



By Howard Pyle  
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**Once** upon a time there was a man whose name was just Master Jacob and nothing more.

All that Master Jacob had in the world was a good fat pig, two black goats, a wife, and a merry temper—which was more than many a better man than he had, for the matter of that.

“See, now,” says Master Jacob, “I will drive the fat pig to the market to-morrow; who knows but that I might strike a bit of a sale.”

“Do,” says Master Jacob’s wife, for she was of the good sort, and always nodded when he said “yes,” as the saying goes.

Now there were three rogues in the town over the hill, who lived in plenty; one was the priest, one was the provost, and one was the master mayor; and which was the greatest rogue of the three it would be a hard matter to tell, but perhaps it was the priest.

“See, now,” says the priest to the other two, “Master Jacob, who lives over yonder way, is going to bring his fat pig to market to-morrow. If you have a mind for a trick, we will go shacks in what we win, and each of us will have a rib or two of bacon hanging in the pantry, and a string or so of sausages back in the chimney without paying so much as a brass button for them.”

Well, of course that was a tune to which the others were willing to dance. So the rogue of a priest told them to do thus and so, and to say this and that, and they would cheat Master Jacob out of his good fat pig as easily as a beggar eats buttered parsnips.

So the next morning off starts Master Jacob to the market, driving his fat pig before him with a bit of string around the leg of it. Down he comes into the town, and the first one whom he meets is the master priest.

“How do you find yourself, Master Jacob?” says the priest, “and where are you going with that fine, fat dog?”

“Dog!” says Master Jacob, opening his eyes till they were as big and as round as saucers. “Dog! Prut! It is as fine a pig as ever came into this town, I would have you know.”

“What!” says the priest. “Do you try to tell me that that is a pig, when I can see with both of my ears and all of my eyes that it is a great, fat dog?”

“I say it is a pig!” says Master Jacob.

“I say it is a dog!” says the priest.

“I say it is a pig!” says Master Jacob.

“I say it is a dog!” says the priest.

“I say it is a pig!” says Master Jacob.

Just then who should come along but the provost, with his hands in his pockets and his pipe in his mouth, looking as high and mighty as though he owned all of that town and the sun and the moon into the bargain.

“Look, friend,” says the priest. “We have been saying so and so and so and so, just now. Will you tell me, *is* that a pig, or *is* it a dog?”

“Prut!” says the provost, “how you talk, neighbor! Do you take me for a fool I should like to know? Why, it is as plain as the nose on your face that it is a great, fat dog.”

“I say it is a pig!” bawled Master Jacob.

“I say it is a dog!” says the provost.

“I say it is a pig!” says Master Jacob.

“I say it is a dog!” says the provost.

“I say it is a pig!” says Master Jacob.

“Come, come,” says the priest, “let us have no high words over the matter. No, no; we will take it to the mayor. If he says that it is a pig we two will give you ten shillings; and if he says it is a dog, you will give the animal to us as a penance.”

Well, Master Jacob was satisfied with that, for he was almost certain that it was a pig. So off they marched to the mayor’s house. There the priest told all about the matter, for he was used to talking. “And now,” says he, “*is* it a pig, or *is* it a dog?”

“Why,” says the mayor, “I wish I may be choked to death with a string of sausages if it is not a dog, and a big dog and a fat dog into the bargain.”

So there was an end of the matter, and Master Jacob had to march off home without his pig and with no more in his pockets than he had before. All the



Master Jacob comes to y<sup>e</sup> town  
with his fine, fat pig and there falls in  
with the Priest and the Provoost.



same, he saw what kind of trick had been played on him, and, says he to himself, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. If one can pipe another can whistle; I'll just try a bit of a trick myself." So he went to his wife and told her that he had a mind to do thus and so, and that she must do this and that; for he thought of trying his hand at a little trickery as well as other folks.

Now, as I told you before, Master Jacob had two goats, both of them as black as the inside of your hat at midnight; moreover, they were as like as two spoons in the same dish; for no one could have told them apart unless he had lived with them year in and year out, rainy weather and clear, as Master Jacob had done.

Well, the next day Master Jacob tied a rope around the neck of one of the goats, took down a basket from the wall, and started off to the town over the hill, leading his goat behind him. By and by he came to the market place and began buying many and one things, until his basket was as full as it could hold. After a while whom should he see coming along but the priest and the provost and the mayor, walking arm-in-arm as bold as you please.

“Halloa, Master Jacob,” said they, “and what have you there?”

“The blessed saints only know that,” said Master Jacob. “It may be a black cat for all that I know; it *was* a black goat when I left home this morning.”

And what was Master Jacob going to do with his little black goat?  
That was what they should like to know.

## Master Jacob takes his black goat to town.



“Oh,” said Master Jacob, “I am about to send my little black goat on an errand, if you will wait you shall see for yourselves.”

Then what did he do but hang the basket around the goat’s neck. “Go home to your mistress,” said he, “and tell her to boil the beef and cabbage for dinner to-day, and, stop! Tell her to go to Neighbor Nicholas’s house and borrow a good big jug of beer, for I have a masterful thirst this morning.” Then he gave the goat a slap on the back, and off it went as though the ground were hot under it. But whether it ever really went home or not, I never heard.

As for the priest, the provost, and the mayor, you may guess how they grinned at all of this. Good land sake’s alive! And did Master Jacob really mean to say that the little black goat would tell the mistress all that?

Oh, yes; that it would. It was a keen blade, that little black goat, and if they would only come home with him, Master Jacob would show them.

So off they all went, Master Jacob and the priest and the provost and the mayor, and after a while they came to Master Jacob’s house. Yes, sure enough, there was a black goat feeding in the front yard, and how should the priest and the provost and the mayor know that it was not the same one that they had seen at the market-place! And just then out came Master Jacob’s wife. “Come in, Jacob,” says she, “the cabbage and the meat are all ready. As for the beer, Neighbor Nicholas had none to spare, so I just borrowed a jugful of Neighbor Frederick, and it is as good as the other for certain and sure.”

Dear, dear! how the three cronies did open their eyes when they heard all of this! They would like to have such a goat as that, indeed they would. Now, if Master Jacob had a mind to sell his goat, they would give as much as twenty dollars for it.

Oh, no; Master Jacob could not think of selling his nice little, dear little black goat for twenty dollars.

For thirty, then.

No; Master Jacob would not sell his goat for thirty dollars, either.

Well, they would give as much as forty.

No; forty dollars was not enough for such a goat as that.

So they bargained and bargained till the upshot of the matter was that they paid Master Jacob fifty dollars, and marched off with the goat as pleased as pleased could be.

Well, the three rogues were not long in finding out what a trick had been played upon them, I can tell you. So, in a day or two, whom should Master Jacob see coming down the road but the priest, the provost, and the master mayor, and anybody could see with half an eye that they were in an awful fume.

“Hi!” says Master Jacob, “there will be hot water boiling presently.” In he went to his good wife. “Here,” says he, “take this bladder of blood that we

were going to make into pudding, and hide it under your apron, and then when I do this and that, you do thus and so.”

Presently in came the priest, the provost, and the mayor, bubbling and sizzling like water on slake lime. “What kind of a goat was that that you sold us?” bawled they, as soon as they could catch their breaths.

“My black goat,” says Master Jacob.

Then look! He would run on no errands, and would do nothing that it was told. It was of no more use about the house than five wheels to a wagon. Now Master Jacob might just go and put his hat on and come along with them, for they were about to take him away to prison.

“But stop a bit,” says Master Jacob. “Did you say ‘by the great horn spoon,’ when you told the goat to do this or that?”

No; the cronies had done nothing of the kind, for Master Jacob had said nothing about a great horn spoon when he sold them the goat.

“Why didn’t you remind me?” says Master Jacob to his good wife.

“I didn’t think of it,” says she.

“You didn’t?” says he.

“No,” says she.

“Then take that!” says he, and he out with a great sharp knife and jabbed it into the bladder under her apron, so that the blood ran out like everything.

“Ugh!” says the good wife, and then fell down and lay quite still, just for all the world as though she were dead.

When the three cronies saw this, they gaped like fish out of water. Just look now! Master Jacob had gone and killed his good wife, and all for nothing at all. Dear, dear! what a hasty temper the man had. Now he had gotten himself into a pretty scrape, and would have to go before the judge and settle the business with him.

“Tut! Tut!” says Master Jacob, “the broth is not all in the ashes yet. Perhaps I am a bit hasty, but we will soon mend this stocking.”

So he went to the closet in the corner of the room, and brought out a little tin horn. He blew a turn or two over his wife, whereat she sneezed, and then sat up as good and as sound as ever.

As for the priest and the provost and the mayor, they thought that they had never seen anything so wonderful in all of their lives before. They must and would have that tin horn if it was to be had; now, how much would Master Jacob take for it, money down?

Oh, Master Jacob did not want to part with his horn: all the same, if he had to sell it, he would just as lief that they should buy it as anybody. So they bargained and bargained, and the end of the matter was that they paid down another fifty dollars and marched off with the little tin horn, blowing away at it for dear life.

By and by they came home, and there stood the goat, nibbling at the grass in front of the house and thinking of no harm at all. "So!" says the provost, "was it you that would do nothing for us without our saying, 'By the great horn spoon?' Take that then!" And he fetched the goat a thwack with his heavy walking-staff so that it fell down, and lay with no more motion than a stone. "There," says he, "that business is done; and now lend me the horn a minute, brother, till I fetch him back again."



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## he Priest, the Provost and the Master Mayoꝝ blow and blow the little tin trumpet over y<sup>e</sup> black goat.



Well, he blew and he blew, and he blew and he blew, till he was as red in the face as a cherry, but the goat moved never so much as a single hair. Then the

priest took a turn at the horn, but he had no better luck than the provost. Last of all the mayor had a try at it; but he might as well have blown the horn over a lump of dough for all the answer he had for his blowing.

Then it began to work into their heads that they had been befooled again. Phew! what a passion they were in. I can only say that I am glad that I was not in Master Jacob's shoes. "We'll put him in prison right away," said they, and off they went to do as they said.

But Master Jacob saw them coming down the road, and was ready for them this time too. He took two pots and filled them with pitch, and over the top of the pitch he spread gold and silver money, so that if you had looked into the pots you would have thought that there was nothing in them but what you saw on the top. Then he took the pots off into the little woods back of the house. Now in the woods was a great deep pit, and all around the pit grew a row of bushes, so thick that nothing was to be seen of the mouth of the hole.

By and by came the priest and the mayor and the provost to Master Jacob's house, puffing and blowing and fuming.

Rap! rap! tap! they knocked at the door, but nobody was there but Master Jacob's wife.

Was Master Jacob at home? That was what they wanted to know, for they had a score to settle with him.

Oh, Master Jacob's wife did not know just where he was, but she thought that he was in the little woods back of the house yonder, gathering money.

Phew! and did money grow so near to the house as all that? This was a matter to be looked into, for if money was to be gathered they must have their share. So off they went to the woods, hot-foot.

Yes; there was Master Jacob, sure enough, and what was more, he was carrying two pots, one on each arm.

"Hi! Master Jacob, and what have you there?" said they.

"Oh, nothing much," says Master Jacob.

Yes; that was all very good, but they would like to look into those pots that he was carrying; that was what the three cronies said.

"Well," says Master Jacob, "you may look into the pots if you choose; all the same, I will tell you that they are both full of pitch, and that there is only just a little money scattered over the top.

Yes, yes; that was all very well, but the three cronies knew the smell of money from the smell of pitch. See now, they had been fooled twice already, and were not to be caught again. Now, where did Master Jacob get that money, that was what they wanted to know.

"Oh," says Master Jacob, "I cannot tell you that; if you want to gather money you will have to look for it yourselves. But you must not go too near to

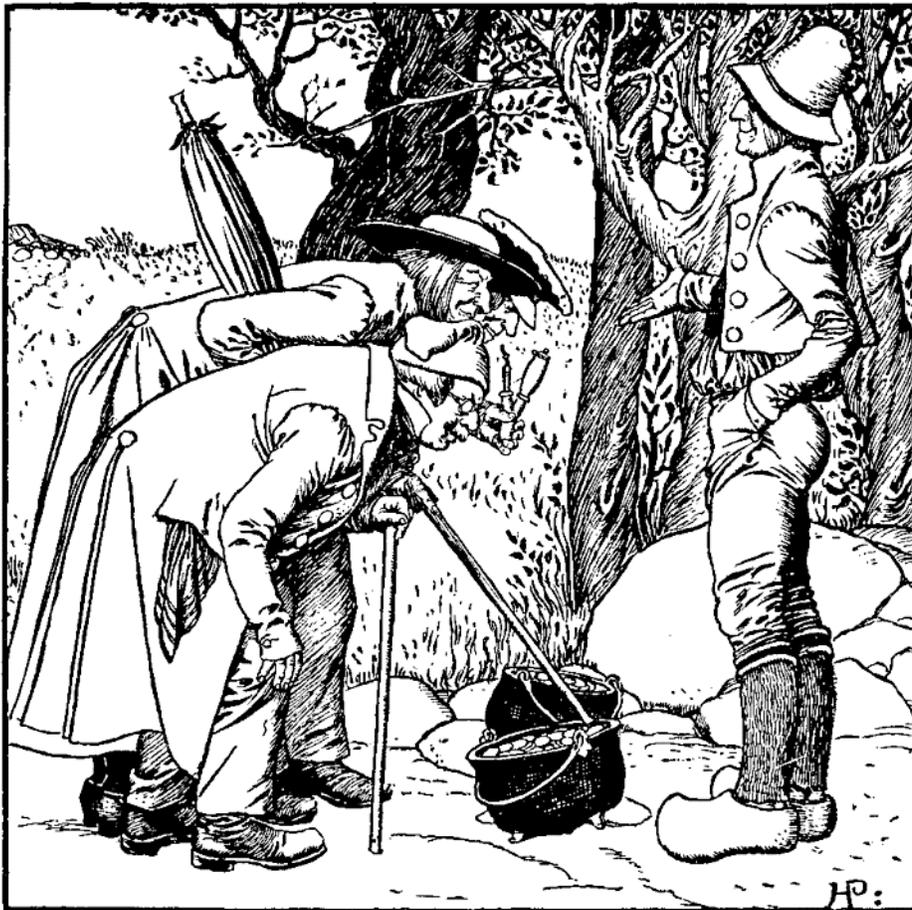
those thick bushes yonder, for there is a deep pit hidden there, and you will be sure to fall into it.”

When the priest and the provost and the mayor heard this, they nudged one another with their elbows and winked with one eye. They knew how much of that cheese to swallow. They would just take a look at this wonderful pit, for they thought that the money was hidden in the bushes for sure and certain. So off they went as fast as they could lay foot to the ground.



## Master Jacob with his two pots meets the three cronies in the woods. ©

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“Just you stay here,” said the priest to the others, “while I go and see whether there really is a pit as he said,” For he thought to himself that he would go and gather a pocketful of the money before it would be share and share with his comrades. So, into the thicket he jumped. and—plump!—he fell into the great, deep pit; and there was an end of number one.

By and by the others grew tired of tarrying. “I’ll go and see what he is waiting for,” says the provost. For he thought to himself, “He is filling his pockets, and I might as well have my share.” So, into the thicket he jumped, and—plump!—he fell into the great, deep pit; and there was an end of number two.

As for the mayor, he waited and waited. “What a fool am I,” said he at last, “to sit here twiddling my thumbs while the two rogues yonder are filling their pockets without me. It is little or nothing but the scraps and the bones that I will come in for.”

So the upshot of the matter was that he too ran and jumped into the thicket, and heels over head into the great, deep pit, and there was an end of number three. And if Master Jacob ever helped them out, you may depend upon it that he made them promise to behave themselves in time to come.

And this is true that I tell you: it would have been cheaper for them to have bought their pork in the first place, for, as it was, they paid a pretty penny for it.

As for Master Jacob and his good wife, they had a hundred dollars in good hard money, and if they did not get along in the world with that, why I, for one, want nothing more to do with them.