

# The story snail

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As a storyteller for children, I would like to share my latest favourite story for primary aged children. This comes from a book by Anne Rockwell. The Story Snail Lee's version of a story by Anne Rockwell Once upon a time there was a boy named John. John was a nice boy, and a kind boy, but there was nothing that he was really good at doing. Nothing at all. Everyone laughed at him and teased him. So one day, he ran away. He ran away to the paddock and he hid in the long tall grass. He sat down on a log and heaved a big sigh (Sigh!) Suddenly he heard something..... " Psssssstt! " said a little voice. John looked around him and couldn't see anyone. Then he heard the sound again.... " Psssssstt! " said a little voice. " Down here.. Look down. Here I am. " So John looked down. On the toe of his shoe there was a little golden snail that seemed to be looking up at him. " Are you talking to me? " John asked the snail. To his surprise, the snail replied. " Yes I am, " it said. " I am a magic snail. I am the story snail. Pick me up and tell me, what's wrong? Why are you looking so sad? " So John bent down and picked up the little snail. He told it how the children laughed at him and teased him because there was nothing that he was really good at doing. The snail looked at John and said, " You are not really good at anything, but you are a nice boy and you are kind, so I will give you a present. I will give you one hundred stories that no one has ever heard before. Whenever you tell a story, everyone will listen. ' How good he is at telling stories', everyone will say. " So the snail told John one hundred stories. Then it crawled away. John went home. He told the first story, just the way the snail had told it to him. " That is a great story! " everyone said. Someone cried out " Tell us another story". So John told another story. Everyone loved that story too. Every day John told a story.

He told stories until he had told every story that the snail had given him. "Tell the stories again!" the boys and girls said. So John told the stories again... and again.... and again.... Until one day, a little girl said, "Oh tell us a new story. I've heard that story before" Sadly, John said that he didn't know any more stories. Everyone laughed and said "John tells the same stories over and over and over again. They are boring." Upset, John said to himself, "I must go and find that magic snail and ask it for a new story." So he went back to the paddock. But the snail wasn't there. John called out to the snail, but it didn't answer. He didn't know what to do. "Whoooooo, Wheeeeeeeeeee," he heard suddenly. "I am the Wild West Wind. What are you doing?" "Excuse me," said John. "I'm trying to find a little golden snail. It's a special snail, a magic snail. Do you know where it is?" The Wild West Wind answered, "The snail you seek is far, far away. You will never find it. You had better go home and be safe. Whoooo, Wheeee!" And the wind blew John's hat away. But John would not go home. He walked and he walked until he came to a dark forest. In the forest, John saw a green elf. "Excuse me," said John. "I'm trying to find a little golden snail. It's a special snail, a magic snail. Do you know where it is?" "Once I saw that snail." The elf said to John. "He told me a thousand stories. But I didn't have anyone to tell my stories to, and look around, they have all turned into mushrooms." John looked and he noticed that there were little red mushrooms growing all around them. "All the mushrooms growing in this dark forest are the stories that I did not tell. The snail has never come back again. I can't tell you where he is, but I can give you a magic password. You never can tell. Maybe it might be handy sometime." He leaned over and whispered in John's ear, "

Fuzzbuzzoncetherewas. " John thanked him and continued on his way to find the snail. John walked on until he came to the blue sea. He saw a mermaid sitting on a rock by the shore, combing her long hair. " Excuse me, " said John. " I'm trying to find a little golden snail. It's a special snail, a magic snail. Do you know where it is? " " No, " said the mermaid. " But I can tell you what the seahorse told me. He has seen the little golden snail. " " Tell me, tell me please, " said John. " You must do a kind thing, and a brave thing, and you must have a magic password. Then you will find the little golden snail. That is what the seahorse told me. " " I have a magic password, " said John. " The elf gave it to me. If you tell me what it is that I have to do, I will do it. " But the mermaid slid off the rock and it swam away without answering. John walked on again. The next day, he came to a garden. A little rabbit was sitting in the garden looking sad. " Excuse me, " said John. " I'm trying to find a little golden snail. It's a special snail, a magic snail. Do you know where it is? " " How do I know where it is? I do not even know where I am. I am lost, " said the rabbit, and it began to cry. " Don't cry, " said John. " I will try to take you home. Where do you live? " The little rabbit said, " I live at the edge of a dark forest. It is where a green elf lives. A thousand mushrooms grow there. It is far away. " " Poor me, " thought John. " I have come so far, and now I must go backwards. I will never find the magic snail now. " But he picked up the lost rabbit and patted its soft fur. " I will take you home, " said John. " I have just come from that forest. I know where it is. " And he took the little rabbit home to its mother. " You have done a very kind thing, " said the mother rabbit, and she gave John a carrot. How can I repay your kindness? " " Can you help me? " said John. " I'm trying to find a little

golden snail. It's a special snail, a magic snail. Do you know where it is? " " I have never seen it, but I have heard it from inside my rabbit hole, " said the mother rabbit. She pointed at a big rock and said, " Behind that rock there is a cave, and in that cave lives the little golden snail. " " So what have you heard? " John asked. " I have heard words, words, words, " said the mother rabbit. " Have some lettuce? " But John ran over to the rock. John pushed on the big rock until it rolled out of the way. Sure enough, there was a deep, dark cave behind the rock. Something was growling. Something big. Something that sounded scary. " That's not the golden snail growling like that, " John said to himself. He was afraid. That thing sounded mean! He peeked around the entrance to the cave, and he saw a bright red fire. Then he saw a big green dragon. " Grrrrrrrr, " said the dragon. " Who are you? I might as well eat you up. " " Please don't, " said John. " I am John. I'm trying to find a little golden snail. It's a special snail, a magic snail. Do you know where it is? " " I know that snail, " said the dragon. " It lives in this cave with me, but it won't tell me any stories. It says that I spit fire and growl and eat things up. I won't let you find it. " And the dragon growled again. " Please, " said John. " If I tell you a story, will you let me see the snail? " " No! " said the dragon, and he growled again. " Two stories? " said John. " No! " said the dragon, and he spit fire out of his mouth. " Ten stories? " said John. " One hundred! " shouted the dragon. So John sat down and he told the dragon one story and another. The dragon didn't spit fire or eat him up. It growled softly as it listened. John told the dragon story after story, until he had told him all of the stories that the magic snail had given him. The dragon looked down at John and he said " That was very brave of you to come in here and sit down

to tell me stories. Everyone else is scared of me. For having such courage, I am going to tell you how to find the snail now. Walk forward three steps, then two hops to the side. Spin around once, then take a giant step backwards. Close your eyes and stamp your feet. When you open your eyes you will see a golden door. Knock once loudly, then twice softly. Then say the magic password. " " And what is that? " John asked. " I don't know, " said the dragon. " The snail will not tell me. " But John knew. John walked forward three steps. He hopped two hops to the side. He spun around. Then he took a giant step backwards. He closed his eyes and stamped his feet. Sure enough, just like the dragon had said, there was a golden door in front of him. John knocked loudly once, then two soft knocks, and then he said " Fuzzbuzzoncetherewas". The golden door opened, and John saw the little golden snail eating a green leaf. " Hello snail, " said John. " I have come to ask you for a new story. I have told all of the stories that you gave me. Even the dragon has heard them. No one wants to hear them again. " The snail stopped eating the leaf. It looked up at John and poked out its little horns. " I cannot give you a new story, " said the snail. " There are many new stories to tell, that is true. But now, you must find them for yourself. You have come so far though, so I will send you safely home. " Softly the snail whispered, " Fuzzbuzzoncetherewas" and John fell asleep at once. When John woke up, he was home again. " Have you found a new story John? " everyone asked. But John had no new story to tell. Then he heard a bee buzzing. Suddenly John smiled. He looked around at the boys and girls and he said " Fuzzbuzzoncetherewas a boy named John. John was a nice boy, and a kind boy, but there was nothing that he was really good at doing. Nothing at all.

Everyone laughed at him and teased him. So one day, he ran away. " And John told all about the little golden snail, the magic snail, the story snail. He told them about the Wild West Wind and about the green elf. He told about the mermaid and the lost rabbit. He told about the dragon in the deep, dark cave. He told the story that I have just told you. And after that, whenever he wanted, John told a new story. And everyone said, " John is good at telling stories. Really, really good! "