

Tales Retold

by Roland Harris

Peter and the dark corner

A story for seven-year-olds

This is Peter.

Peter was afraid.

When he climbed the twisty tree with his school friends, he was not afraid. When he had to fight a big bully at school, he was too angry to be afraid. When he first went to the great city and heard the train growl and scream from the tunnel, making the lights sway, he was not afraid – not after the first time.

But when he went upstairs to bed at night, then he was afraid. He had to pass the dark corner. There the shadows were never still; when Peter disturbed them with his trembling candle, they gnashed and snarled furiously, in silent fury. One night, his candle was blown out; the shadows pressed down on him – like a wave, like a huge bird's wings. He could not pass the dark corner.

Pebble the dog, curled up in his basket upstairs, wondered why his young friend was so late; then went to sleep.

Peter's mother and father were far away, and he lived with his uncle and aunt. "Stuff and Nonsense!" roared Peter's uncle, "Shadows! Afraid of shadows! Who's ever heard of a boy afraid of shadows!" The house trembled at his voice.

Peter went out to play with his friends. He jumped a ditch none of them would dare. He climbed a steep quarry to get their lost ball. He reached the top branch of the twisty tree and shook down conkers. But at night, he was too scared to venture past the dark corner. His red-faced uncle took him by the hand, very scornful.

That night, Peter dreamt a dream. The shadows were chasing him. A terrible shadow with eyes of flame led them. That was the king of shadows. They chased Peter even down the chimneys, in and out of cupboards, and

ties the sheets of his bed in knots. He ran out. There stretched an open field, the sun blazing on it! Peter ran to it, for he knew the shadows could not cross there. But the king of the shadows slid under the grass blades and still came on, like a slithering snake. Peter was in despair. He seized a stick and turned. With a great shout, he charged at his pursuer, and grasped him by the throat. The snake turned to a flame. Peter dashed him into the river. He turned to a cloud. Peter shouted and blew him to pieces. He turned into a flood. Peter swept him into the sea. He turned into a whale. Peter struck him with a harpoon. He turned into a dead log. Peter cleft him with an axe. He turned into a twisty tree. Peter wrestled with him, and threw him down. Peter was more terrible than the king of shadows! Suddenly behind him, he heard a voice. "Well done, little Peter," it said gently, "you have not given in to me; yet do not think you have beaten me to the ground. No man will ever do that. But you will not fear me at the dark corner, ever again. You need not be afraid, any more."

"You need not be afraid, any more." It was Peter's mother, and she was lifting him up. He had fallen by the window at the head of the stairs, and was tangled in the curtains. "You had a dream, and fought with the moonbeams. See, it is only the curtains stirring in the wind, and the moon's shadows flickering. I have come back to take you home. Do not be afraid any more."

Patrick and the city men

A story retold for children with reading difficulties

Patrick was Irish. He was an Irishman. He lived in Ireland. He lived in the country. He was a simple Irishman. He was a countryman. He was not used to town ways.

One day Patrick the Irishman went away from Ireland. He went over the sea. He went over the sea to America. He went to New York, in America. The simple Irishman went far from Ireland. He went to the big town, but he was not used to town ways. He was a countryman.

The men in the town thought they would make fun of Patrick, because he was so simple and was not used to town ways. He lived in the town now. He had to get used to town ways. If he did not get used to town ways,

the men in town would make fun of him.

One day two very clever men from the town were walking down the street in the town. They saw Patrick the Irishman coming down the street. The townsmen thought they would have some fun out of him. They stopped Patrick at the corner of the street.

“Patrick,” said one of them, “Have you heard the news?”

“Have I heard the news?” said Patrick. “No. I have not heard the news. Not a word of it. What is the news?”

“Why, Patrick,” said the other townsman, “have you not heard? The devil is dead!”

“Yes, Patrick, the devil is dead!” said the first townsman.

“Is he now?” said Patrick, “Now that is news indeed.” He looked at the two clever men from the town. He looked at the two clever men for a long time. Then he put his hand in his pocket. He took out two dimes. He gave each of the clever men a dime. Then he went on down the street.

The two clever men from the town stood there looking at their dimes. Then one of them called out after Patrick “What is the dime for?” he called.

“In Ireland, where I come from,” said Patrick, “when the head of a family dies, we always give the orphans a present.”

Patrick and the rattlesnake

A story retold for children with reading difficulties

Patrick had a friend, Jack. Jack and Patrick were Irish. They were very poor, were Jack and Patrick. And they were very simple. Because Jack and Patrick were very poor, they had gone away from Ireland over the sea to America. They looked for work in America. Because they were not used to town ways, they looked for work in the country.

They heard of a farm where work was to be had. They asked some men the way to the farm. The men saw that they were Irish. They saw too that they were simple. They saw that they were not used to town ways. The men thought they could have some fun out of Jack and Patrick.

“How do we get to this farm?” said Patrick.

“Go to the corner of the street,” said the men, “where the town ends. Then go across the field until you come to a stile. Climb over the stile and you will see the farm at the top of the hill.”

“Thank you,” said Jack.

“Thank you,” said Patrick

“Just one thing,” said the men, “Mind how you go by that stile. There’s danger by that stile.”

“Danger?” said Patrick.

“Danger?” said Jack.

“Danger,” said the men, “You’ll have heard tell in Ireland of demons. Demons are dangerous. You’ll have heard tell in Ireland of the devil himself. The devil himself, he is dangerous too. Well, by that stile there is danger more dangerous than demon or devil.”

“Is that so now,” said Jack

“That is news indeed,” said Patrick.

“Yes sir,” said the men, “There are rattlesnakes by that stile.

“Rattlesnakes!”

“So mind how you go by that stile. Take a big stick, and if you see one of them rattlesnakes, hit hard, and hit fast.

“Hard,” said Patrick, and:

“Fast,” said Jack. “We will that,” they said.

So they took a big stick. They went to the corner of the street, where the town ends. There Patrick was unlucky. The sole of his boot came off. He was very poor. So he took off his boot, and went barefoot. Jack took the big stick, and on they went. They went across the field on the way to the farm. At first they went fast. Then they did not go so fast.

“What does a rattlesnake look like?” said Patrick.

“I do not know,” said Jack, “There are no rattlesnakes in Ireland. Besides, I have a big stick.”

“Ireland is a good country to be in,” said Patrick.

“I am not afraid,” said Jack.

“I did not say you were afraid,” said Patrick, “Besides, you have a big stick.”

“When we come to the stile,” said Jack, “I will go first. If I see a rattlesnake, I will hit it with the big stick, hard and fast. That will be the end of the rattlesnake. Then you can climb over.”

“You can not see very well,” said Patrick.

“You can go first if you like,” said Jack.

“Not at all,” said Patrick, “you are the man to go first. Besides, you have the big stick.”

So they went across the field. They came to the stile. The grass by the stile was very long grass. There was a wind blowing down the hill from the farm. The long grass swayed in the wind. The long grass looked as if it was full of rattlesnakes.

“You go first,” said Patrick

“That is what I am doing,” said Jack. “I am not afraid”

“There is no need to be afraid of rattlesnakes,” said Patrick. “Not if you have a big stick and boots on.”

So Jack went to the stile. The stile was made of old planks, sat on edge. The planks were very old. In the planks, there were many knot-holes. Some of the knot holes were large, some were small. Suddenly Jack hit very hard and fast with his big stick. He hit down at the grass. There was a loud crack.

“Is that a rattlesnake?” said Patrick

“It is that,” said Jack. “The biggest you ever did see.”

“Is it a dead rattlesnake?” said Patrick

“It is now,” said Jack. “That loud crack was the end of it.”

“Is this the rattlesnake?” said Patrick. He bent down in the long grass

“What else would it be?” said Jack.

“It looks like an old stick in the long grass,” said Patrick

“The rattlesnake must have got away,” said Jack.

So he went to the stile again. He took his stick. He climbed on the old planks with the knot holes. He climbed over the stile. Then Patrick went to the stile.

“Keep your big stick ready,” he said to Jack

“It is ready,” said Jack. He raised his big stick in the air, ready to hit the rattlesnake hard and fast. Patrick climbed onto the stile. He put his foot on the edge of the first plank. Then he looked down for rattlesnakes. He went to climb on the next plank. But he was unlucky. He put his big toe into a knot hole. His big toe poked through the old plank. He thought he had been caught by a rattlesnake.

“Help!” shouted Patrick. “Help! It’s got me! Hit it Jack, hit it with that big stick!”

“Hard and fast,” shouted Jack. And down came the big stick to hit Patrick’s big toe. Patrick shouted again.

“Hit it again, Jack!” he shouted. “It’s bit me!”

So Jack, who could not see very well, hit it again. But after that, it was Patrick who took the big stick on the way up the hill to the farm.

Patrick at work

A story retold for children with reading difficulties

Patrick did not keep his work on the farm very long. He went to the town to look for work. He went to work with some men. These men were builders. They were building a tall house. To build the house, they needed many bricks. These bricks were lifted to the top of the building in a big tub. The tub was fastened to a long rope. This rope went down a pulley. It went over the pulley. Then it went down to the ground again.

Patrick's work was to fill the tub with bricks. When he had filled the tub with bricks, he pulled on the rope. In this way, he sent the bricks up to the men building the house. Patrick thought he was going to like this work. He thought it would be less dangerous than rattlesnakes. But Patrick was unlucky.

One day, he filled the tub with bricks. He filled it right to the top. He thought he would show the men that he was a good worker. So he filled the tub right to the top with bricks. Then he took the rope in his hands. He pulled on the rope. The tub of bricks was very heavy. It was so full of bricks. It was so full that it was almost as heavy as Patrick. He pulled and pulled. He pulled it right to the top of the lift. That will show them what a good worker I am, he thought.

At the top of the lift there was a plank. On the top of the plank there was a barrow, filled with bricks. As the tub got to the top of the lift, it caught the barrow. It upset the barrow. The bricks in the barrow fell on to the tub. But not all the bricks. Some fell down the lift. The bricks that fell down the lift fell on to Patrick's toes.

Patrick held on to the rope. But the tub was now heavier than Patrick. So the tub started to come down. Patrick started to go up. Half way up, Patrick met the tub coming down. The tub gave him a nasty crack on the shoulder. He held on to the rope. He went up to the top of the lift. There, he hit his head on the plank and caught his hand on the pulley. The tub hit the ground and most of the bricks fell out.

Patrick held on to the rope. He was now heavier than the tub so the tub started to come up. Patrick started to go down. Half way down, he met the tub coming up. The tub gave him another nasty crack. Patrick went down on the ground. He landed on the bricks. He hit them rather hard.

At this point, Patrick lost his nerve. He let go of the rope. The tub started to come down. It gave Patrick a heavy crack on the head. In hospital, Patrick decided that he would leave America, and go back to Ireland. In Ireland, there are no rattlesnakes. And in Ireland, buildings are not so tall.

The Mean old Blacksmith

A story retold for children with reading difficulties

There was once a mean old blacksmith. He was so mean, that nobody liked him. Nobody liked him in the village where he lived. They all said he was mean. But he was not mean to strangers.

One day, the mean old blacksmith was working at his forge. As he was working, he looked up. There by the forge stood an old man. He was in rags. He looked ill. He looked hungry too. But he said nothing.

At last, the mean old blacksmith said:

Well, sit down. Have a bit to eat.

So the old man sat down. He ate some food. While he ate the food, the blacksmith went on with his work. Clang! Clang! Went the hammer. He got to a difficult bit of the work. Clang! Clang! When the blacksmith looked up, there was no old man to be seen. In his place, a very tall figure. Like a flame, but a gold key in its hand.

Don't suppose you know me, said the figure like a flame.

Can't say I do know you, said the mean old blacksmith.

I'm Saint Peter, said the flame.

Sure, said the blacksmith. But he was very unsure really.

Once a year, said Saint Peter, I come down to earth. The first man I find who does right, I give him three wishes. So I am giving you three wishes.

Three wishes, said the mean old blacksmith. Well, this is my first wish. These village folk, they call me mean. But I call them lazy. I work all day at my forge. They come and sit in this chair of mine, just talking and wasting time. And time is money. They sit here in my chair, wasting my time.

Well? said Saint Peter.

Well, that chair is a rocking chair and I wish first that when someone sits in that rocking chair it will rock and rock and hold them until I let them go. Hold them fast and rock and rock until they shout Let me go!

That is my first wish.

Not much of a wish, said Saint Peter.

That's as may be, said the mean old blacksmith. Now, this is my second wish. You see that hammer – almost every day that hammer gets lost. How does it get lost – I'll tell you. The kids from school, they come into my forge. They borrow my hammer for a game. They hide my hammer. They leave it in the long grass. So I wish second that when someone touches that hammer it will hammer and hammer and not stop hammering until I let them go. Hold them fast and hammer and hammer until they shout Let me go! That is my second wish.

Not much of a wish either, said Saint Peter.

That's as may be, said the mean old blacksmith. Now, this is my third wish. My last wish. See there, right in front of my forge? That's a bush I'm proud of. It's a thorn-bush. These village folk, they break it to bits. They drive their carts by my forge. They drive too close. The wheels of their carts break my thorn-bush. So I wish third that when someone touches that thorn-bush it will grab them, and grab them, and stick them head first in where the thorns are long and thick and sharp. Hold them fast there and not stop holding them until I let them go. That is my third wish.

That's three wishes, said Saint Peter. Three wishes as mean as any I've heard.

That's as may be, said the mean old blacksmith.

That mean old blacksmith got meaner and meaner. He played mean tricks on all the village folk with his three wishes. Nobody liked him. Nobody. He got so bad the Devil was worried. So he sent for the mean old blacksmith.

One day the blacksmith looked up from his forge. There by the door stood a little demon.

Don't suppose you know me, said the little demon.

Can't say I do, said the blacksmith

I'm sent to take you back with me, said the demon.

That's as may be, thought the blacksmith. Right, he said, I'll be with you. Come on in while you wait for me.

The little demon saw the rocking chair. He sat down in it and started to rock. Started to rock, and went on rocking. Every time he started to get

up, the chair rocked more. It rocked and rocked, worse than any rough sea. The little demon started to turn from red to green.

Let me go! Shouted the demon.

And promise never to come back?

Never, said the demon, I promise.

All right, said the blacksmith. And he let the little demon go. Next day he looked up from his forge again. There by the door stood a big demon.

Don't suppose you know me, said the big demon.

Can't say I do.

I'm sent to take you back with me – and right now, said the demon.

That's as may be, thought the mean old blacksmith. He went on with his work. He took the hammer. Got to finish this before I go, he said.

Give me the hammer, said the demon. We've got to hurry.

The big demon started on the work. The hammer went up and down. Clang! Clang! It went. Soon the work was finished. Right, said the blacksmith, the work is finished now. I'm with you.

But the hammer went on hammering. It hammered and hammered until at last the big demon shouted let me go!

I'll let you go, said the mean old blacksmith, if you go right back where you came from.

Yes, yes, said the demon, anything you say.

And promise never to come back?

Never, said the demon, I promise. You will never see me here again!

All right, said the blacksmith. And he let the big demon go.

Sure enough, next day the blacksmith looked up a third time from his forge. There by the door stood no little demon. No big demon either. It was the Devil himself.

And I suppose you don't know me either? Said the Devil.

Can't say as I would want to, said the blacksmith.

I've come to take you back with me, said the devil.

Come in and sit down while you wait, said the blacksmith.

No thank you, said the devil.

Give me a hand with this hammer then, said the blacksmith, so that I can finish the work off.

Not likely, said the devil. Work finished or not, you are coming with me right now.

That's as may be, thought the mean old blacksmith.

And how will you get me to come? He said.

How will I, said the Devil. I'll drive you with a stick off your own thorn-bush, that's how.

No! shouted the blacksmith: take me with you any other way, but don't touch my thorn-bush.

But there was a mean look in the devil's eye. He went right to the thorn-bush and started to break off a stick from it. That thorn-bush, it grabbed the devil by the tail and grabbed him by the foot, and stuck him head first in where the thorns are long and thick and sharp. Did he yell! Did he kick! But it was no good. The thorn-bush held him fast. Let me go! He shouted.

I'll let you go, said the mean old blacksmith, if you go right back where you came from.

Yes, yes, said the devil

And promise never to come back?

Never, said the devil, not me nor any demon either.

All right, said the blacksmith. And he let the devil go.

Well, the mean old blacksmith worked on at his forge. No more devils or demons came to worry him. But he was as mean as ever. In the end, his time came to die. And he died. Up he went to Saint Peter. But the blacksmith had been too mean to get in there. So he started to go down the other way.

It happened that day that two little devils were playing by the gate of Hell. They saw the mean old blacksmith coming down the road to hell. So they called the Devil. He did not waste any time. Shut the gate! He shouted. Shut it and bolt it!

I suppose you know me, said the blacksmith.

Indeed I do, said the Devil.

Let me in, then.

Let you in? Not likely, said the Devil. I've had enough of you. And he gave him a fiery coal from the fires of Hell. Here, he said, you clear off right now, and start a hell of your own.

So he did. There was nothing else left for him to do.

Patrick's wonderful cure

A story retold for children with reading difficulties

When at last Patrick got back to Ireland, he was a wiser man. A very much wiser man. When Patrick got back to Ireland, he had learnt a lot. He had learnt so much that he was able to get his own back. He got his own back twice, as you shall see.

The first time he got his own back was like this.

A new man came to live in Patrick's village. This new man was a foreigner. He came from England. A man from England was a foreigner to Patrick. Well, the new man came from England to live in Patrick's village. He was well off. He came for the peace and quiet. That was why he came to Patrick's village. There was no peace and quiet in England, he said. But in Ireland, in Patrick's village, there was peace and quiet. In Patrick's village, said the new man, people were kind. They were not mean, not greedy. They were kind people, quiet people.

That's as may be, said Patrick to himself, but they were not well off. Only the new man, the foreigner, was well off.

Well, next day the new man went for a walk. He went for a nice quiet walk in Patrick's village. There on the street was a man with a donkey. The man put a load on the donkey.

"Get on now", said the man to the donkey.

But the donkey would not get on.

"Well then" said the man with a donkey, "take that, you lazy brute of a donkey."

And he gave the donkey a blow with his fist.

The new man did not like the look of that. That was not peace and quiet, he said to himself. That was not kind.

He walked on. As he walked, he met a cat and dog. The cat and dog started to fight. A man came out on to the street and aimed a blow at the dog with a stick. Then he threw a bucket of water over the cat. The cat and dog ran off.

The new man, the foreigner, did not like the look of that. That was not a kind thing to do, he said to himself. That was not peace and quiet.

The next day, the new man went to the pub to get a drink. The pub was the best place to meet the people in Patrick's village. The new man

went there to meet the people. He wanted to tell them something.

He had a drink. They had a drink. The man from England said:

“I am an Englishman. I came to your village to find peace and quiet. I came to find kind people. But today I saw a man from your village hit a donkey. And I saw another man from your village throw a bucket of water over a cat.”

An Englishman does not like cruelty to animals. People should be kind to animals, not cruel.

“So I will give a pound to the first person I see who is being kind to an animal.”

“You will give a pound for that?” said the people in the pub.

“Yes, a pound”, said the Englishman.

“Well then”, said the man with the donkey, “I will carry the loads myself. For a pound I will carry the loads myself.”

Patrick had not been in the pub when the Englishman promised the pound. But he had been told about it by the man with the donkey.

That afternoon, the Englishman went for a walk. He went for the same walk every afternoon. So Patrick knew very well where the Englishman would be that afternoon. And just by chance Patrick decided to go for a walk too. He went for the same walk as the Englishman, but he went before him.

As the Englishman came to the corner of the lane, he saw Patrick. Patrick was kneeling at the side of the lane. He was holding something in his hand. The Englishman came up to Patrick as he knelt at the side of the lane.

“What are you holding there, my man?” said the Englishman.

“I am holding my poor hurt frog”, said Patrick.

“A frog?” said the foreigner from England

“Yes”, said Patrick, holding up his hand. “Look for yourself, sir. It is a poor hurt frog, for something has hurt its leg.” And indeed, the leg of the frog was badly hurt. It was very clear, indeed, that the frog was too badly hurt to live.

“The frog is too badly hurt to live”, said the Englishman.

“Not at all, sir”, said Patrick. “I will see what I can do for it. I will look after it like my own child, sir, I will nurse it like a baby. It is wonderful what kindness can do, sir. I can promise you that if the frog dies, it will be no fault of mine.”

“You are a kind man”, said the Englishman. “Indeed, you are the first kind man I have met here in this village. It does me good to talk with you.”

And he put his hand in his pocket to take out the pound to give Patrick. But just then, he thought of something.

“Tell me, my man, he said, were you at the pub this morning having a drink?”

“Having a drink, sir!” said Patrick, “I have my work in the morning. I have no time for having a drink in the morning.”

“Ah, then you will not have heard about the promise of a pound?”

“The promise of a pound”, said Patrick, “I was not there to hear of it.”

At this, the Englishman was very pleased. He was very pleased indeed.

“Here”, said he to Patrick, “here is the pound. Take it.” And he gave a pound note to Patrick.

“But sir, what is this for?”

“What for, my man”, said the foreigner, “I will tell you what for. It is for being the first man to do a kindness to animals. It is good to see a man who is not cruel in this village.”

“It is nothing but my duty”, said Patrick, putting the pound in his pocket. “Well now, he said, I will take the poor hurt frog home with me and see what I can do for it.” And he put the frog in his other pocket. This did not matter very much, for the frog was by that time dead.

“I tell you what, said the Englishman. If you can cure that frog, I will give you another pound for your trouble.”

“I can not promise”, said Patrick, “but we will see. It is wonderful what a little kindness and care will do.” And he went off home.

Ah, thought the Englishman to himself as he went on his walk, that is a fine man, a kind man, and an honest one.

The next day the Englishman called to see Patrick. He called to see how the poor hurt frog was getting on.

Patrick showed him a little box. In the box was some straw. On the straw was the frog. It had a big bandage on each leg, and it lay quite still.

“It does not look very well”, said the Englishman.

“Indeed, it is not very well”, said Patrick.

“Do you think you will be able to cure it?” said the Englishman.

“I will keep on trying”, said Patrick.

“It will be a wonderful cure if you do”, said the Englishman.

“It will indeed, sir”, said Patrick.

The next day and the next, the Englishman called again to see Patrick and his frog. Each day he was shown the little box. Each day the frog lay very still.

But the next day when he called there was a change. When he looked in to the box, he saw that the frog had its eyes open. It still had a big bandage on each leg, but its eyes were open.

“That is wonderful”, said the Englishman.

And the next day when he called to see Patrick, he saw that the frog had a bandage only on one leg. The other leg had no bandage on it. The frog was trying to hop about in the box.

“One leg is quite well, you see”, said Patrick. “The other leg still has to have a bandage on it.”

“I can see that it will get better now”, said the Englishman. “It is wonderful what a little kindness and care will do.”

Next day the wonderful cure was completed. When the Englishman called, the frog had no bandage on its legs at all. It was hopping about in the box. It was quite well.

“There you are sir”, said Patrick. “You can see for yourself. That frog is as well as it ever was. It looks as good as if it had never been ill at all.”

“It does, indeed”, said the Englishman. “You have kept your promise. And now I will keep mine.”

And he took out from his pocket another pound note and gave it to Patrick.

“You are very kind”, said Patrick. “Now that you have seen the frog cured, I will take it out and set it free.”

“It does not seem as big as it was”, said the Englishman.

“That is so”, said Patrick; “it did not eat for three days. Man or animal, we lose weight in illness”.

The frog hopped away. Patrick put the pound note into his pocket. “A wonderful cure, a wonderful cure”, said the Englishman.

And so it would have been, if it had been the same frog.

Bob the Poacher

A story retold for children with reading difficulties

Patrick had a friend named Bob. His friend was a bit of a rogue. All the people in the village knew that Bob was a bit of a rogue. But they liked Bob all the same.

There was a big house near the village. The big house belonged to a rich man. It was in a big wood. In the wood the rich man kept pheasants. Now, Bob was a bit of a poacher. All the people in the village knew that Bob was a poacher. And the rich man knew that Bob was a poacher, too. He did not like Bob. Bob liked his pheasants.

The rich man hired two keepers to catch Bob. The two keepers were named Mr. Cutts and Mr. Lewis. Mr. Cutts and Mr. Lewis went to the village pub. Bob was in the pub too.

“I hear there are poachers in these parts,” said Mr. Cutts.

“There are,” said Bob, “far too many poachers.”

“Well, we shall catch them, every one,” said Mr. Lewis.

“I hope you will catch them,” said Bob. “They give the village a bad name. Just ask me if you want any help to catch the poachers.”

“When I want your help I shall ask for it,” said Mr. Cutts.

Well, the two keepers tried all they knew to catch Bob poaching. They sat up all night long. They stayed all night outside Bob’s house. They stayed out in the rain. They stayed out in the fog. Mr. Lewis and Mr. Cutts stayed out night after night in cold, in rain, in fog, but they did not catch Bob poaching. Indeed, the one thing they did catch was a cold.

One night Mr. Cutts stayed hidden in Bob’s garden. He hid in the fog. Bob came out of his house very late. He looked around carefully, and then walked up the road. He walked a little way towards the wood. The pheasants were in the wood. Mr. Cutts was just going to follow him. But Bob turned around and walked back towards his house. He walked back very softly. Mr. Cutts stayed hidden in the fog.

“What a fine smell of roses!” Bob said out loud. “But it can’t be roses. There are no roses at this time of the year. It must be Mr. Cutts, the clever new keeper.”

And Bob walked into his house.

Soon after this Mr. Cutts fell ill. He had a bad cold after hiding in the bog outside Bob's house. Patrick told Bob. Patrick told Bob he had seen the doctor at Mr. Cutts' house. And keeper Lewis fell ill too. He had hurt his leg running after a poacher. Patrick had seen the doctor at his house too.

So the people in the village knew that Bob would be out poaching.

But the next night Bob and Mr. Cutts met again.

Bob was out walking near the big wood. He had a sack on his shoulder. The sack on his shoulder was full. Bob looked around carefully and then walked on. But Mr. Lewis and Mr. Cutts were hidden in the wood. The two keepers saw Bob. They called out to him to stop. But Bob ran away. The two keepers ran after him.

Bob was a fast runner. He ran so fast he might have got away. But he had a sack on his shoulder, and it was a full sack. He looked around, and the keepers were very near to him. He ran on, and got as far as the pond near the big house. There he threw the sack far out into the pond. The sack fell into the pond, and went under. Bob sat down by the pond.

"Got you this time," said Mr. Cutts.

"But is that you, Mr. Cutts?" said Bob. "I thought you were very ill in bed."

"Ah, we got you this time," said Mr. Lewis.

"And is that you, Mr. Lewis?" said Bob. "I thought you had a bad cold from staying out and looking for me poaching."

"You thought so," said the keepers, "but we got better when we knew you were out tonight. You were not so clever as you thought."

"What was that sack you threw into the pond?" said Mr. Cutts.

"A sack," said Bob, "a sack I found in my garden. Perhaps you left it there, Mr. Cutts, the night you were waiting in the fog. It felt as if it might have had pheasants in it. So I was on my way to your house with it."

"Is that so?" said Mr. Lewis. "You were on the way to Mr. Cutts' house with it, weren't you? Then what did you run away for?"

"I thought the poachers were after me," said Bob.

"I thought you would have known me, Bob," said Mr. Cutts, "by the smell of roses."

It was a very cold night indeed.

The pheasants were in the sack at the bottom of the pond. Mr. Cutts did not want to go in after them. And Mr. Lewis did not want to go into the pond to find the sack. The pond was deep in places. It was dirty. And it was very cold indeed.

“You go in after it,” said Mr. Cutts to Mr. Lewis.

“You go in,” said Mr. Lewis to Bob, “You threw it in.”

“I would, just to help you,” said Bob, “but the pond is too dirty. And I can’t swim. You would not want to send a man in who can’t swim.”

“You go in,” said Mr. Cutts to Mr. Lewis.

Keeper Lewis took off his clothes very slowly. He walked into the pond, up to his knees.

“I can’t find it,” he said.

“Look in the middle of the pond,” said Mr. Cutts.

Keeper Lewis walked into the middle of the pond. He was in up to his neck. The middle of the pond was deep. And it was very cold indeed.

Mr. Lewis stood in the middle of the pond, up to his neck in the cold, dirty water.

“Well, I think I will be off now,” said Bob.

“Oh no you won’t!” said Mr. Cutts.

Mr. Cutts took hold of Bob. Bob tried to get away.

But Mr. Cutts took a firm hold of him. He could not get away. But he tried. He tried hard. He thought with Mr. Cutts. They fought right by the pond. And at last, Bob had to give in.

“You come out,” said Mr. Cutts to Mr. Lewis. Mr. Lewis had not found the sack, but he came out quickly. He started to put on his clothes. His clothes had been by the pond side. But now not all his clothes were there. His trousers were not there. They could not be found. Bob said they must have gone into the pond in the fight.

“Mr. Cutts must have done it,” said Bob, “when he tried to stop me from going home.”

Next day, all the people in the village came to the pond. They came to the pond to help get the sack out. The rich man came from the big house too. He said he would give five shillings to the man who got the sack out of the pond.

Five men from the village went into the pond to try for the five shillings. Patrick went in too. At last, Patrick came out of the pond. On his shoulder he had the sack.

“Well done, Patrick,” said the rich man from the big house.

And he gave Patrick the five shillings.

All the people in the village thought this a bad thing of Patrick.

After all, Bob was a friend of his. The five men who had gone into the pond to look for the sack said that Patrick did not act like a friend.

“Five shillings is five shillings,” said Bob, “I do not blame Patrick a bit.”

“Well,” said the rich man, “open the sack, Cutts. Let us see what is in the sack.”

“It might very well be pheasants,” said Bob. “And as I found the sack in my garden they might be my pheasants. But as they might not be mine, I will give half of them to the owner.”

Mr. Cutts took a knife, and with the knife he cut the sack open.

He held up the end of the sack. There, for all the people of the village to see, lay a heap of cabbages!

“Cabbages!” said Mr. Cutts.

“Cabbages!” said the rich man from the big house.

“Cabbages!” said Bob, “now that is a pity. I had looked forward to a good dish of pheasant. I can eat cabbage any day. Ah, that is a pity. And to think of Mr. Cutts, the clever new keeper, and Mr. Lewis too, staying out all night for a sack of cabbages.”

“Cabbages!” said all the people in the village.

“Yes,” said Patrick, “I call to mind that I left a sack of cabbages in Bob’s garden. This must be my sack. Well now, that was a good deed of Mr. Cutts and of Mr. Lewis to find it for me.”

And Patrick put the sack of cabbages on his shoulder.

With his sack, he walked off home.

