

# Small Heroes

A Fairy Tale by A.M. Jobateh, February 16, 2002

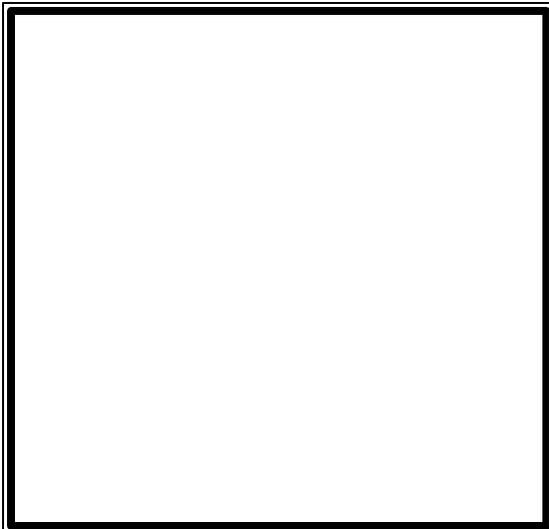
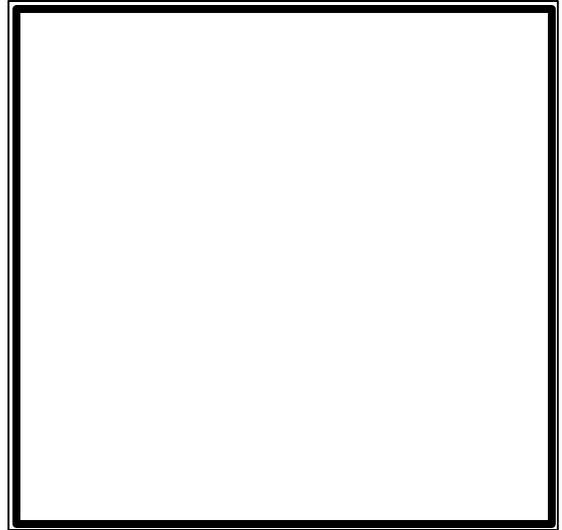
You fill in the pictures!

Once upon a time, in a kingdom far, far away

there was a royal family who lived in a grand palace with a grand garden and orchard that stretched far behind. King Willow and Queen Violet had a daughter, Princess Blossom who was reaching the age to be married.

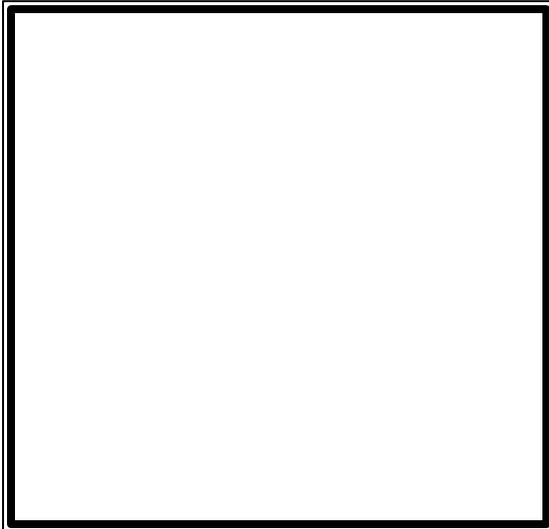
One day, Queen Violet noticed that the flowers in the garden and the fruit trees in the orchard were looking rather sickly. She and King Willow did not know what to do. They cherished and loved their gardens very much for the beautiful flowers, delicious fruits and the sounds of their songbirds.

The royal family was not too bright but it loved the gardens. The King and Queen sent out a public notice that the first young man to solve the problem would gain the hand of the Princess in marriage and live with them in their beautiful palace.



On the first day of the selection event three young men showed up. The first, dressed in fine purple silk and furs, came forth with a solution in a large metal crate on wheels, the size of a small cottage. Out came three large dogs that would bark and frighten away any evil spirits from the Garden. After three days – and nights of constant barking, the only thing weakened was the health and sleep of the royal family. Princess Blossom was getting thin and ragged from the lack of sleep!

“Enough!” exclaimed King Willow. “Send them away and bring in the second young man”.



The second young man, dressed in blue velvet and leather had a solution in a large leather sack, which wiggled and made screeching noises. Out came three cats that he claimed would catch the rats that were probably harming the garden. After three days, Queen Violet noticed less singing from their songbirds. It turned out that the cats were catching them and eating them. The others flew away in fear!!

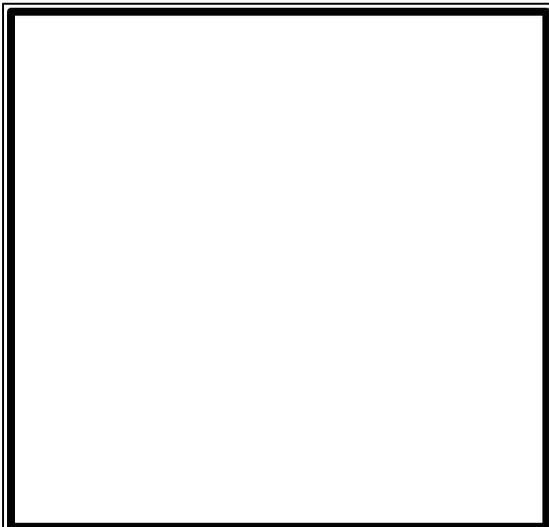
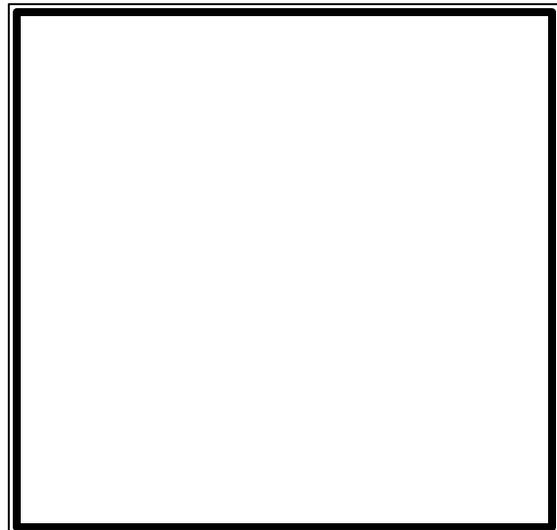
“Enough!” exclaimed Queen Violet, “Send them away and bring in the third young man”.

In came the third young man, a farmer’s son dressed in a humble white and brown cotton outfit. In his hand was a small paper box with tiny holes in the lid. The box was as small as one of King Willow’s orchard apples. The courtiers guffawed at the young man.

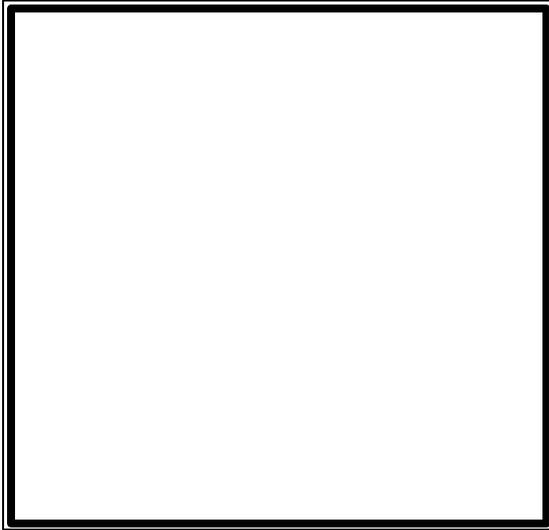
“How can something so small solve the Royal Family’s problem? He must be crazy to think this will work and he’ll win the hand of Princess Blossom in marriage!”

Princess Blossom felt sorry for the young man and stepped forward to say, “Please, parents and members of the royal court, give this young man a chance”.

King Willow allowed him to proceed. And he did, opening the box and shaking it gently around the perimeter of the garden. All the while, the spectators still snickered in the background.



After he was done, he said. “Your majesties, in three days you will notice an improvement in your garden and orchard”.



So, on the third day, Queen Violet noticed the birds had returned and were greeting her with beautiful songs in the morning. King Willow noticed his apple and pear trees were improving too. Princess Blossom noticed the roses were blooming in full colour once again.

The King called everyone to the garden. He said to the young man, "Young man, you have surprised us with the results of your little box. I can tell from your dress, you are not from one of the rich families of the kingdom. I am not sure if I can allow you to marry my daughter"

At that moment, Princess Blossom came out of the flower bushes with a white rose in one hand and a small red dot in the other. She was smiling happily from ear to ear.

"Father, father!" she exclaimed, "Look at how beautiful the roses are blooming today!"

The young man held out his little box towards her. The little red dot grew wings and flittered over to him and landed in the box.

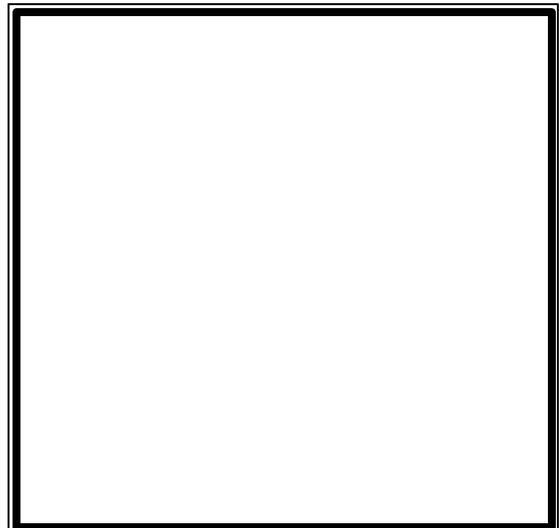
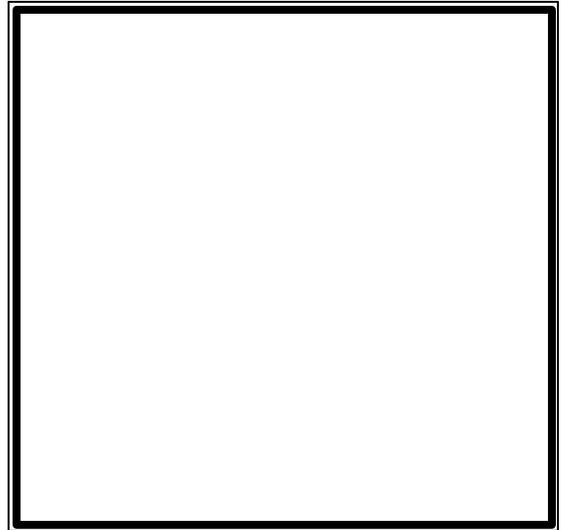
"Ooooh," exclaimed the princess. "That wonderful little thing helped to heal the roses. There are more on the bush and over in the orchard".

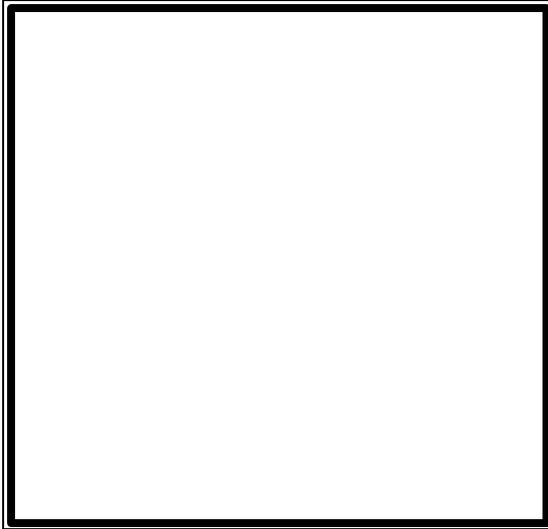
"That is correct," said the young man "My father and his father have been using these for many, many years in ridding their gardens of the aphids and other harmful insects. They are called Ladybugs"

"Something so small, yet so helpful", She chuckled. "You are a wise young man."

The King was blushing as he spoke, "Young man, no matter of your financial standing or the smallness of your solution, you have charmed us and helped us greatly! I will leave the decision of marriage to my daughter."

Princess Blossom walked over to the young man. She smiled and blushed as she handed him the white rose. "Will you take my hand in marriage?"





“Yes,” he answered shyly accepting the offer. “It would be a great honour but only if we can spend many sunny days together in the garden and in the shade of the orchard trees.”

And so they did spend many days enjoying and tending to the lush garden and orchard with each other, then with their children and eventually their grand children.

**And they lived happily ever after!**

**The end (:|:)**