

The Revenge of the Roses

Harold was the meanest kid in the street. In fact, he was so mean that his own mother always had wondered if they had given her the wrong baby at the hospital, because his sisters were all very sweet and thoughtful. When he was very young, Harold used to like to throw his toys out of the playpen or crib, and then cry and make a very annoying fuss until someone came to pick them up. As he grew a little older, he really enjoyed teasing the cat and spilling her water—especially on hot days. By the time he was in fourth grade, his greatest pleasure was in picking roses from the bushes. He wasn't particular about the kinds of roses—red ones, yellow ones, white ones, old ones, even rosebuds would do. He couldn't explain why he enjoyed picking them. He didn't even put them in vases. He was just—well—mean!

One day, he thought he heard a rose crying. It made some sort of a high-pitched sound. Over the next few weeks, he learned to listen closely, and he noticed that the sound had a pattern. Quite by accident, while doing some studying, he noticed that the signal for an S O S in Morse Code sounded similar to the pattern of noise made by the roses. He went outside and picked three more roses, so he could check his theory. Yes, he was right—the high-pitched sound each one made as he picked it was almost identical. It appeared to

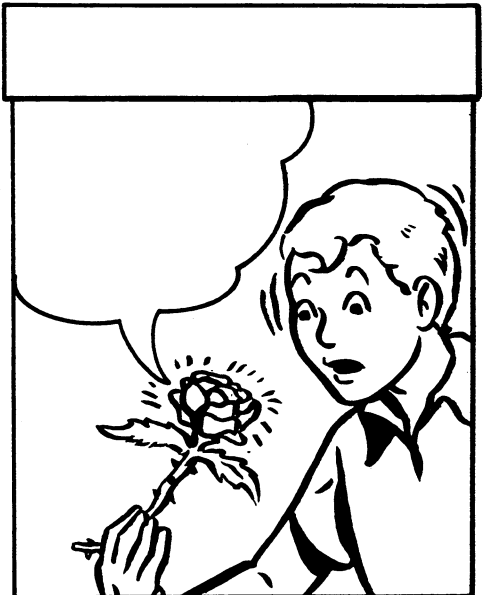
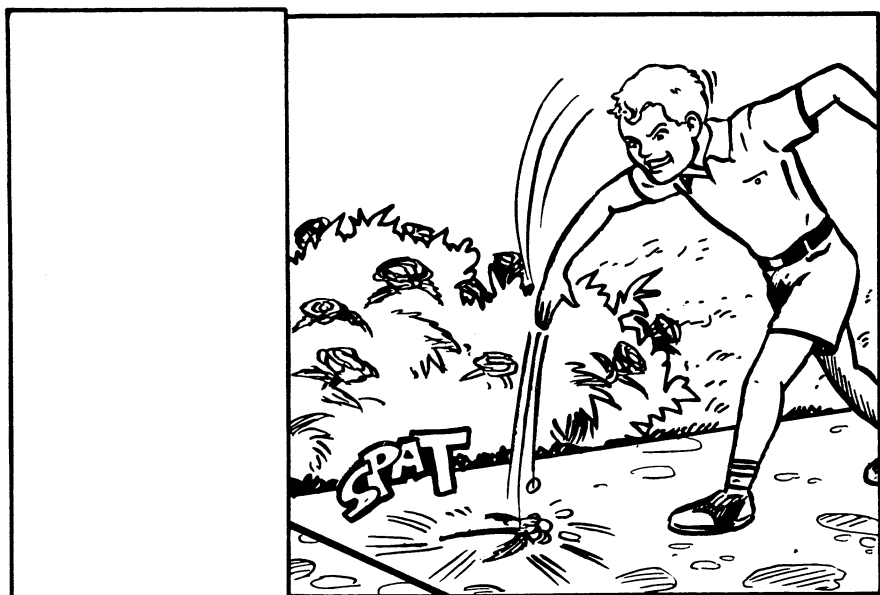
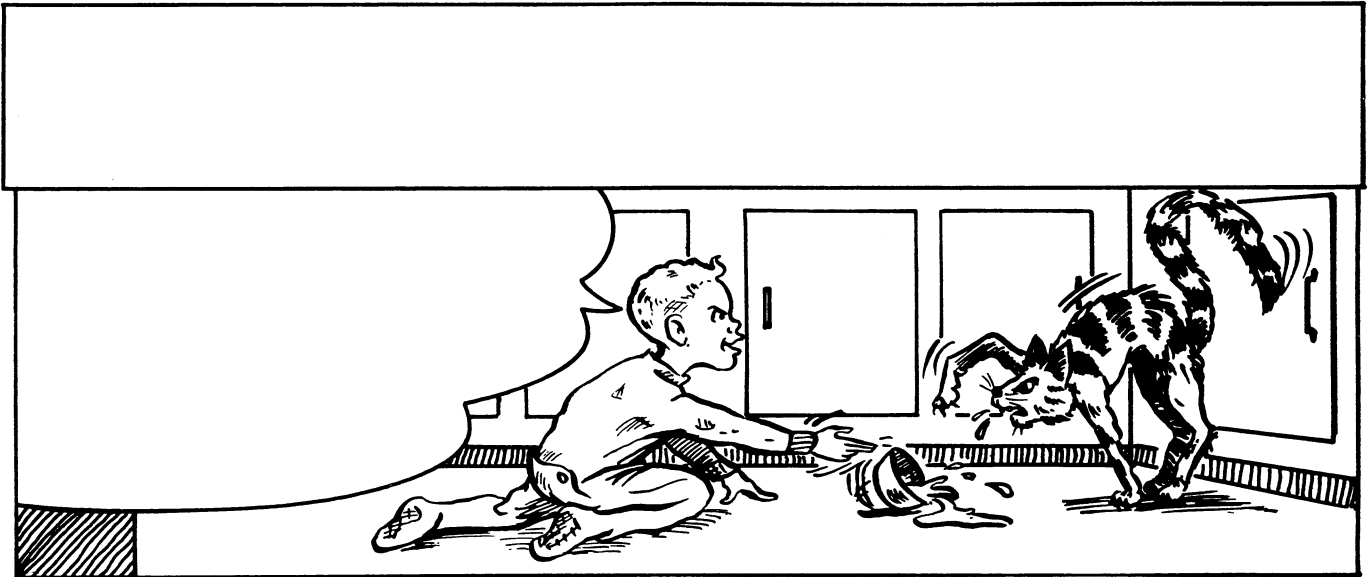
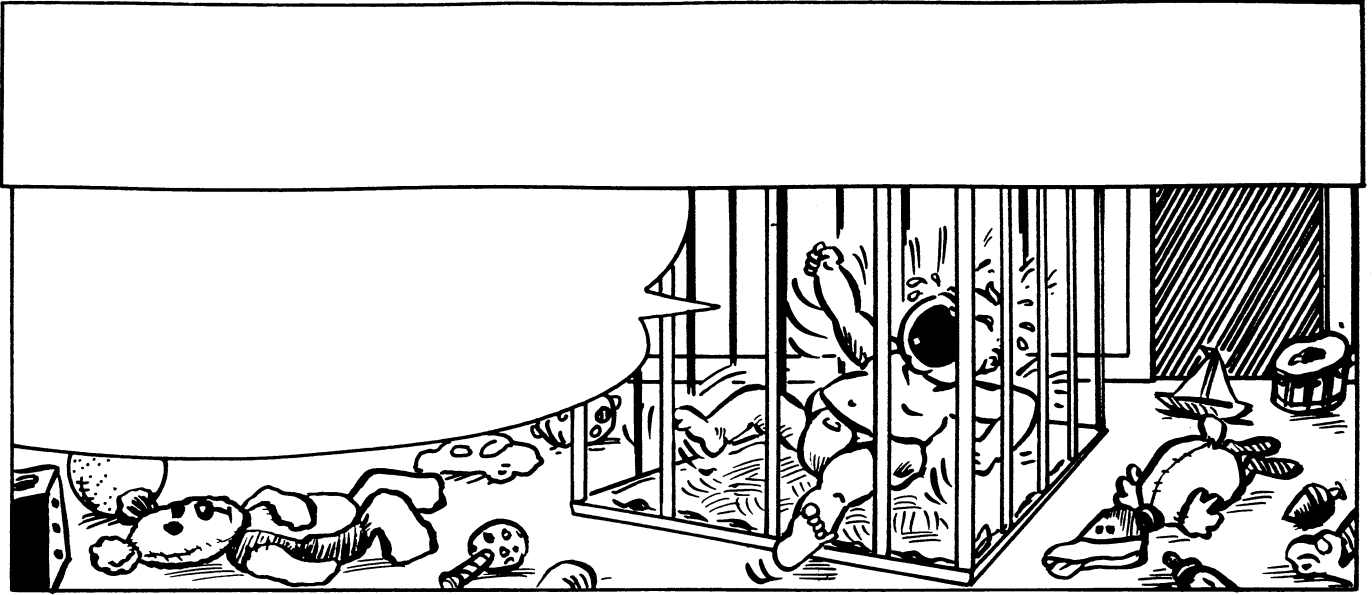
be a signal, but to whom could the roses be signalling? Harold found this very interesting, but he did not know how to go about finding out this information.

—One Saturday night, as Harold was just dozing off, he heard a strange sound outside. Suddenly a brilliant light shone through his window from the lawn, so he got up and peeked through the curtains. What do you think he saw?

An enormous ship, shaped something like a leaf, was landing in his backyard, emitting a high-pitched, familiar sound. Harold was extremely excited, and he hurried out into the yard. Perhaps these were visitors from outer space. Lucky Harold—to be the first to see these visitors!

Slowly the door of the spaceship opened. Very carefully, one of the occupants of the ship started to come out of the spaceship. It had extremely unusual legs, with something resembling thorns running up and down each side. Within moments, the entire body of the creature stood on Harold's lawn. It was a giant rose, and it looked very angry.

"We're looking for a kid named Harold," it said. "We've heard that he's the meanest kid in the street, and we want to teach him a lesson."



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I. WORDS

A. The first message by telegraph in Morse Code was sent in 1844. To find out what that message was, fill in the blanks in the following sentences or parts of sentences taken from the story.

1. _____ he was very young, _____ used to like to _____ his toys out of the _____.
2. One day, he _____ he heard a rose _____ .
3. _____ the next few weeks, he _____ to listen closely.
4. Red ones, yellow ones, _____ ones, old ones, even _____ would do.
5. He didn't even _____ them in vases.
6. It appeared to be a _____ _____, but to _____ _____ could _____ roses be signalling?

Now, write the circled letters, in order, in the spaces below.

Morse's first telegraph message was:

_____ !

B. The words in the first column below were taken from the story. Circle the word that means the same or almost the same. You may re-read parts of the story for clues.

explain	tell	excited	enough
enjoyed	frightened	liked	inside
identical	instead	helping	same
dozing	sleeping	doing	drinking
similar	smaller	alike	listen
brilliant	bringing	belong	bright
enormous	huge	empty	elephant
emitting	evening	sending	ending
familiar	family	farmer	known
perhaps	maybe	parties	paper

II. IDEAS

A. Circle T if the sentence is true. Circle F if the sentence is false.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Harold's sisters were just as mean as he was. | T | F |
| 2. Harold enjoyed teasing the cat. | T | F |
| 3. Harold pulled the petals off daisies. | T | F |
| 4. Harold heard a high-pitched sound made by grasshoppers. | T | F |
| 5. One night, a spaceship landed in Harold's back yard. | T | F |

B. Underline the sentence that best describes the main idea of the story.

1. Harold threw his toys out of the playpen.
2. Harold had three sisters.
3. Harold would have to pay for being so mean.

Waiting Out the Storm

Peter had remained too long at his friend Andrew's house; it was already dark outside, and he was supposed to have been home hours ago. As he hurried along the narrow path through the darkness, he wished he had his jacket with him, because it was cold, and a long way from home when the storm hit. Unprepared for a storm, Peter knew that he would have to find some shelter—immediately.

He saw one lonely light about 100 metres ahead. As he got closer, he could see that it came from a little, isolated cottage that he had often passed. But he had always passed it quickly, because everyone in town said that the woman who lived in that cottage was a witch. He didn't really believe in witches, but just in case, he made it a habit always to walk quickly when he passed the little cottage.

As he approached the cottage, he saw her outside, probably searching for her cat. As she saw Peter, she asked, "What are you doing way out here, at this time of night, and in this weather, son?" He explained to the woman his reason for being out in the snow-storm, and she invited him to wait out the storm in her cottage. Now Peter had two choices, neither of which he was too happy about, but staying in a warm cottage seemed to be a better choice than trudging through the storm without a jacket, so Peter accepted her invitation.

He entered the warm, cosy cottage with the old woman, and almost immediately, he heard a man's voice saying, "Please sit down, son." He looked into the friendly face of a man much younger than the old woman, and he asked, "Who are you?"

"I'm Joseph," the man said, "and I live here with my mother. Aren't you lucky that she saw you out there in the storm? We were just preparing our evening meal. Will you join us?"

As the old woman stirred some stew in a large battered pot on the stove, Peter took the opportunity to get a good look at her. Surely

all the gossip was true! She was a witch if ever a witch existed. Her skin was wrinkled and papery-looking, her grey hair hung in long strings down her back, she had a crooked tooth that made her mouth look misshapen, and she had a big, dark mole on her chin with her chin with two grey hairs growing from it.

During the meal, the woman enquired about Peter's school, family, and friends. Peter was convinced that she was merely trying to distract him from the truth, for he had an overwhelming fear that he would never see school, family, or friends again.

After they had eaten, Joseph looked out the window to check the weather. "The storm is worse than ever, so you had better stay with us until morning. Sorry that we don't have a phone, but your parents will probably figure that you stayed with your friend. You can sleep right next to the stove, to keep warm."

Peter tried to relax in the cot next to the stove. But it was very dark, and the noise from outside was extremely frightening. Branches were blown by the wind, and they hit the sides of the cottage. Peter thought he would never be able to relax, but he kept repeating, "There's no such thing as a witch, no such thing as a witch," until he fell asleep.

After what seemed like only a few minutes, he was awakened by some noises in the kitchen. Someone was moving around. He hardly dared to open his eyes, as if to keep them closed was to keep out what was about to happen. But he knew he had to see who was there! Very slowly, he opened one eye. In the early light of the dawn, he could see that the old woman had picked up a large knife and was coming toward him. What could he do? She was coming closer! He was so frightened, he couldn't even move! But she walked right past him, reached for a large cutting board that hung from a hook on the wall, and turned back toward the kitchen.

"Peter, you'll be happy to know that the storm is over. We'll all have some breakfast together before you return home," she said as she began to prepare the morning meal.