

# Papa's Lucky Penny



“O, papa are you going fishing again to-night?” asked Harold Brewer.

“I am going out with my rod, but I don't know whether there will be any fishing done,” said papa, “I have been out three nights, and have not caught a thing.”

“Take me papa,” said his little daughter Ruth, “you know you say I always bring you good luck. You know I'm your lucky penny.” Papa laughed. “What do you say, mama?” he said, turning to his wife, “would it be all right?”

“I think so,” she replied, “I will wrap her up warm and you will have a fire. I will put on her thick coat.”

Ruth could hardly stand still long enough to be dressed. To go out fishing in the night with her father had been one of the things she had longed to do. Harold had been several times, but she had never even asked if she might go.

As soon as they arrived at the beach papa lighted a big fire of driftwood. That in itself was very exciting. It was such fun to help bring the wood from the dry bank. Then after the fire was well started papa sat down on a log with Harold on one side and Ruth on the other.

“You must sit very close to me, if you are to bring me good-luck,” said papa to Ruth, “but do not jostle my elbow.”

For some time all three sat as quiet as mice, when suddenly papa exclaimed, “I've got a nibble. Be careful, don't get in my way, Ah! it is a big fellow! How he pulls! And papa was on his feet, as excited as a school boy. Up the beach he ran, than back again, and in much less time than it seemed, had landed a fine big bass.

“What did I tell you, papa,” cried Ruth, jumping up and down and clapping her hands with delight. “I knew you would catch a fish if you brought me.”

“Well I am certainly very glad you came,” said papa, as he and Harold took the big fish from the hook.

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This story contains the unabridged and unaltered text of and illustration from “Papa's Lucky Penny” from *Who Killed Cock-Robin and Other Stories*, published in 1905 by Henry Altemus Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; with additional new text by Anne Verville and new photograph by Dan C. Rinnert. New material Copyright 2004-2005 by Canville Communications.

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The fire had died down a little so the children piled on more wood, and the party seated themselves again on the log. Papa threw his line into the water and waited for a bite. Waited, and waited and waited, but all in vain.

The fish-line and the rod were as motionless as possible; at last a voice at his elbow said rather sleepily “I guess that big fish used up all the good luck I brought with me.”

Papa and Harold laughed. “I guess he did” said papa, “and if that is the case we might as well be starting home. Harold may carry the fish and I will take the rod and my lucky penny. And he caught sleepy little Ruth in his arms and tossed her on to his shoulder.

“Well,” said mama, “as the fishing-party appeared at the house, “were you glad you took Ruth?”

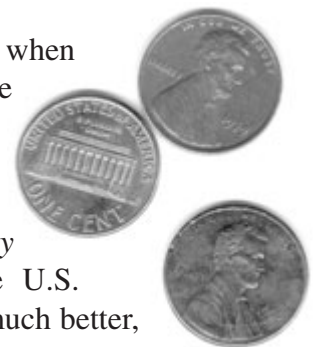
“We will let you know at the breakfast table,” said papa, and that was all that either he or the children would say.

But the next morning when a fine broiled bass was brought on to the table, papa asked, “What do you think, mama, did I do well to take my lucky penny with me?”

*“Luck” depends upon many things, such as patience, the ability to listen, and the courage to ask for something. Papa Brewer found that patience is often rewarded, and so is an adult who listens to a child. Little Ruth learned that those who ask, including children, shall receive.*

For ages many people have believed that pennies bring good luck. Back when people believed in sea gods, sailors threw pennies into the sea to ensure a safe voyage. That custom was later converted into the tradition of tossing a penny into a fountain or well to have a wish granted. Those who find a penny are also supposed to have good luck the rest of the day. (*Find a penny and pick it up; all day long have good luck.*) Maybe you have found a penny yourself as you walked along the sidewalk.

Sometimes people will hide pennies in their houses and leave them there when selling the house to ensure the new owners good luck. To this day, a bride might place a penny in her wedding shoe, believing the penny will bring her and her husband good luck and wealth. This wedding tradition may have started in the United Kingdom, where the *penny* was actually a sixpence. When the United States was founded, Americans carried on the *lucky penny* traditions. Though we Americans commonly use the word *penny*, the U.S. Treasury and U.S. Mint use the term one-cent piece. I think *penny* sounds much better, don't you?



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