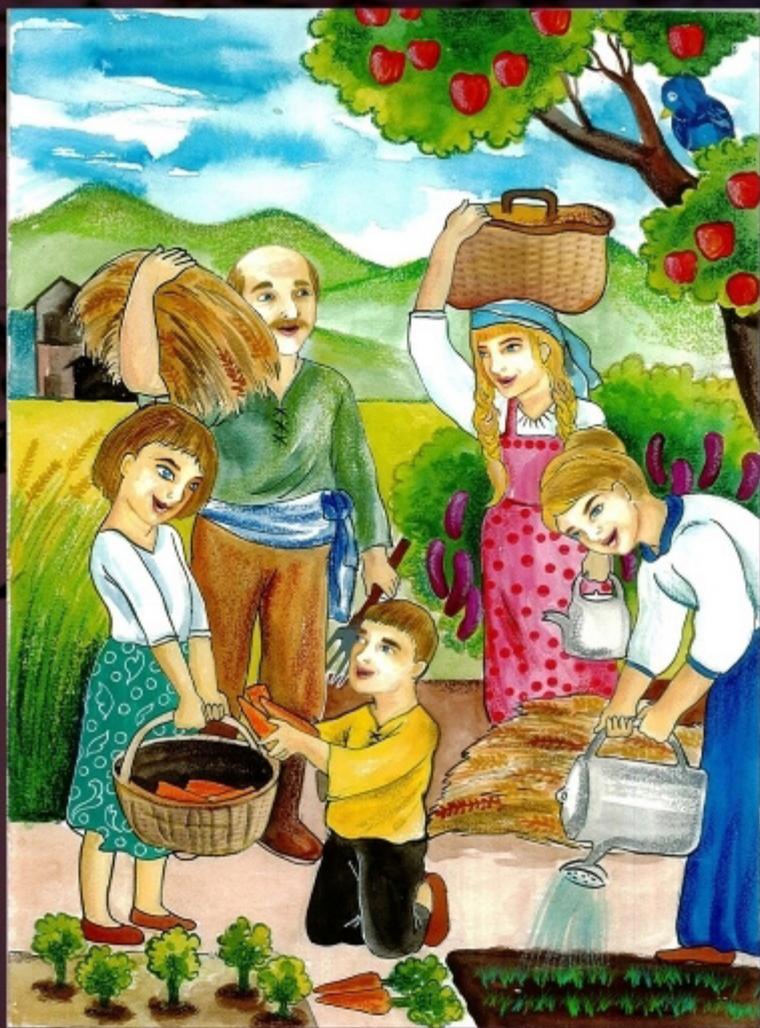


The Spirited Smith Family



By
G. K. Ananda Kumarasiri



Holistic Education Books

Published by:
Human Development and Peace (HDP) Foundation

President : Ambassador Dato' Dr G. K. Ananda Kumaraseri
373/47B Ambuldeniya Lane,
Old Kottawa Road, Nugegoda,
Sri Lanka.

Malaysian address:

No: 3, Jalan 14/37, 46100 Petaling Jaya,
Selangor Darul Ehsan,
Malaysia.

Tel. No: (603) 79584182 or (603) 79320731
or 60- 123911942 or (603)56315299
or (603) 56348181

Fax No: (603) 56315262

Email: akumaraseri@yahoo.com.

Website: www.livebybuddhism.org

Illustrations By: Amurtha Godege

ISBN: 978-955-7711-01-0

January 2018

© A. Kumaraseri

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher.

About the Author



Ambassador Dato' Dr. G. K. Ananda Kumaraseri was a distinguished career ambassador (1966-1995). He has the rare distinction of setting up and heading the Centre for International Relations and Strategic Studies (1979-1981) for the Malaysian Public Service. The assignment stimulated his interest in education, human resource development and professional training. He retired in 1995 as Director General ASEAN. He is the Founder President of the Human Development and Peace Foundation (HDPF). Apart from being appointed Adjunct Professor at University Utara Malaysia, he is an active Dhamma Speaker, giving regular public talks across the country and abroad. He has authored several widely circulated books:

- My First Word Book: Buddhist Pedagogical Approach
- A Compendium of Buddhist Personal Names: Heritage and Significance of Adoption
- Living Buddhism: The Way Forward
- Living Buddhism: Advancing from Knowing to Being
- My Alphabet Book: Buddhist Pedagogical Approach
- SIDDHARTHA: The Prince of Peace
- Professional Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs Management: An Ambassador's Insight
- Siddhartha : My First Story Book

- The Way of Siddhartha: Glorious Righteous Prince
- The Terrifying Drug Menace
- Welcoming the Birth of a Child
- Angulimala: Transforming Life
- Matu Posaka: Joy of Honouring Parents
- Mothercare and Parenting: Key to Social Structuring.
- King Bimbisara the Great: A Father's Unremitting Love
- SIDDHARTHA: Colouring and Drawing Book
- Glorious Prince Siddhartha
- The Great Matu Posaka
- Dhamma Weera: Wise Student of Nagaloka
- Nipunna: The Expert Archer of Taxila
- Suren: The Clever Young Adviser
- My Book of Riddles
- Have Great Fun with Riddles
- Riddle My Riddles
- Symbols and Symbolism : Embrace Multiculturalism
- 60 Years Sri Lanka-Malaysia Relations and More



Map of Devon

In the beautiful English countryside of Devon, amongst rolling hills and lush green meadows, lived some of the most hard-working farmers in the history of England. They were known far and wide for their diligence in producing high-grade agricultural and dairy products. Their specially high quality farming products were exported throughout England and also beyond the country's shores to major cities and towns in Europe. Devon's renowned farm produce ranged from fresh leafy vegetables and delicious juicy fruits to the creamiest of milk, butter and other dairy products. As a result, Devon's farming and agricultural community were reputed as amongst the most famous in England.

Among the diligent farming community of Devon were the Smiths. The family had been involved in agriculture and farming for several generations. The Smith family comprised John and his wife Jane and their three kids. Their daughter, Judy was the eldest. Next in seniority was their daughter, Rosy. The youngest member of the family was their son, Jack. The Smith family was quite different from the rest of the farming community of Devon. They were a small scale farming family. Most of the other farm owners had transformed their farmlands into modern large-scale farming units. Their farms comprised sprawling acres and acres of fertile agricultural land that stretched as far as the eyes could see.

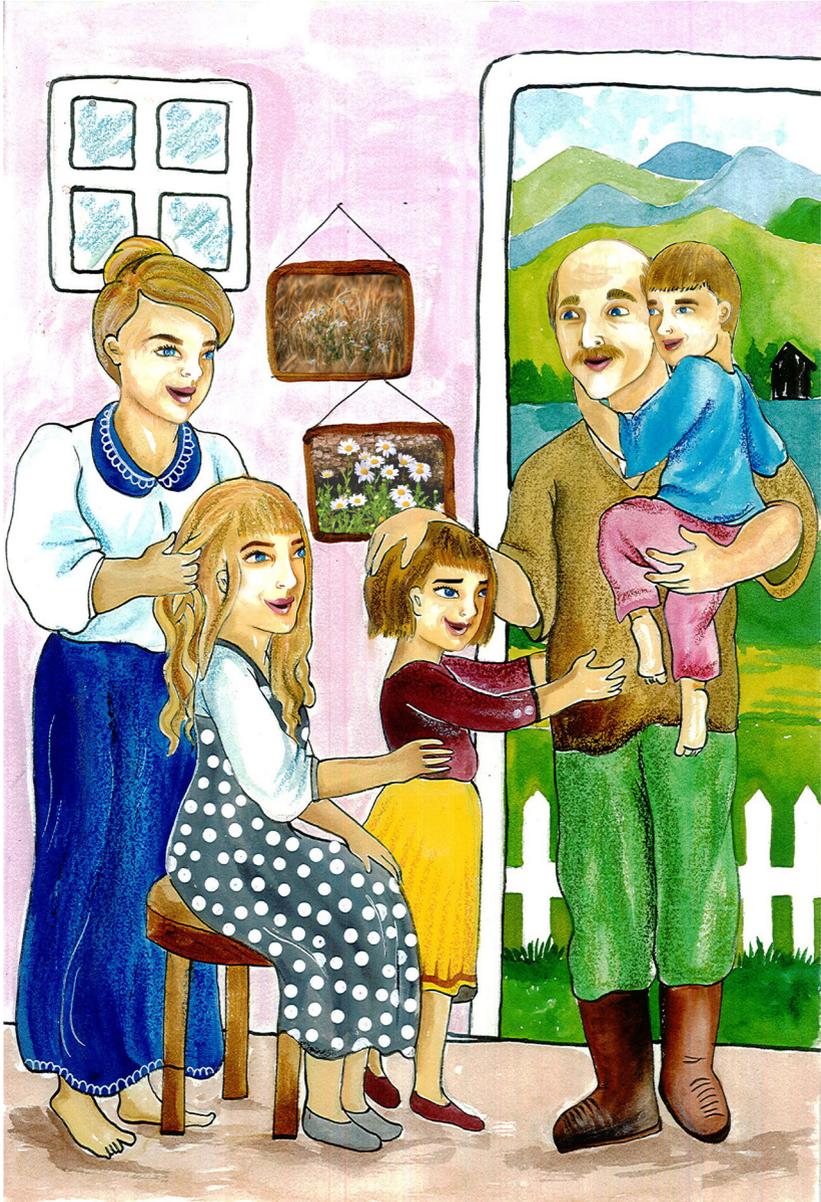


The Farming Community of Devon

These large-scale farmers used modern heavy machinery such as tractors, harvesters and various other modern equipment that were necessary for large-scale farming. In addition, they employed large gangs of farm hands to undertake the numerous farming activities. The Smiths, on the other hand, owned a relatively small plot of land which they harnessed for specialised intensive cultivation and to produce high grade honey. Their farmland was not as fertile as the others in the region. The soil was far from ideal to ensure high yields to harvest. Their land was in fact uneven and strewn with rocks and numerous pebbles. Furthermore, they had to make do with the limited irrigation from a nearby stream. that was available to their plot of land.

Despite the harsh conditions, the Smiths, including the youngest child Jack who was barely 10 years old, worked on the farm without any complain or self-pity. They were determined to make the best with what they had on their land instead of moaning and groaning about the difficulties and hardships of farming they encountered. They would pool their individual efforts and together work tirelessly on their farm throughout the four seasons of the year.

To supplement the poor soil on their farmland, the Smiths used natural compose and manure to enrich the vegetable beds. They specialised in organic farming and

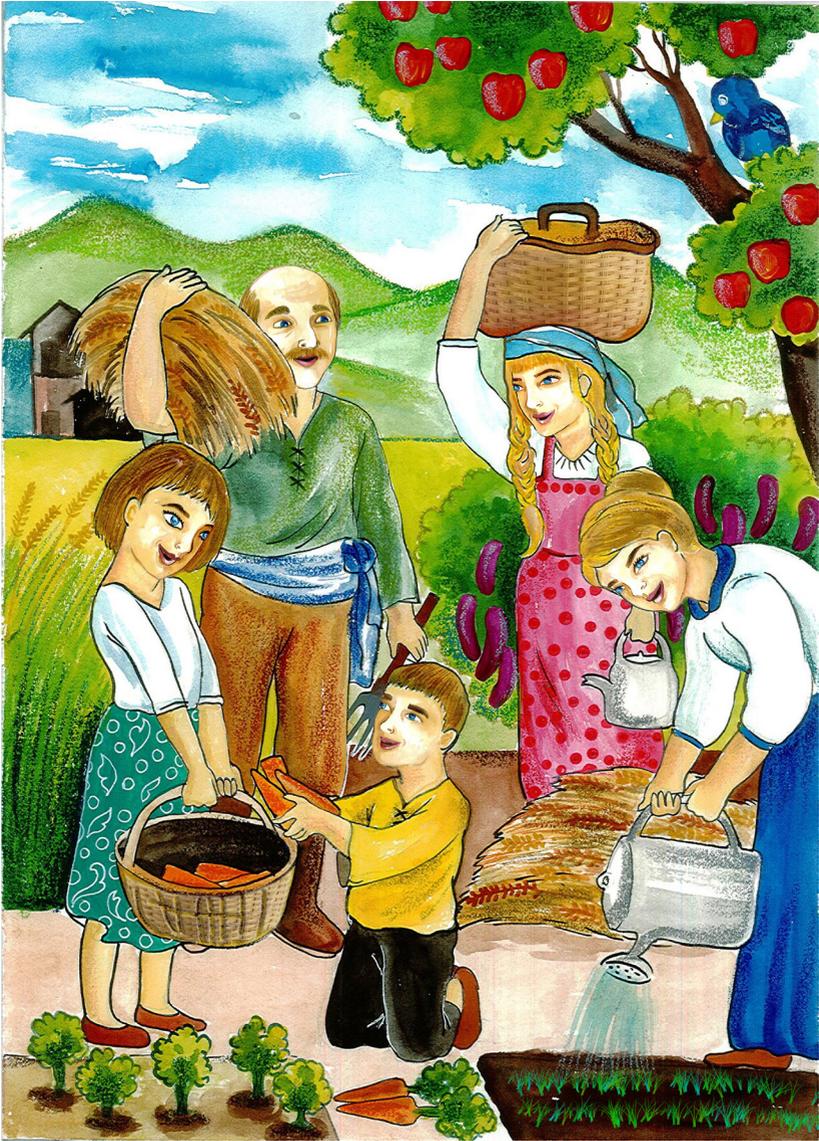


The loving happy Smith Family

and avoided using artificial fertilisers for their crops. In this way, they managed to ensure a reasonably good harvest of organically grown vegetables, tubers and fruits each season. People preferred to pay a higher price for the organic crops they grew, especially for the grains and daily vegetables as these were healthier to consume. To further supplement their income, the Smiths produced high-grade natural honey.

Thus, by working diligently the Smiths were able to live a simple but purposeful and fulfilling life. They were a wonderful example of a contented happy family that was committed to working hard and supporting each other in every way possible. The family spirit grew increasingly stronger as each member worked spiritedly for the common good of the family. As a result, their close family bonds grew progressively intensive, with the passage of each farming season. While the young children worked hard in the farm, they also paid attention to their studies. Their parents encouraged them to give their best effort to their daily homework and studies. They regularly took them to the local library to read up on various subjects of interest when they were free, in particular during weekends and during the children's term holidays. It was not surprising therefore that all their three children did well in their school exams in all subjects.

The Smiths also gave a good deal of attention to making sure that their children were well mannered and di-



The Smiths working tirelessly on the farm

sciplined in their behaviour. They spent a good deal of time in grooming their children from a young age to be polite and respectful and caring of others, including animals, insects and other creatures. They were also taught from small to be mindful of safeguarding the environment and to protect Nature. So the children took a natural interest in the flora and fauna around the countryside and were protective of them.

But alas, ill-fortune struck the family when the children were still young. John fell seriously ill and had to be admitted to hospital for treatment. The doctors tried their level best to cure him of his ailment, but their strenuous efforts were all in vain. John's health deteriorated day by day. After a couple of agonising weeks in hospital, he succumbed to his illness.

The death of John who was dearly loved by his wife and children was a terribly painful loss to bear. To add to the grief of the family, they were now hard put to secure a steady income. He was the one who was primarily responsible for supervising all the work in the farm from planting, nurturing, harvesting the crops and selling the produce at the local market place. He possessed a thorough knowledge and understanding of the agricultural and farming industry. The future of the children, however, was of uppermost importance in widowed Jane's mind. Both she and her late husband



John's sudden death

had wanted them to have a good education so that they would have better opportunities to secure steady jobs in the city when they grew up and started their own family. But now all these lofty aspirations for the children's future seemed to be suddenly crushed.

However, despite the tragedy of John's death and the many challenges that she encountered, Jane was determined to be strong for the children's sake. She was committed to do all that was within her grasp to provide for their needs. She huddled her grieving children together and consoled them by recalling the goodness of their late father. She comforted them by urging them to be grateful for the good times they had spent with him as a truly loving father and a great husband to their mother.

After consoling her bereaving children, Jane advised them that with the tragic loss of their beloved father everyone now had to work extra-hard to get on in life. She advised them to be always mindful that they needed each other's encouragement and moral support to surmount the hardships they all now faced as a family. She assured them that if they worked together as a strong family unit, they would be able to overcome the daunting challenges that now confronted the family.

On her part, widowed Jane put aside her deep grief and assumed the role of her late husband as the bread winn-



Jane consoles and advises her bereaving children

er of the family. At the same time, she never neglected her mother's role which was equally vital for the children to continue on with their lives successfully. Notwithstanding the great challenges encountered by the family, mother Jane saw to it that her children continued their schooling. Each day, Judy, Rosy and Jack would without fail rush home from school to help their mother to tend to the crops. During the weekends they would gather honey, harvest whatever crops and fruits in season and sell them together with their farm produce in the town's market place.

Due to Mother Jane's resolute commitment and the assistance and co-operation of the children, the family managed to earn enough to meet everyone's needs. This was by no means an ordinary accomplishment on the part of Mother Jane. Though it was very trying, all the siblings were motivated to forge a strong family bond and to do their best for the common good of the family. They remained positive in mind in spite of the hardships and challenges they encountered. They would even joke and laugh whenever they had some free time to relax and enjoy each other's company instead of brooding over past mishaps and difficulties.

Just as life began to appear promising once again for the Smith family, another brutal tragedy struck a heavy blow. In the summer of 1942, Devon was hit by a terrible storm. Not only did the heavy rains devastate the



Devon struck by a devastating storm

crops, it took a telling toll on the simple home of the Smith family. The walls cracked and the beams bent severely. As a result the roof of the house gave way to several leaks.

With everyone working doubly hard to sustain the family and John no longer around to look after the upkeep of the house, Jane decided that rather than repair their old run-down house, it would be better to build a new one altogether. So each night while the other farmers in Devon retired to bed for a well-deserved rest after a hard day of work in the open fields, the Smiths would trot to the nearby stream to quarry rubble and sand from the river to build a new home. Night after night the family would trek back and forth heaving bucket-full of sand and heavy rubble which they piled up next to the site of their new home.

One night a powerful gale broke out. It rained cats and dogs all through the night. Mother Jane and the children huddled together under their old thatch-roofed house. There was now barely a dry spot left in the house to shelter from the rains. They were, however, more concerned about the piles of sand that they had laboured to gather from the stream. Jane and the kids waited anxiously for the punishing rains and strong winds to pass over. They were all worried about what had become of the piles of sand they had so laboriously collected to build their new home.

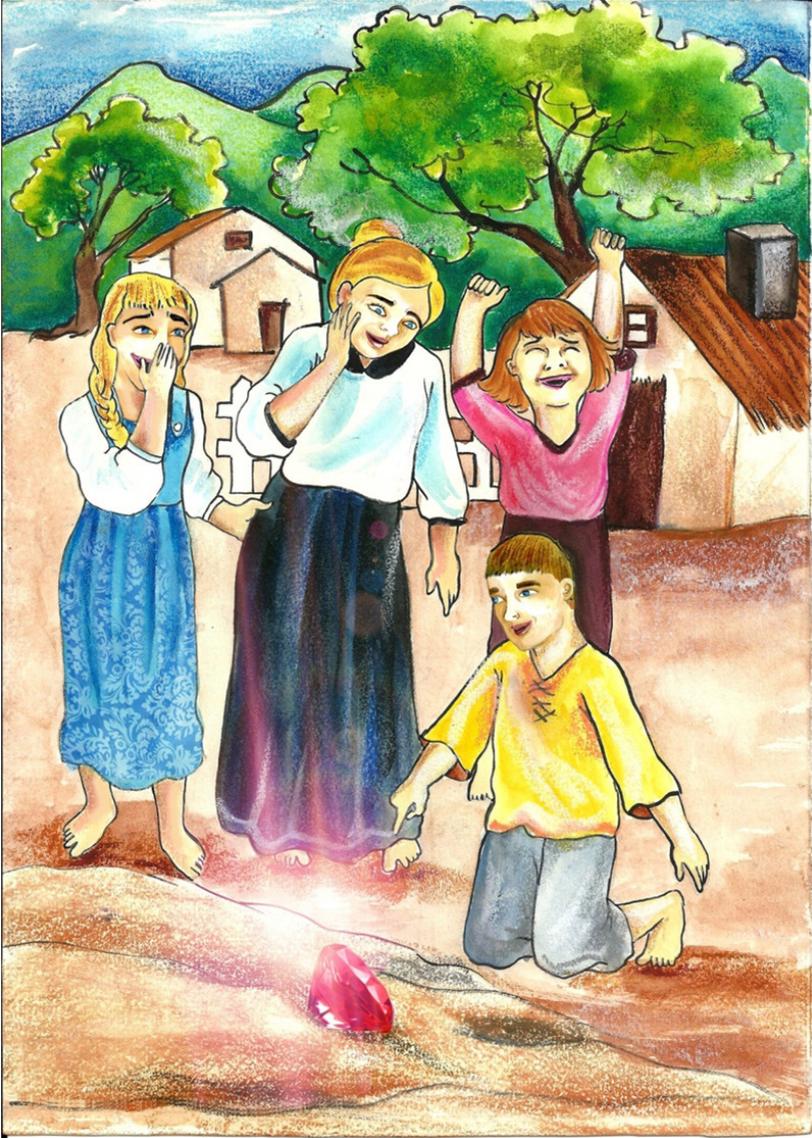


The storm beats upon the thatch-roofed home

When the rains stopped the next morning, the Smiths dashed out of their house to inspect the piles of sand. They could see even from a distance that most of the sand piles had been washed away by the heavy down-pour. This did not deter little Jack from rushing towards the spot where the sand had been piled up while the others had slowed down their steps upon realising the sad fate of the piles of sand they had carried from the riverbank.

Being an inquisitive child, Jack peered closer into the pile of sand. To his amazement, he stumbled upon something unusual. It was a piece of shiny glassy object that gave forth a sparkle against the bright rays of the morning sun. Filled with great excitement, he called out to his mother and sisters at the top of his voice to come quickly and see what he had stumbled upon.

Mother Jane and her two daughters dashed to see what Jack had found. Jane just could not believe her eyes. Her face lit up like an electric bulb. She at once recognised that the sparkling crystal object Jack had discovered was no ordinary stone, but a large precious gem that they must have dug up from the river bed. It only revealed itself when the rains washed away the lighter sand and pebbles in which it was hitherto buried. Jane could not hold back her joy. She burst out with sheer ecstasy and spontaneously hugged all her loving children, for her little Jack had stumbled upon a great fortune.



Little Jack stumbles upon a precious gem

The glittering stone that Jack had spotted proved to be a rare precious uncut pink diamond. It fetched a most handsome price at the jewellers because of its strong lustre and unusually large size. The money from the sale of the rare gem solved the entire financial predicament faced by the Smith family. They could now afford to build a much larger home and that too in quick time by contracting the job to a reputable construction company instead of them having to slog to build it themselves.

From thence onwards the Smiths were able to afford many things which they could only dream about hitherto. Even so, Jane would often remind her children to continue to work hard and give whatever task they undertook, their very best shot. For, therein lay the secret to their success and happiness. They continued to work diligently in their farm. At the same time, Jane saw to it that the children had a sound education. Although the Smiths were finally blessed with good fortune, they did not allow their riches to get into their head. They did not flaunt their windfall on unnecessary, wasteful things and unhealthy indulgences, They continued to live as a spirited, contented happy family.

All of the children continued to study hard. They did well in their school exams. They went on to pursue their higher studies at the nearby University of Devon and graduate with flying colours.

Understand, Reflect and Internalise

Parents, caregivers and teachers are urged to encourage the child to interact and improve her or his communication skills, thinking, comprehension and imagination. The onus is on them to make a full commitment to develop the child's innate interest to think while learning new things and gathering wholesome ideas, concepts and lessons in life. They are urged to make a deliberate effort to spend quality time with their child by reading together with them the story, discuss the questions listed below and guide them to reflect on the important life-lessons in the story.

1. What was Devon famous for?
2. What do you know about the Smiths?
3. Describe the character of John.
4. How did the family face John's death?
5. Describe the character of Mother Jane and the children?
6. How did widowed Jane and the children cope with the farming after John's demise?
7. How did Mother Jane and the children respond to their unexpended great fortune?
8. What morals and ethics have you learnt from the story?
9. How can you improve yourself based on the story?
10. What is the life of a farming family like?

The Smiths were an ordinary farming family who lived in the district of Devon in England. They did not own a large farm. However, they worked hard and managed to live a happy family life. Everyone in the family cooperated and worked as a team and helped each other out in the farm. Each one in the family gave her or his best shot. This was the secret of their success in building a high reputation for their organic farm products.

The family experienced a grave misfortune when Mr. Smith died after a serious illness. Mrs. Smith courageously managed the farm with the help of her three young children. No sooner the Smiths were able to run the farm successfully, a second tragedy struck. One night a fierce storm swept across Devon and damaged their rather old house. The roof began to leak badly. Mrs. Smith decided to build a new house. Each evening the Smiths would carry buckets of sand from the nearby stream and pile them up at the site where they intended to build their new home.

Most unexpectedly, a severe storm broke out and it rained right through the night till the next morning. As soon as the storm stopped, the Smiths ran out to see that the piles of sand had been swept away. Little Jack, however, ran ahead and spotted a glittering precious stone amongst the washed away sand. The Smiths were able to sell it for a good price. They then had enough money to contract a company to build their new home. The story teaches us to be spirited and work hard and we will be duly rewarded.