

Sample I

The Three Wishes

Once upon a time a poor woodman lived with his wife in the middle of a forest. Every day he went out to cut down trees and sold the timber to a local carpenter.

One day he set off as usual and found a big old oak tree which would provide lots of wood. But as he swung his axe to strike the first blow, he heard a little voice begging him not to fell the tree. He looked down and there was a tiny fairy, pleading with him to stop what he was doing.

The woodcutter was so surprised that he laid down his axe and promised to spare the tree.

The fairy was so grateful that she granted him three wishes.

‘The next three things you or your wife wish for will be given to you, whatever they are,’ she promised him.

The woodman set off on the long walk home, to tell his wife what had happened. But by the time he got home he was famished.

‘I’d love a big plate of sausages ...,’ said the woodman. No sooner had the words left his lips than a plate of tasty sausages came tumbling down the chimney.

Then the woodman remembered what the fairy had promised. He told his wife the whole story and she was not pleased.

‘You mean we could have had anything in this world and you asked for a plate of sausages?’ she raged. ‘I wish a sausage would stick to the end of your nose!’

As soon as the words were out of her mouth, a sausage rose off the plate and attached itself to the end of the woodman’s nose.

The woodman pulled at the sausage. His wife pulled at the sausage. Then they both pulled together, but it was completely stuck.

The woodman's wife tried to pretend that the sausage looked quite good at the end of her husband's nose. But the woodman knew what he had to do.

'I wish my nose was back to normal,' he said. And his wish was instantly granted.

The woodman and his wife never did get a fine house, or smart clothes, or a horse and carriage. But they did, at least, have a wonderful meal of sausages.