

The Tale of the Foolish Boy



By George Senednesky, Ph.d.

Illustrated by Crystal Ludolph

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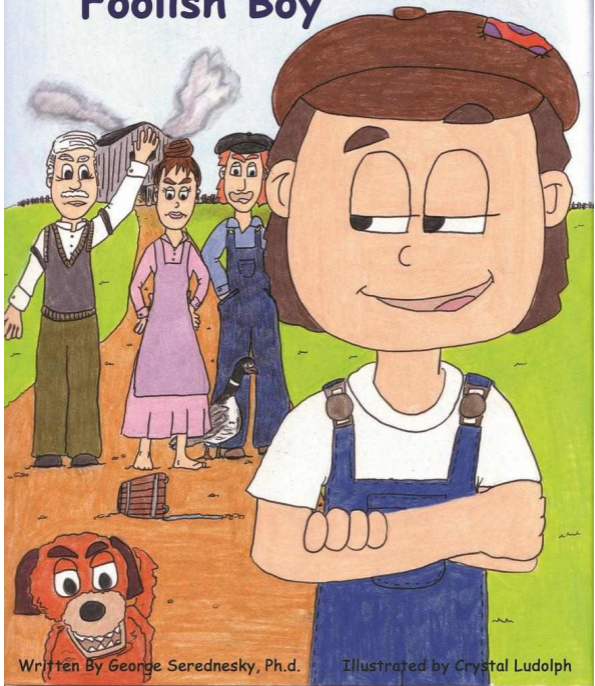
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Written By George Serednesky, Ph.d.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my grandma, Julia Vasilko, who inspired my imagination as a child with her telling of great children stories.

— George Serednesky, Ph.d.

To my dad, Gene, and sissy, Gina, my beloved Aunts and the rest of my family and friends who I love so very much.

—Crystal Ludolph

Foreword

I believe the *Tale of the Foolish Boy* to be a narration that may be used to help your child develop better decision-making skills, i.e., it is a story that may save the life of your child.

As a psychologist who works with children, I encourage parents to allow and even arrange for their children to have the opportunity to learn from their actions. This is accomplished by not overly protecting children from the negative consequences that are the result of bad choices. Reading this tale to children is a safe way to build improved decision-making. It will also

help parents learn the importance of providing children with clear instructions.

Reading this tale to your child will greatly amuse, while at the same time teaching responsibility. Your child will insist on hearing this tale over and over because it is an irresistible and most hilarious story when told to children age 4-8.



This is a tale about light-hearted Billy. He ignored good advice. He was

a very stubborn boy who wanted to play all the time.

Billy lived on a farm with his hard-working mother, and they were very poor. Billy was often bored by the chores he was expected to perform, and careless in the way he did them. One day, he thought of a plan to get out of his work.



“Mother, dear,” he asked smiling sweetly, “may I run errands for you in town or at the fair so that you can rest

in the afternoon after your day's work?"



“Why yes!” said his mother, her eyes sparkling. “What a big help that will be.”



So, that Monday, Billy dressed in his good hat and his Sunday best,

and he walked into town to do a special errand. His mother needed a sewing needle to repair a seam in her calico dress.

“Hi Billy,” said Mr. More, the shopkeeper. “Why aren’t you working in the fields or milking the cows?”



“Not me,” said Billy, “I’ll be spending my hot afternoons in town

from now on. One root beer, please, and oh yes...a sewing needle for my mom.”

Billy lingered in the cool shade of Mr. More's supply store and stretched out on a sack of beans. Before long, he fell into a deep sleep.



“Billy!” Mr. More’s voice was loud and cranky. “Your mother will be expecting you now. It’s late. If you hurry, you can jump on old Mr. Tom

McBride's hay wagon over yonder and sleep yourself silly almost all the way home."

"Thanks, I will," said Billy. And with Mr. McBride's permission, he jumped aboard.



“Yowee!” said Billy, in sudden pain. “That needle in my pocket stuck me. I’ll just lay it here beside me while I get on with my nap.”

When he got home, Billy searched and searched for the needle, but it was lost.

“Mom! I put the needle right by my side but someone must have moved it.”



“Foolish boy,” said his mother. “When you’re sent to town to buy a needle, stick it in your lapel. See?”

Remember, it is impossible to find a needle in a haystack.”

Billy nodded.

* * *

One Tuesday afternoon, Billy was sent to town to buy a long-handled axe. He couldn't wait to nestle into that sack of beans at the supply store. After a one-hour nap, Billy woke up. "I want to buy a new axe, Mr. More," he said grandly.



Outside he removed his jacket and carefully tried and tried to stick the

axe into his lapel, but he only succeeded in cutting up his new jacket.

Billy walked home whistling a happy tune with the axe hanging from the threads of his shredded jacket. Once home, the axe fell to the floor, and Billy smiled and said, "Look what I brought you from the store."



“Foolish boy!” said his mother. “You carry an axe over your shoulder just like a soldier. Go upstairs to your room and think about what you have done!”



“I’ll remember that,” thought Billy. Then he ran to his room and was very glad that his mother only punished him with a scolding.

* * *

On Wednesday, Billy was sent to

the fair to buy a goose. “This one’s just right for you,” said Tom Wilson, the goose farmer. “You can use your rope to lead him home.”



“Don’t be ridiculous,” said Billy.
“My mom taught me how to carry a

goose.” With that, he grabbed the unfortunate bird by the neck and flung it over his shoulder. Then Billy turned for home and marched away just like a soldier.

“That goose is as good as dead,” said Mr. Wilson to himself as he pocketed the two dollars with a shrug.



When Billy got home, he threw the dead goose triumphantly on the kitchen table.

“Foolish Boy!” steamed his mother. “We needed a live goose not a dead one. When you bring a goose home,

you tie a rope around its neck and lead it home, safe and sound.”

“Rope?” said Billy without a care in the world. “I used that to keep up my pants!”



His mother was so angry; she

grabbed the rope off of his trousers and tossed it out of the window. Billy just stood there with his pants around his ankles and a surprised look on his face.

“You don’t listen,” she scolded. “Billy I’m sending you to your room without dinner. Sometimes you act like a nincompoop.”

“Yes, I do, Mother,” said Billy. “But next time I promise I’ll use a rope.”

* * *

On Thursday afternoon, Billy’s mother gave him another task. “Billy, I want you to go to town and buy some material which I will use to make a

new coat.”

“Don’t worry,” said Billy, tightening the rope around his trousers. “I’ll be back before you know it.”



“This material is heavy,” said Mr. More. “Suppose I bundle it up so you can carry it home.”

“None of that,” Billy said brightly. “I learned that lesson the hard way.” Billy tied up the cloth with the rope from his pants, and then he held his pants up with the one hand and used the other to drag the cloth bundle all the way home.

“I’m home and hungry,” Billy yelled. When his mother saw that the new material was all dirty and torn, she could not believe her eyes.

“That’s the last straw, Billy. You don’t learn. You’re foolish and careless.” His mother raised her voice and pointed her finger.



“I don’t want to hear all of this yelling,” Billy cried. With that, he ran away from home. He scrambled out the front door. He was hungry and scared, and angry at his mother for yelling at him.



After sleeping in a haystack three miles from home, Billy awoke the next morning to the sight of a barn on fire.



“I’d better get out of here. If the farmer sees me, he will surely give

me the blame,” thought Billy as he dashed down the road, past the farmer’s house where a crowd was gathering.

One of the crowd saw Billy running away and yelled, “Look, there’s the stranger who set the fire!” He pointed an accusatory finger at Billy.



Billy looked unkempt, with straw sticking out of his hair, and he glanced toward the people, and then

ran away as fast as he could.



The townspeople caught him and threatened to take him to the police while Billy yelled, "I am innocent. I did not start the fire. Please believe me."



A townsman then said, "If you did not start the fire, why didn't you take a bucket of water and put it out?"



“If you run away, people think you are the one who set it.” Billy was set free, and walked two miles before he had a rest in a potter’s shed.



On Saturday morning, Billy encountered two farmers by a pond in

the midst of a big argument. They were pushing each other and yelling loudly.



“Peace to you, men of earth. What could be the matter?” asked Billy.



“Mind your own business,” they shouted at Billy. “This argument is a private one. You can pass, but do so quickly and hold your tongue.”

Billy walked close to the pond and passed the farmers, but could not contain his joy when he spied a bucket.

He quickly filled it with water from

the pond and doused the farmers from head to toe.

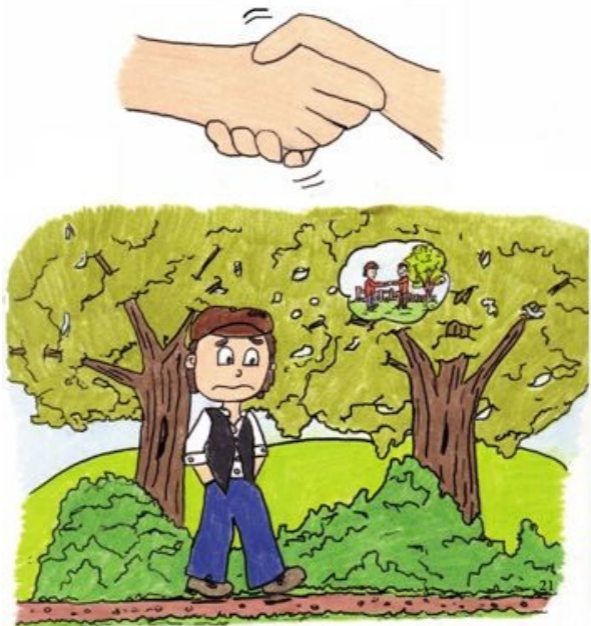
“Fool! Trouble maker!” they cried as they yelled at Billy.



“If you want to make peace between men of earth, foolish boy,

you must first call them sir or shake hands.” The other farmer then yelled. “If you do this, they will be forced to see that fighting is wrong, and they will soon forget their petty squabbles.” Billy was dazed, but he nodded.

“Shake their hand,” he repeated softly and trudged off down the road.



After a restless night under a bridge, Billy heard yelps and grunts from above. He rose and peeked above the bridge to see four dogs

fighting amongst themselves for the pleasure of eating a big, fat frog.



Without thinking, he jumped up on the bridge and in rapid-fire succession, tried to shake the paws of all four dogs.

“Peace be with you,” he wailed. “Forget your petty squabbles and stop the fighting. Fighting is wrong and you should be friends toward each other.”



Before Billy could finish, the dogs

started nipping at him and scared him very much.



Billy had had enough. He ran like the wind all the way home and right into his mother's arms.



He promised his mother faithfully that he had learned his lesson and would not run away from home again.



His mother hugged him and told him how much she loved him. Billy had learned an important lesson...



THERE IS NO PLACE LIKE
HOME!

Epilogue

Parent, the moral of this story is to always be clear when instructing children with errands and responsibilities. Make your child aware of the consequences poor choices lead to. Children are fallible. They are little people needing mentors, guidance and love. These are the ingredients for building strong self-images and independent thought processes. Learning lessons can only be a positive experience if directions are clear. For example, tell Billy where to put the new needle so as not to lose it, or tell Billy how to lead the goose home before it is bought.

Helping children learn from their mistakes is key toward helping them become successful adults.