

## The rat

Once upon a time, there lived a family which bred cows. And like all dairy farmers, they stored their cheese in the cellar. But in this cellar, there was a hole and every night a rat would sneak through the hole and nibble the cheese.

One day, the father of the family decided it was time the nibbling stopped.

He said: "Enough is enough! I am going to kill the rat."

He switched his lantern off, took a big stick and waited for the rat to come and nibble the cheese. When the rat saw the stick, he got so afraid that he rushed out of the cellar through the keyhole. But the keyhole was so small that his skin got torn.

The father told him: "Now, go away with your skin. Have it mended by whoever you like but I never want to see you again in my cellar nibbling on my cheese!"

The poor rat with his torn skin, limped away, not knowing where to go. He walked a little and went to see a cobbler. He told him his story.

"My skin got torn because I rushed through a keyhole away from a local farmer who didn't want me to nibble his cheese. Please give me a silk thread so that I can sew up my skin."

The cobbler said: "Go and see the pig, ask him for a few of his bristles so I can make you a silk thread."

The rat went off to see the pig. He walked up to a barn, called the pig and asked him:

"Pig, pig, could you please give me a few of your bristles so that the cobbler can change them into a silk thread to sew up my skin?"

The pig answered: "I would love to give a few of my bristles but to do so I need to eat some flour. Go and see the miller and bring me back some flour. Then I shall give the bristles to the cobbler and he will change them into a silk thread to sew up your skin."

So the rat walked off and searched for a mill; when he found one, he called the miller and asked him:

"Miller, miller, could you please give me some flour to feed the pig who will then give a few of his bristles to the cobbler who will change them into a silk thread to sew up my skin."

The miller answered: "I can give you some flour but to do so I need wheat grains."

So the rat walked off to find grains. He walked across the country and saw afar a field, all dried-up with nothing more than a few wheat ears spiking up.

"Field, field, could you please give me some grains for the miller? He will make flour to feed the pig. The pig will then give a few of his bristles to the cobbler who will change them into a silk thread to sew up my skin."

The field answered: "the earth is too dry, I need manure. Find a cow and ask her for manure."

The rat set off again wondering if the story would ever end. He entered a barn and called the cow.

"Cow, cow, could you give me some manure for the field? The field will grow grain for the miller; The miller will produce flour to feed the pig. The pig will then give a few of his bristles to the cobbler who will change them into a silk thread to sew up my skin."

The cow answered: "I can give you manure but to do so I need to eat grass."

The rat wobbled away to find grass. He went into a meadow.

"Meadow, meadow, could you give me some grass for the cow? She will produce manure for the field. The field will grow grain for the miller. The miller will produce flour to feed the pig. The pig will then give a few of his bristles to the cobbler who will change them into a silk thread to sew up my skin."

The meadow answered: "I will give you grass but I need to be watered."

So the rat took off once more to look for water. He found a small stream and told his story over again:

"Stream, stream, could you give me a little water for the meadow? The meadow will grow grass for the cow. The cow will produce manure for the field. The field will grow grain for the miller. The miller will produce flour to feed the pig. The pig will then give a few of his bristles to the cobbler who will change them into a silk thread to sew up my skin."

The stream answered: "Yes, I shall give you water."

And the stream became larger and larger and larger.

And the rat drowned.

So did the story.

And this is the end.