

Little Chickpea

In a quiet village, surrounded by golden wheat fields and meadows full of wildflowers, lived a mother and her three sons. The older boys were Pere and Joan. The youngest was known as Little Chickpea because he was so tiny. Though he was the smallest, he was quick-witted and the bravest of the three, always finding a solution when problems arose.

One summer morning, their mother asked them to collect firewood in the forest so she could light the fire and cook lunch. With the sun shining above, the brothers packed their bags and set off along the familiar forest path.

On the way, Pere and Joan began teasing their little brother.

“Little Chickpea, are you sure you can walk all the way? Aren’t you too small for this sort of work?” Pere asked with a mocking laugh.

Joan followed his brother’s example.

“Perhaps you should go back to Mum and leave the firewood to us.”

But Little Chickpea was not intimidated. He smiled confidently.

“Don’t worry about me. I may be small, but I can do everything you can, and more!”

He continued with his head held high, refusing to let their teasing upset him.

Inside the forest, the scenery began to change. The trees grew taller and leafier, and sunlight filtered through the branches, making dancing shadows on the ground. The boys began gathering wood, but as they went deeper, the paths became darker and more tangled. The wind sighed through the trees, moving the branches as though the forest itself were alive.

Suddenly, they found an old house with weathered wooden walls and a little window showing a faint light inside. It looked mysterious among the dense trees. Curious, they approached. Little Chickpea, who was more cautious than his brothers, warned them:

“Perhaps we should knock before going in. We don’t know who lives here.”

But Pere and Joan laughed at his concern.

“You’re too frightened! There’s nothing to worry about. We know this forest!” Joan said, opening the door at once.

Inside stood a table laid with bread, cheese and a jug of fresh water, as if someone had prepared lunch. Without thinking, the older brothers began eating eagerly, never wondering where the food came from or whom it belonged to.

Meanwhile, Little Chickpea felt increasingly uneasy. Something was wrong. Hearing a noise outside, he looked through the window and saw a figure approaching slowly between the trees. It was an old

woman with a strange appearance and a piercing gaze. Her hair was white as snow, but there was a wicked gleam in her eyes. Little Chickpea realised she was a witch!

His heart beating fast, he turned and shouted:

“Quick, hide! A witch is coming!”

But his brothers, their mouths full of bread and cheese, laughed again.

“Don’t be so scared. There’s no witch! Stop trying to be a hero.”

Their laughter stopped when the door creaked open. The witch stood in the doorway, watching them with a wicked smile.

“What are you doing in my house?” she asked in a deep, frightening voice.

The older boys froze, their trembling hands still holding pieces of bread. Little Chickpea was afraid too, but stayed calm. He knew he must not panic.

“We’re very sorry, madam. We came looking for shelter and didn’t mean to cause trouble. We were just leaving,” he said firmly.

The witch laughed with satisfaction and mockery, rubbing her hands together.

“Now that you’re here, you cannot leave without playing a little game.”

The brothers exchanged bewildered looks, but felt they had no choice.

“If you solve my riddle, I’ll let you go. If not, I’ll turn you into soup!”

Then she gave them the riddle:

“I have keys, but no locks, and a space, but no rooms. You can use me to write, although I am not a pencil. What am I?”

Pere and Joan stared at each other, unable to answer. As time passed, their faces grew paler. But Little Chickpea smiled confidently.

“A keyboard!”

Surprised by his quick answer, the witch looked at him with admiration.

“You have won,” she said in frustration. “You may leave, but never come back!”

The three brothers ran from the house as fast as they could, their hearts still racing. When they reached home, their mother welcomed them with open arms, unaware of their dangerous adventure. For the first time, Pere and Joan looked at their little brother with respect and admiration.

“Little Chickpea, you’re the bravest of us all,” Joan admitted humbly.

From that day on, they stopped teasing him and treated him like the hero he was. Little Chickpea continued having adventures with his brothers, proving that true courage comes from your heart and your cleverness, whatever your size.