that led down to the cow-yard, and then they opened the gate to the loose-box, and they saw the calf. It was just standing still, looking at them, with its big ears out straight. Little Charles called to the calf, and it came a very little way nearer, but it wouldn't come out and it wouldn't come near enough for little Charles to touch it. So he went into the loose-box to catch the calf, and little John stood by the gate.

When little Charles went into the loose-box, the calf gave a jump over to the other side, and then it made another big jump and ran past little Charles, and out the gate of the loose-box, and knocked little John down. Then it ran out the gate to the sloping place, and down the sloping place to the cow-yard. Little John got up and laughed, for he wasn't hurt, and little Charles came out of the loose-box, and they both went to the doorway of

THE CALF STORY

the sloping place and looked down, and there was the calf standing by the wall, looking up at them.

So, while the little boys stood there, looking at the calf, little John thought of something. And he said, "Charles, I bet you can't ride that calf." And little Charles said, "I bet I can."

So little Charles went down into the cow-yard to ride the calf. And the calf waited by the wall until little Charles got pretty near, but not near enough to catch it, and then it made a big jump and kicked up its heels and went running past little Charles over to the other side of the cow-yard. And little Charles went over to that side to catch it, but it jumped past him again; and so he tried for a long time to catch the calf, and chased it back and forth across the cow-yard, but he couldn't catch it.



At last the calf was in the corner of the cow-yard, and it waited a little too long, so that when it tried to jump past little Charles, he caught it by the tail and jumped up on its back. But he had to hurry so, to get on, that he got on the wrong way around, with his face toward the calf's tail, and he was holding on to the calf's tail with both hands.

The calf didn't like to feel a boy on its back, and it jumped about and kicked up its heels and ran all about the cow-yard. And little Charles didn't dare to let go the calf's tail, because he was afraid he would fall off and hurt himself, the calf was jumping so hard. And he couldn't turn around with his face the right way,

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because he didn't dare to let go the tail. So the calf ran all around the cow-yard, with little Charles on its back holding to its tail with both hands, and the calf jumped and kicked, trying to throw little Charles off, but he held on tight. And little John stood in the doorway of the sloping place, and he thought it was a good joke and he laughed very hard. But little Charles didn't laugh. He wanted to get off the calf's back, but he didn't dare to, while the calf was jumping about so hard, and the calf wouldn't stop. So at last he called to little John and told him he must go and call Uncle Solomon.

Then little John ran off as hard as he could, and he found Uncle Solomon and told him that little Charles wanted to get off the calf but he couldn't. And Uncle Solomon didn't know what he meant, but he went with little John to the barn, and stood in the doorway to the sloping place, and saw the calf jumping about with little Charles riding backwards and holding to its tail. He couldn't help laughing at first, but then he went down into the cow-yard and caught the calf, and little Charles got off. And Uncle Solomon told both the little boys that they must not ride on the backs of young animals, because young animals were not strong enough, and their bones weren't hard, and it might hurt them very much. So the little boys said they wouldn't do it again. Little Charles didn't want to, anyway.

Then Uncle Solomon went back, out the cow-yard gate, past the barn, to the garden, where he was working. And the little boys went back and played by the shed.

And that's all.



THE CALF JUMPED AND KICKED

THE HATCHET STORY



ONCE upon a time there was a farm-house, and it was painted white and had green blinds; and it stood not far from the road. In the fence was a wide gate to let the wagons through to the barn. And the wagons, going through, had made a little track that led up past the kitchen door and past the shed and past the barn and past the orchard to the wheat-field.

One day, about the middle of summer, it was little John's birthday, when he was six years old; and he was out by the shed, playing. He had some grass and some hens' feathers that he had found, and he had stuck them in his hair, and he had put some mud on his face, and he was pretending that he was an Indian, with eagle's feathers in his hair and his face painted. So, while little John was a pretend Indian, hiding behind a little bush, Uncle John came walking along, and he held one hand behind him, and he called to little John.

Then little John jumped up and gave a great yell, as loud as he could, and he ran at Uncle John. And Uncle John laughed to see the feathers in his hair and the

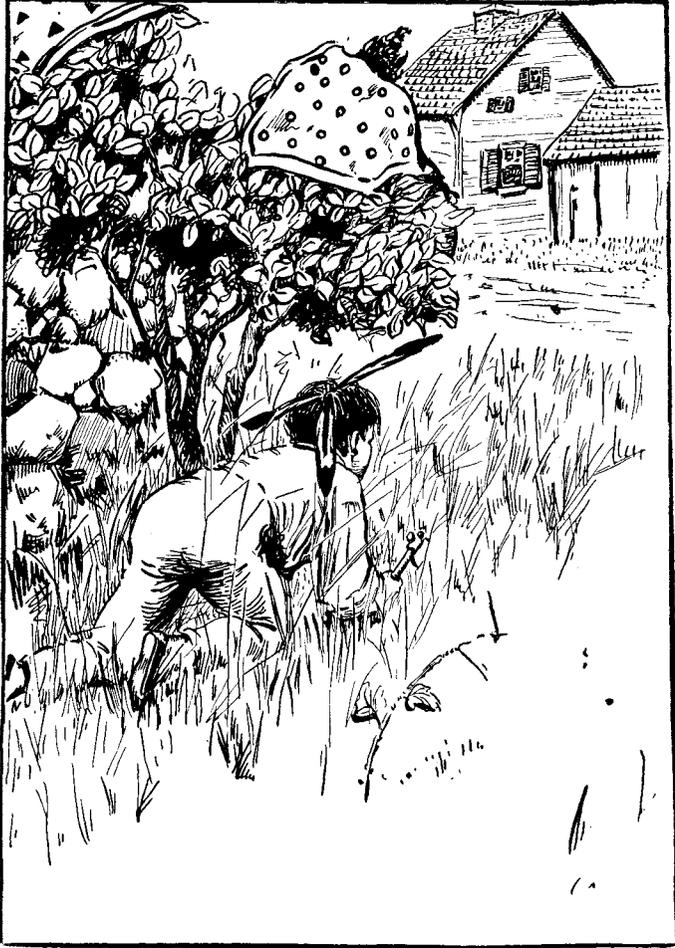
THE HATCHET STORY

mud on his face, and he said, "Here's a present for you, John." Then he held out the hand that had been behind him, and there was a little hatchet. And little John took the hatchet, and he was so excited and so pleased to get a real hatchet, that he hardly remembered to thank his father. But Uncle John knew, and he was glad that little John was pleased, so he laughed again, and told little John not to cut himself with the hatchet, and then he went away again.



So little John went back and hid behind his bush, and pretended that he was the Indian and the hatchet was his tomahawk, and he looked around to see what there was that could be pretend people. Now there was a place on the shed that Uncle John had just mended. It was a place where the wheels of the wagons had knocked off the boards, and Uncle John had put on some new boards that were bright. Little John saw these new boards, and they were very bright and shining in the sunlight, and he thought they would be good for pretend people.

So he began to crawl out the way he thought real Indians would do. He had his hatchet in one hand, and he crawled down as flat as he could in the grass, so that none of the pretend people could see him, and he went very slowly. He crawled along from the bush, that was near the wall of the garden, as far as the little wagon



HE CRAWLED DOWN AS FLAT AS HE COULD
IN THE GRASS

THE HATCHET STORY

track. There wasn't any grass in the wagon track, and there was only a little between the track and the shed. So, when little John got as far as the wagon track, he jumped up, and he made a great noise, the kind he thought Indians would make, and he ran right at the bright boards that he was pretending were people, and he waved his hatchet about and whacked it right into the boards, a lot of times.

Aunt Deborah was in the kitchen, getting dinner, and she heard little John yelling and she heard the noise of the whacks, and she ran right out, because she was afraid that little John was getting hurt. But when she saw him whacking the new boards with his hatchet, she was angry and sorry, and she called out to him, and made him stop whacking the boards. She said, "John, see what great cuts you are making in those nice new boards that your father has just put on."

And little John stopped being an Indian and looked and saw that he had made a lot of great cuts in the new boards, and he was sorry. Then he went with Aunt Deborah to the kitchen door, and into the house. And she took his new hatchet, and put it away until the afternoon or the next day, when he wouldn't be so excited about it. And then she washed the mud off his face, because it was almost dinner-time; but she didn't say any more about the boards.

When Uncle John came in to dinner, little John went up to him, and he said, "Father, I want to show you something." And Uncle John wondered what it was, but he went out again with little John. So little John led

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his father to the place where the new boards were, and he showed the great cuts where he had whacked with his hatchet, and he said, "I was pretending Indian, and I forgot. I'm sorry." Then Uncle John gave little John a pat on the head, and he smiled and said, "No great harm done, John. But be more careful." And little John said, "Yes, I will."

Then little John took hold of his father's hand, and they went in at the kitchen door to their dinner.

And that's all.

THE FISHING STORY



ONCE upon a time there was a farm-house, and it was painted white and had green blinds; and it stood not far from the road. In the fence was a wide gate to let the wagons through to the barn. And the wagons, going through, had made a little track that led up past the kitchen door and past the shed and past the barn and past the orchard to the wheat-field.

One day in the winter, when it was cold, Uncle Solomon said to Uncle John, “Well, John, I guess we might get some pickerel to-night.” And Uncle John said, “Yes, father, I guess we might.”

So Uncle John went out to the shed, and he got little John’s sled. On the sled he put Uncle Solomon’s axe and all the wood the sled would hold. Then he went to the barn and got the two fish-lines that were on a little shelf in the corner, and he unwound the lines from the sticks they were on, to see that there weren’t any knots or kinks in them, and that they were strong enough. Then he put a little piece of red flannel on each hook for bait. The pickerel were so greedy and so hungry in the

THE SANDMAN: MORE FARM STORIES

winter that they would bite at the red flannel without stopping to see whether it was good to eat or not. Then Uncle John put the fish-lines with the axe and the wood on the sled, and he went into the house.

All the people in that farm-house had supper early in the winter, because it got dark so soon, and there wasn't much to do. When they had eaten their supper, Uncle Solomon and Uncle John and little Charles and little John all put on their thick coats, and around their necks they wound long scarfs that they called comforters. They wound these comforters around their necks once, and then over their ears and the tops of their heads, and tied them under their chins, and the ends hung down, with tassels on them. Aunt Deborah and Aunt Phyllis had knit the comforters of wool, and they kept Uncle Solomon and Uncle John and the little boys very warm. Then they all put on their caps and their thick mittens and started.

Uncle Solomon walked ahead, carrying the lantern. Then came the two little boys, dragging the sled with the wood on it, and Uncle John walked behind, with the fish-lines in his pocket. They went down the little track, out the wide gate, into the road, and along the road until they came to the place where the road went near the pond. Then they turned down there, and went out on the ice that was thick all over the pond. Uncle Solomon walked along until he came to a place that he thought was a good place for fishing, and there he stopped and put the lantern down on the ice.

When Uncle Solomon stopped, they all stopped,

THE FISHING STORY

and Uncle John took the wood and began to build a fire. Uncle Solomon took his axe and began to cut a hole in the ice. He cut a round hole, and it took some time to cut it, because the ice was so thick. When he had cut all the way around, he pushed with the handle of his axe on the round piece of ice that was left in the middle, and he pushed it down into the water, under the other ice. So there was a round hole with no ice over it.

By the time Uncle Solomon had got the hole cut and the ice pushed down, Uncle John had built the fire and lighted it from the lantern, and it blazed up and made a great light. Then Uncle Solomon and Uncle John took the two fish-lines and let the hooks with the pieces of red flannel on them down into the water, through the hole. They didn't have any bites for a long time; but after awhile the fish had seen the light of the fire and had come swimming over to see what it was, and they began to bite. So, pretty soon, Uncle Solomon felt a great bite, and he pulled up his line quickly, and there was a big pickerel on the hook, and it was as long as little John's sled. Uncle Solomon took the pickerel off the hook very carefully, because pickerel are very cross fish and they have sharp teeth and bite very hard. Then he let little Charles take that fish-line and fish with it.



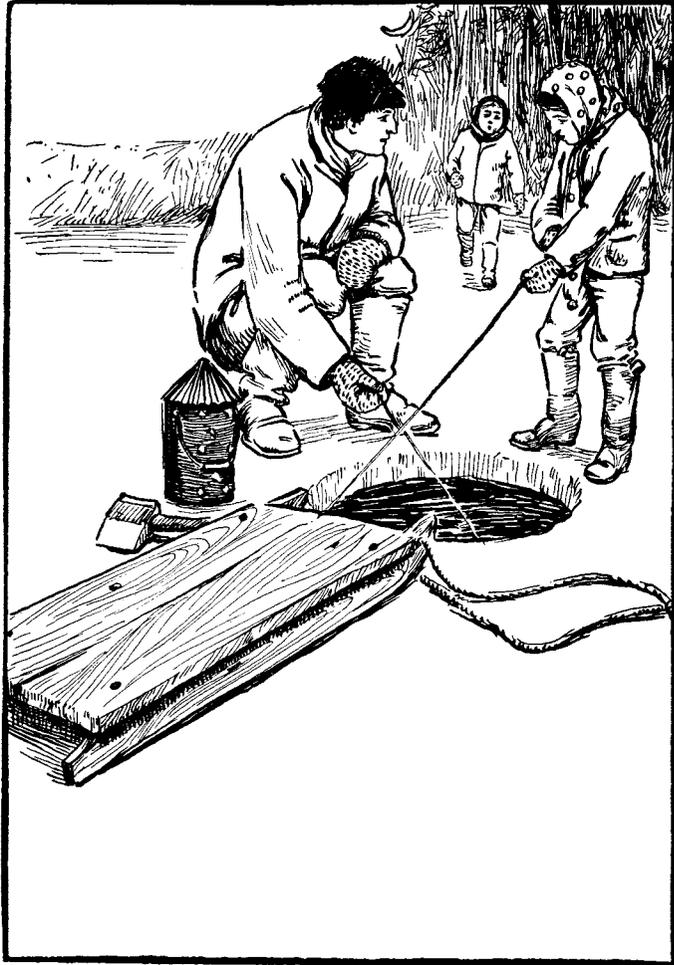
Pretty soon after Uncle Solomon had caught that pickerel, Uncle John felt a great bite, and he pulled up his line quickly, and there was another big pickerel, but it wasn't quite so big as Uncle Solomon's. And Uncle

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John took that pickerel off the hook very carefully, and then he let little John take his fish-line and fish with it. So the two little boys fished through the hole in the ice, and the fire was burning and making a light all around, and keeping them warm.

After they had been fishing for awhile, little Charles felt a bite and tried to pull his line in quickly, but the pickerel pulled so hard that he couldn't. So Uncle Solomon took hold and helped little Charles, and they pulled in a pickerel that was bigger than Uncle John's, and almost as big as Uncle Solomon's. And in a little while, little John felt a bite, and he caught a pickerel, too. And little John's pickerel was just big enough for him to pull it in all alone.

By the time little John had caught his pickerel, the fire had almost burned out, and it was time to go home again. So Uncle John fastened all the pickerel on a twig that he had broken off a tree on the bank, and he put them all on the sled, and he put Uncle Solomon's axe on the sled. Then Uncle Solomon took up the lantern and started walking over the ice, and the two little boys walked behind him. Then came Uncle John, dragging the sled, because the little boys were too tired to drag the sled, going home. They walked along to the shore that was the nearest to the road, and they turned into the road and went along the road until they came to the farm-house. And they turned in at the wide gate and walked up the little track to the kitchen door. And the little boys went right in and took off their coats and caps and mittens and the other clothes and went to bed,



HE LET LITTLE CHARLES TAKE THAT FISH-LINE

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and Uncle John put the sled away, and the axe, and he gave the pickerel to Aunt Deborah.

The next day, all the people in that farm-house had the biggest pickerel of all for breakfast, and it was very nice. And for dinner, they had the other three pickerel, and they were very nice.

And that's all.