

Richard T Smith



A
**STORY
TELLER**

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Once upon a time

There was a mouse, not an ordinary mouse but an extraordinary mouse, as you will soon see.

One day Mouse was on his way to get some blackberries that grew in the hedgerows for his dinner, when all of a sudden a shadow came over him that grew larger and larger.

It was no ordinary shadow as there was a particular shape to it and one that Mouse certainly didn't want to see. It was the shape of wings ... owl wings ... and Mouse knew that he was about to be dinner for Owl as blackberries were to be dinner for him.

Mouse turned sharply to his right just in time, avoiding Owl sinking his talons into him.

But Mouse wasn't safe yet as Owl continued to chase him, but fortunately for Mouse there was a small hole at the bottom of a tree that was big enough for Mouse to get into but too small for Owl.

Although Mouse could run faster than Owl, Owl could take larger steps.

Mouse could hear Owl getting closer and closer, so much so he could feel the heat of Owl's breath bearing down on him.

“Just made it!” he shouted as he entered the hole in the tree, or had he spoke too soon? He could feel the talons of the owl pressing down on his tail, which was still trailing outside the hole in the tree.

Mouse pulled with all his might as Owl was also pressing down with all his might. Fortunately for Mouse the soil was very soft, allowing Mouse’s tail to slide under Owl’s talons, and finally he was free.

“You cannot stay in there forever, Mouse!” Owl shouted. Mouse couldn’t answer as he was still

trying to catch his breath after the chase.

Owl is right. I cannot stay in here forever, Mouse thought.

Whatever am I going to do?

Mouse sat down on the ground to gather his thoughts whilst listening to Owl taunting him from outside the hole in the tree. Then, suddenly, Mouse had an idea.

Owl was surprised when Mouse started to talk, as he hadn't spoken for a long time.

Mouse started telling a story.

The Watermelon

Once upon a time there was a man who owned a market stall selling watermelons. His name was McBain. He was so proud of his watermelons he would always brag that his was the biggest and best watermelons in all the land, so much so that he became very unpopular with the rest of the people in the market.

One day when McBain was bragging to passing customers as usual about his watermelons. He would say, pointing to the watermelon he was holding, “Ladies and gentlemen, the average weight

of a whole watermelon, such as the kind sold in grocery stores, only ranges from twenty to twenty-five pounds, but not here – I only sell watermelons weighing in at thirty pounds!”

You could hear the other stallholders muttering, “Here he goes again ...”

As the crowd gathered around his stall, a man in the crowd shouted out, “Thirty pounds! No way does that watermelon weigh thirty pounds!”

“It does!” replied McBain.

“No it doesn’t!” the man replied again.

McBain insisted it was a thirty pound watermelon.

The man took a short pause before asking McBain to hand the watermelon to him, to feel the weight for himself and see if he agreed with him.

At this point McBain handed over the watermelon to the man in the crowd.

“You know what?” the man said. “I agree this watermelon is definitely a thirty pound melon.” And he went on to repeat it over and over again as he walked away from McBain’s stall.

As the man walked about ten yards from the stall, McBain shouted “Bring back that watermelon!” The man in the crowd ignored him and kept on walking and repeating over and over again “This watermelon is definitely a thirty pound melon – yes sir, this watermelon is definitely a thirty pound melon.”

At this point the Owl shouted, “Why didn’t he run after the man and get the watermelon back?”

This pleased Mouse because it meant that Owl was listening to his story. Mouse replied, “Because McBain knew if he had run after the man to get his watermelon back, the

rest of the crowd would have stolen all the watermelons on his stall. Nobody would have stopped them as McBain wasn't liked by anyone." At this point Owl just muttered something under his breath.

Then it went silent, but it wasn't long before Owl started to taunt Mouse again.

"I have all the time in the world, Mouse. I'm not even hungry as I had eaten another mouse before our paths crossed."

Mouse continued to stay silent for what seemed a very long time before he started to tell another story.

Lord Singleton

Once upon a time, many years ago there was a mean and wicked landowner by the name of Lord Singleton. He treated his workers appallingly, letting them live in his rundown cottages. He would deduct unfair rent from the workers and pay them a pittance in wages. In fact, he would always look to deduct money from them at every opportunity.

He would sometimes go into the local tavern where his workers would drink and play cards with whatever money they had left, if any.

Lord Singleton would just invite himself into a game by sitting down and indicating for them to deal him in. Nobody would ever say no as there would be repercussions.

He would raise the stakes higher than they were getting paid for a week's work, knowing that they would throw their hand in and consider themselves out of the game.

And as they didn't pay to see his hand, they never knew if they could have beaten him or not.

“Why did they work for him if it was that bad?” asked Owl.

Once again Mouse smiled knowing he had Owl's attention. "Because times were hard, and if they left their job it meant they were also homeless. And as bad as the cottages were it was still better than sleeping on the street", replied Mouse.

But as smart as the Lord thought he was, he could never have imagined for one minute that his nemesis would be a fifteen year old boy.

"A fifteen year old boy?" Owl asked.

"Yes, a fifteen year old boy", replied Mouse, with a huge smile on his face.

He hit Lord Singleton where it hurt him the most ... his pocket.

And not only didn't Lord Singleton see it coming, he also didn't know who it was, and there wasn't anything he could have done about it.

And what's more, it was the people who worked for him that benefited from his loss.

Owl listened intensively and was waiting to hear Mouse finish the story, but Mouse went quiet.

At this point Owl was getting agitated at not hearing the full story. "Well, Mouse, how did a fifteen

year old boy outsmart Lord
Singleton?”

Mouse replied in a low and weak
voice, “I can’t finish the story.”

“Why ever not?!” shouted Owl.

“Because I feel dehydrated and
weak and in need of a drink”,
replied Mouse.

“I can take you to the stream so you
can drink the water”, said Owl.

“I will not leave this hole in the tree
as you will eat me”, replied Mouse.

“Why would I do that? I want to
hear the rest of the story”, said Owl.

“You could eat me after I finish the story”, Mouse pointed out.

A frustrated Owl asked Mouse, “How can I get water for you? I don’t have anything to carry it in.”

“There is a way”, Mouse told Owl.

“How?” asked Owl.

After a short pause, Mouse spoke again in a weak voice.

“If you go over the hedgerows and bring me back some blackberries, I can drink the juice from them. Then I should be well enough to finish the story.”

“Finish the story”, Mouse repeated in a weaker-sounding voice.

Owl, wanting to know the ending to the story, set off to get the blackberries.

On his return he dropped the blackberries outside the hole in the tree, then flew up onto the big branch opposite.

“Mouse, you may come out and get the blackberries as I’m at a safe distance from you.”

But Mouse never responded.

“Mouse? Can you hear me, Mouse?
You can drink the juice from the
blackberries now.”

There was still no response from
Mouse.

Owl swooped down to the small
hole in the tree. He bent down and
looked in to see if Mouse was still
alive, but there was no sign of
Mouse.

Owl realised that Mouse had tricked
him into going for the blackberries
so he could escape.

Owl wasn't angry at Mouse. In fact
he fully understood why he did

it, although he was very disappointed as he didn't get to hear the full story.

Yes, Mouse was very clever. He used Owl's curiosity to help him escape.

Acknowledgements

AOB Proofreading

Disclaimer

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, places, events and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

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The Tuffy Stories

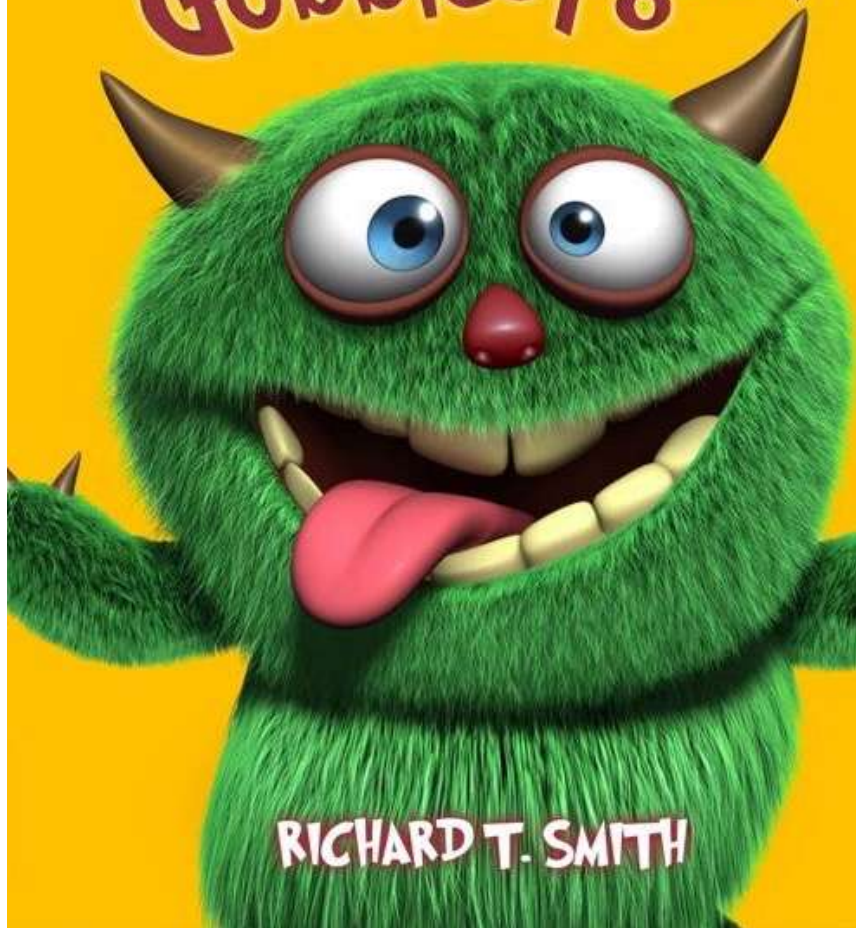
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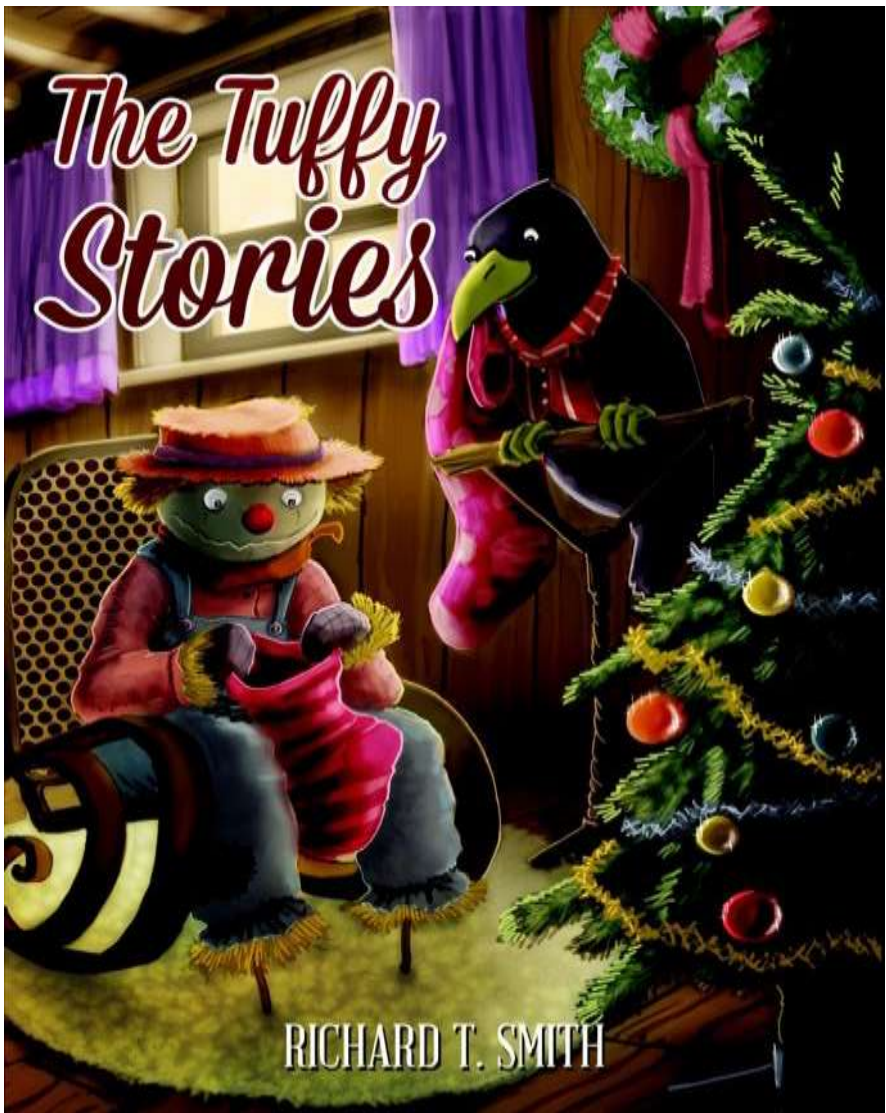
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The Tuffy Stories

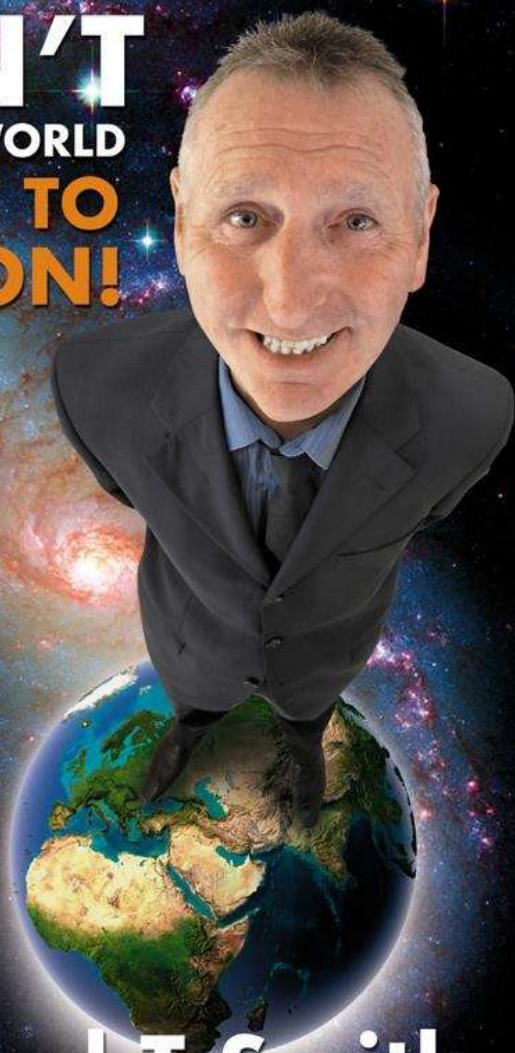


RICHARD T. SMITH

**The
Chestnut
Man**

Richard T. Smith

DON'T
STOP THE WORLD
I WANT TO
STAY ON!



Richard T. Smith
THE MAGIC ENTREPRENEUR

ONE LINERS & PUT DOWNS

"It's great to see you all here this evening... now I know my house is safe."

"You must be loaded if you can afford the lipstick for that mouth."

Richard T. Smith

100 NUGGETS OF GOLD

*"More gold has been mined from the
thoughts of men than has been taken
from the earth." - Napoleon Hill*

Richard T. Smith

SMALL BOOK OF
LIFE CHANGING
QUOTES

Written by
Richard T. Smith

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