

The One Who Hits the Cat...

Marilyn had already fallen asleep and it seemed to her that she could hear cats meowing in her sleep. She opened her eyes and saw the Sandman lying on his belly on the floor and meowing like a cat. The family's pet cat, ginger Ed was lying opposite him and tilting his head from side to side in the rhythm of the Sandman's meowing.

"What are you doing?" Marilyn asked.

"We're having a conversation," the Sandman replied.

"Can you speak cat language then?" Marilyn wondered.

"Of course I can. I can speak a lot of languages. This is my job,"

"And what is Ed telling you?" Marilyn enquired.

"Ed is telling me about an old piece of folk wisdom: the one who hits the cat won't get his horses growing."

"But we don't have any horses," Marilyn said.

"Exactly. This is why Ed didn't understand why the poor horses wouldn't grow if the cat got beaten up. Then I told him a story about how I went to a horse farm and what I saw there."

"Why don't you tell me the story as well?" Marilyn demanded.

"Alright," the Sandman agreed and Ed and he both

climbed into Marilyn's bed.

“So once I went to a horse farm to sprinkle dream sand. Not in the eyes of the horses, of course but in the eyes of Lucy, the little girl living there.

Lucy was a sometimes a little bit mean and loved nudging the family cat from time to time. It was not that the



cat was hurt or anything, but it did look a bit like teasing. When Lucy was still very small, it really wasn't a problem but as Lucy grew, also the meanie inside her kept growing. The poor cat tried to escape her but oftentimes he didn't succeed.”

Ed, who was sitting next to the Sandman, made a long sad meow and put his head on his paws.

The Sandman continued. “Once the family noticed that their horses had somehow shrunk. Both old and young horses had shrunk and were a lot smaller than before. Nobody knew the reason for it and everybody felt sad. The horses kept on diminishing and after a year they looked like piglets.

The young ones were only the size of a cat.”

“This can’t be possible!” Marilyn argued. “Now you’re talking total gibberish!”

“Hold on!” the Sandman said. “Let me finish.” Marilyn lifted Ed onto her belly and petted him gently. Ed started to purr in a little while.

“So,” the Sandman went on. “The horses kept on shrinking and in the end they were put in the rabbit run because



otherwise they just got lost. The smallest ones were sometimes taken inside where they could run around. They were actually quite cute to look at, especially the horsies who were as small as baby mice.

The farmer invited all kind of wise men to solve the problem. Some even came from abroad. All wise men were helpless and didn't know what to do. The horses went on shrinking.

Once when an especially tiny horse had climbed into Lucy's pencil case that was lying on the floor, Lucy accidentally used him as a rubber. Another time, the family cat ate some horses because he thought they were mice.

Once everybody had started to give up hope and there was not much left of the horses, a wise Norse man with a long white beard appeared on their doorstep. He said the same folk wisdom that I told you before: the one who hits the cat won't get his horses growing. Of course they discovered the one teasing the cat very quickly after that. Lucy said she was sorry for a hundred times but that didn't get her off the punishment."

"Is that all?" Marilyn asked. "What about the horses?"

"Once Lucy stopped teasing the cat, the horses started to blow up like balloons. In less than a month, they were as big as they had been before. Some grew a little bit too much and couldn't fit the stable anymore. Then Lucy nudged the cat



very gently and the oversized horses were back in their right measurements.”

“I have never ever teased Ed,” thought Marilyn and fell asleep, dreaming of many horses.

“It’s a good thing we have no horses,” Ed thought and fell asleep right there, on Marilyn’s belly.

The Sandman sat on the edge of the bed, kicking his heels for a while, and then hurried to work.

Crybaby Lena

Sandman seemed especially happy today. He got a huge handkerchief from his pocket, blew his nose strongly and snickered to himself.

“Today I went to put a very sad girl to sleep,” the Sandman said. “I’ve never cried so much before in my entire life, you know.”

“But why are you so happy when the girl was so sad?” Marilyn asked.

“Hold on, let me tell you the story from the beginning. I didn’t really know the reason why she was sad at first,” the Sandman said. “She was just sad and that was it. Everything we tried to discuss seemed sad straight away.”

“Sometimes it’s the same thing with me,” Marilyn said.