



Magic Tales

Molly
Whuppie



Once there was a poor woodcutter who found it impossible to feed all his children. One day, he took the three youngest to the forest and left them there. The children wandered, lost and hungry, until they came to a house. Molly Whuppie, who was the youngest, but by far the cleverest, knocked at the door.

“Please, will you give us something to eat?” she asked.



“Don’t you know my husband is a giant and will eat YOU if he gets a chance?” said the woman who had opened the door.

“Please...” begged Molly Whuppie. “We are so hungry.”



“Very well,” said the giant’s wife, and took them inside and gave them bread and milk. When the giant came home for his supper, he looked at the three strange children sitting at the table, and said,

“Who are they?”

“Just three little children, very poor and thin,” said his wife.

“You eat your supper, I will look after them.”



When night came, the giant's wife put Molly Whuppie and her sisters to bed with her own three daughters to keep them safe. After she had tucked them in, the giant came and put golden chains of straw around the necks of his own daughters to tell them apart in the dark.

As soon as the other children were asleep, Molly Whuppie switched the chains so that they were around the necks of the giant's own children.



In the middle of the night, when the owls were hooting and the moon was hidden behind the clouds, the giant tiptoed into the room and locked them in the cellar. “I’ll soon fatten you up, you’ll make a tasty meal” he said.

“Quick... wake up!” whispered Molly Whuppie to her sisters. She led them into the forest and they ran and ran, until they were quite out of breath.



Next day, they came to a house that stood beside a lake and was surrounded by statues, and beautiful gardens. It was the house of a King. He invited them in and Molly Whuppie told him how they had tricked the giant.

“Ho, ho!” laughed the King. “Well done! But I know of a better trick. If you go back to the giant’s house and bring me the small sword which hangs beside his bed, your eldest sister shall marry my eldest son.”



Molly Whuppie had to agree, that if she could do it, that would be a very good trick indeed. That night, she went back to the giant's house and hid under his bed.

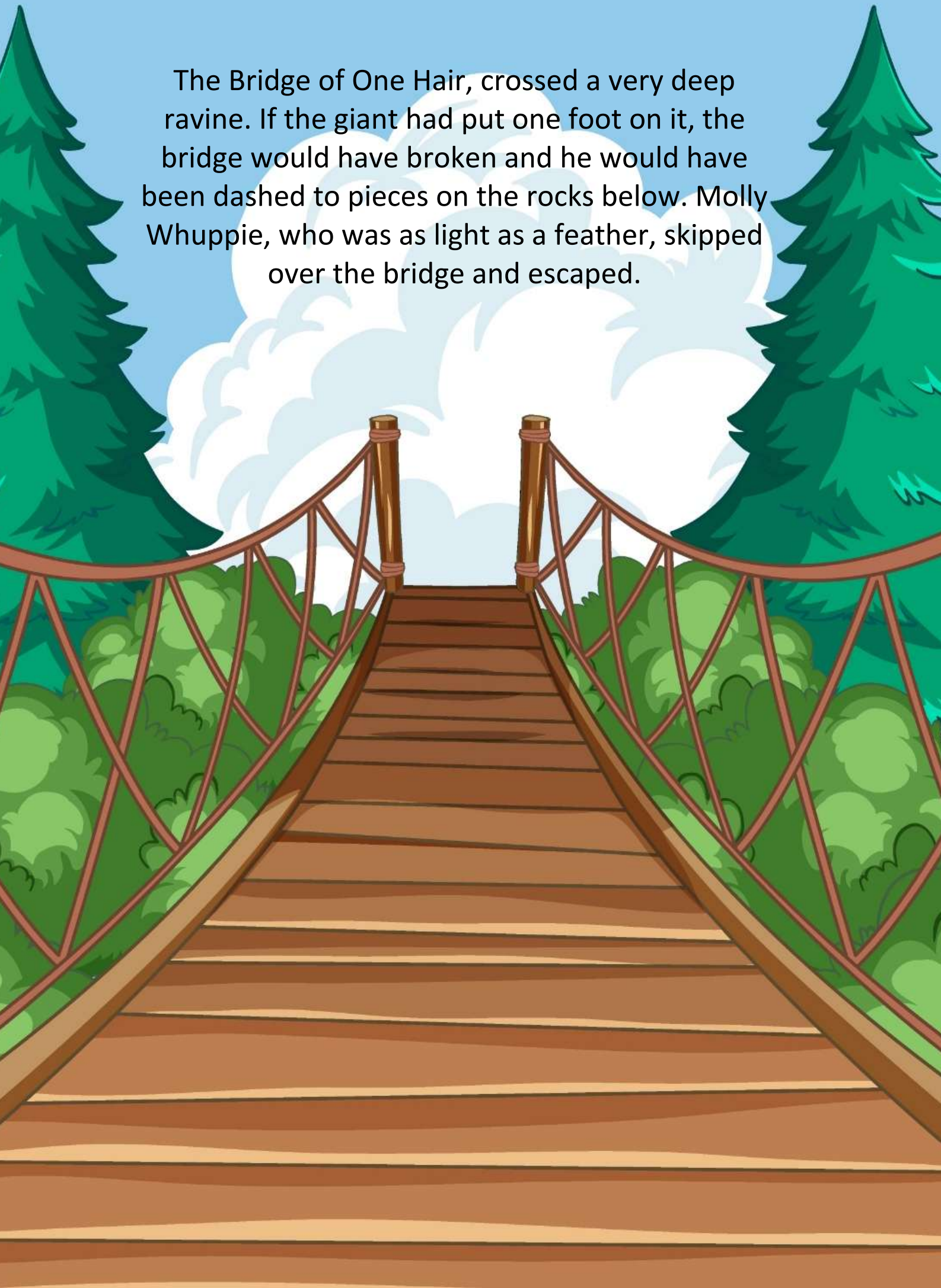
When the giant was snoring loud enough to make the rafters ring, Molly Whuppie took down the sword and crept towards the door. She was almost there when the sword rattled in its scabbard.



The giant woke with a roar! “Steal my sword, would you!” he shouted. He jumped from the bed with a thud that shook the whole house and ran after Molly Whuppie. Molly was very nimble and very quick, she dodged in and out of the trees until they came to the Bridge of One Hair. And there the giant stopped chasing her.



The Bridge of One Hair, crossed a very deep ravine. If the giant had put one foot on it, the bridge would have broken and he would have been dashed to pieces on the rocks below. Molly Whuppie, who was as light as a feather, skipped over the bridge and escaped.



When her eldest sister had been married to the King's eldest son, the King said,

“That was a good trick you played on the giant, but I know of one better. Bring me the purse which lies under the giant's pillow and your second sister shall marry my second son.”

That night, Molly Whuppie hid under the giant's bed again. When the giant was snoring fit to shake the roof from the house, she crept to the door — but just as she reached it, a coin dropped from the purse and rolled across the floor.



The giant woke with a roar! “Steal my purse, would you!” he shouted. He jumped from the bed with a thud that shook the house so hard, a brick fell from the chimney. He chased after Molly Whuppie, but she reached the Bridge of One Hair before he did, and skipped over it to safety.

When Molly Whuppie’s second sister had married the King’s second son, the King said,



“That was a good trick you played, Molly Whuppie, but I know of one better. If you bring me the ring which the giant wears on his finger, YOU shall marry my youngest son.” Molly Whuppie thought THAT was a very good idea indeed, so that night, she went back to the giant’s house for the third time.

When the giant was snoring fit to shake down a whole forest, she slipped the ring from his finger. She was just putting it into her pocket when the giant opened one eye, very, very, slowly and looked at her.



“Steal my ring would you!” he whispered, though HIS whisper was as loud as a gale, and he caught hold of her.

“Let me go... Let me go!” shouted Molly Whuppie.

The giant looked at her and said, “What would YOU do to me, if I had tricked YOU as YOU have tricked ME?”



“I would put you in a sack with a dog and a cat, and a needle and a thread, and a pair of scissors. I would hang you up against the wall. Then I would go into the wood and cut the thickest stick I could find, and then I would come and beat you.” said Molly Whuppie.

“Then that is EXACTLY what I shall do to you,” laughed the giant.

And he did. When he had gone into the forest to look for the thickest stick he could find, Molly Whuppie stroked the cat and dog who were in the sack with her, and sang out, in a loud voice.



“Oh, if only everyone could see what I can see!”

“What can you see?” cried the giant’s wife. “Whatever it is, let me see it too.”

“If you really want to,” said Molly Whuppie. She took the scissors, cut a hole in the bottom of the sack, and jumped out. “You must get inside the sack if you want to see what I saw,” said Molly Whuppie.



The giant's wife climbed into the sack and Molly Whuppie sewed her in.

It was dark inside the sack. The giant's wife didn't like it, and cried to be let out. But Molly Whuppie had hidden herself and would not reply.

When the giant returned home with the thickest stick he could find, he began to beat the sack.

"Take that!... and that!... and that!"

"Stop! Stop! It's ME! It's ME!" shouted the giant's wife.



The cat began to yowl. The dog began to bark. There was so much noise that the giant didn't recognise her voice at first. By the time he realised it was his wife in the sack and NOT Molly Whuppie, Molly Whuppie was safely over the Bridge of One Hair. He was VERY angry at being tricked again, but there was NOTHING he could do about it.



Molly Whuppie married the King's youngest son, and everyone, except maybe the giant, lived happily ever after.



