

The Sandman, Marilyn, and Sheep



It all started on one regular evening. Mum and dad were too tired from work to tell a bedtime story to their little Marilyn. It was already well after nine, but without a bedtime story Marilyn just could not fall asleep. She tried to force her eyes shut and imagined a large flock of sheep like mummy had taught her. The sheep kept jumping over the fence one after another – woosh and woosh.

„One, two, three, seven, fifteen, one hundred, many ...“ Marilyn counted the sheep.

She could not count very well yet, so she counted as many as she knew how to:

„One, two, three, seven, fifteen, one hundred, many ...“

„What are you doing here?“ someone suddenly asked right next to Marilyn's ear. Marilyn was startled, opened her eyes and saw a real Sandman next to her in bed.

„I-I am counting sheep,“ she stammered to answer the little man's question.

„Oh, don't bother!“ the Sandman said. „It doesn't work every time. Once you know all the numbers then you can try again. It will work better then.“



„Oh, I see,“ Marilyn remained in thought.

„That's right,“ the Sandman confirmed, and took quite a handful of sand out of his bag.

„I should better sprinkle some sand in your eye.“

„Sand, really?“ Marilyn looked curiously into the Sandman's palm.

„Yes, sand, you know,“ the Sandman answered. „Well, sleep-sand.“

„Please don't do it!“ Marilyn pleaded. „Better tell me a story! Tell me a proper bedtime story!“ The Sandman made big eyes and mumbled reluctantly:

„I don't get paid for that, you know.“

„But tell it for free!“ Marilyn kept asking, „without getting paid.“

„For free, for free,“ the Sandman hesitated. „You can't get anything for free these days.“

Now Marilyn started crying. Her nose was runny and tears were flowing uncontrollably.

„Wait, wait!“ the Sandman tried to console the little girl. „Children are not supposed to cry while falling asleep!“

„Nobody would tell me a bedtime story!“ Marilyn wept and the Sandman's heart started to melt.



„Alright, I will try. But only a very short one.“ He thought for a while and then became quite serious.

„You know, now that I think about it, it turns out that I don't even know any proper bedtime stories.“

„But make it up!“ Marilyn recommended.
„Just go ahead and make it up!“

„It's easy to say,“ the Sandman scratched his head. „I will have to tell you a made-up story then ...“

„Let it be a made-up story,“ Marilyn agreed, „as long as it's a story!“

The Sandman lied down on his side, got comfortable with his hand supporting his head, and tried to get started somewhere.