



Stone Soup

A European Folktale

Once upon a time, in a small country village, the weather was too dry, crops would not grow, and there was not enough food for the people to eat. Everyone was hungry, and everyone was worried. Because they were hungry and worried, the people hid the little food that they had and didn't share with anyone, not even their friends or neighbors.

One day, a traveler arrived in the village. As he walked around, he asked each person he met about finding a place to eat and sleep for the night. Everyone told him that there wasn't a bite to eat anywhere, and advised him to move on to another village.

"Oh, I have everything I need," the traveler said. "In fact, I thought that I could make YOU some of my delicious stone soup to share."



With that, he pulled a big cooking pot from his wagon. He filled the pot with water and built a fire under it. Then, he reached into his bag and pulled out a plain gray stone. As the villagers watched, the traveler patted the stone, and then dropped it into the water.

Word traveled fast, and soon the man and his cooking pot were surrounded by curious villagers coming to see the magic stone that made soup. The water began to boil as the traveler stirred and stirred. He sniffed at the boiling water, rubbing his belly and licking his lips as if he smelled something delicious! The villagers' stomachs started to rumble; they were hungry!

"Ahh," the traveler said aloud to himself, "I do like a tasty stone soup. Of course, stone soup with cabbage is even better." Hearing this, a villager ran to their house and found a cabbage that they had hidden in the closet. They ran back, holding a cabbage shouting, "I have this cabbage from my garden! Could we put it in your soup?"

"Fantastic!" cried the traveler. They cut up the cabbage and added it into the pot.

"You know," said the traveler, "I once had stone soup with cabbage and just a little bit of beef, and it was amazing."

The butcher said she thought maybe she could find some beef scraps. As she ran back to the butcher shop, other villagers offered bits of vegetables from their own gardens — potatoes, onions, carrots, and celery. Soon, a scrumptious smell filled the air as the big pot of vegetables, beef, and a stone simmered.

At last, the traveler announced that the soup was ready, and there was enough for everyone! The entire community gathered around a table and enjoyed the stone soup that they had made together. It was, indeed, delicious.

