

The Miser Mr Sprat

3rd Place Winner, Category I, Grades 1-3

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Mr Sprat and his wife lived in a very small house. It wasn't easy for them. Times were hard and they were poor. His wife tried her best to make nice meals, but it was always macaroni, bread and more macaroni. Her husband was something else.

Mr Sprat was a miser. His friends always said that as a child, he would hide whatever he brought to school at break time, he would run off to a lonely place and would eat it all by him self. No wonder everyone in school called him "Miser Sprat" and would run behind him and chant:

**"Miser Sprat
Miser Sprat
He hides so much
He's greedy like a rat!"**

This did not bother Tom Sprat. Sharing was not one of his hobbies. Whatever he had, belonged to him and him alone.

When Sprat finished school, he worked in a sugar industry as a cane cutter. 'When payday came, he would give his wife a little to help with the food. His actions after that were a mystery. Sprat would go out side in the back yard and would remain there for about half an hour. His wife often asked him why he would go outside after getting paid. Sprat would laugh and say, "Sweetheart one day, I'll tell you. Just be patient".

Patience was something Peggy, his wife had enough of. She decided that she had to find out what her husband was up to. After giving her the money, one Friday, he went out as usual. Three minutes passed and Peggy quietly opened the back door and tiptoed outside. To her surprise, her husband was kneeling on the ground with a trowel, digging a shallow hole. A few minutes later out came a bulging bag into which he placed his money, counting it as the money was dropped in. After doing this continuously, Mr Sprat soon began to realise that his money was not gathering any interest while his friends boasted about how their monies were growing and were safely placed in a bank. However the bag was placed back into the hole and again buried, reminding himself to take all to the bank the next time.

Peggy had a neighbour Sue who was also her best friend. She could not keep what she had seen to herself, so she immediately ran over and blurted out everything she had seen to her friend. Little did she know that Sue's husband was in the bedroom listening to the conversation.

That Friday as Sprat did his usual, he was shocked as he was greeted with an empty hole. There was no money! Mr Sprat fainted! All his life's saving had been gone in a twinkling of an eye. There was nothing he couldn't blame anyone since he told no one about it. Was it his wife, a friend, the neighbour who had stolen from him?

Up to this very day Mr Sprat remains a poor man with nothing at all because of his miserly habits. He had definitely learnt a lesson from this. Savings are better kept in a bank than in a back yard. It is not only safer, in a bank but you will also see it grow.