

Stories, Aunt Theresa

This transcript was generated automatically. Its accuracy may vary.

I wondered in the shades of night Till Jesus came to me and went up and light out his love did all my darkness free Sunlight, sunlight in my home today Sunlight, sunlight all along the way since the Savior found me and took away my sin While walking in the light of God I sweet communion I press with Holly finger on and leave a bl behind Sunlight, sunlight in my lonely days Light, sunlight all along the way since the day be bound in the I have danced and my love is now within I shall see him as he is the light that came to me Behold the brightness of his face about eternity Love Light, sunlight in my gold today Please, Tabby, is story.

I'd like to very much. Did you ever see a leopard? I got a picture of one in my Edible Zoo book. I never saw one. Right out.

Well, then you can imagine Billy's surprise when there, lying at full length on the green grass of the park, was a big cat like animal, colored orange with black spots. That was a leopard, right? But when Billy told his friends what he'd seen, they didn't believe him. You're kidding. You saw Morton's cat.

I did not see a cat. I saw a leopard. Come on, see for yourself. You think I'm going where a leopard is? Not me, boy.

Leopards are dangerous animals. This one's not dangerous. This one's dead. It's lying there on the grass with its feet stretched out and. Come on.

What are we waiting for?

It is a leopard. Of course it is. I told you it was. Where'd it come from? Who knows?

All I know is finder's keepers. I'm gonna take it home. Aw, come on. You can't move it. It's too big and heavy.

Let's get our mothers to help us. No, no. I want a surprise, Mom. Yeah, let's get my wagon. We can get them in there and pull them home ourselves.

It wasn't easy getting that heavy leopard on the wagon. But finally they had it aboard and were started for home. Steve pulled, Billy pushed, and Mary tried not to get too close.

Billy's mother had just finished making a pie and was cleaning up the baking dishes. She glanced out of the kitchen window just as Billy, Steve and Mary wheeled the wagon with the leopard into the backyard. Billy's mother was surprised, all right, and she was even more surprised at how much fun they were having with the big cat. They were stroking it and lifting up its paws and fooling around with it, as though they played with leopards every day of their lives.

Now, Billy's mother could see that this was not a full grown leopard. But it was a leopard and a dangerous animal, she thought. Then suddenly, they jumped back from the wagon. Steve and Mary ran as fast as they could off to their houses, and Billy couldn't get in the back door fast enough.

He was white as a sheet. He was dead, Mom. But he opened his eyes and made a funny noise and he moved. A live leopard in our backyard. What are we gonna do?

Stories, Aunt Theresa

What are we gonna do, Mom? We're gonna lock the door and call the zoo. That's what we're going to do.

The zookeeper came as quickly as he possibly could. He came in a big truck which carried an iron cage. Billy and his mother watched from the kitchen window as the big cat was lifted into the cage. After the cage was securely locked, Billy and his mother went outside. Where in the world did this creature come from?

I'm sure glad to see it in that cage. You're glad to see it in that cage? How do you think I feel? When that escaped leopard was spotted in the park this morning? We put drugged meat around, hoping he'd eat some and fall asleep.

We had guards posted so the children wouldn't enter the danger zone. After the leopard was sound asleep, we left to get our truck. We weren't gone anytime, but when we returned, our leopard had disappeared. We've been plenty worried ever since. We were afraid somebody might get clawed or even killed.

When your telephone call came, I was plenty relieved. He's a fighting mad creature when he's awake. Wow. Well, thanks again.

When Daddy came home from work, he heard all about the capture of the wild leopard. He was as tame as he could be, Daddy, and he was pretty, too. You mean he looked as tame as he could be? Makes me think of sin.

What do you mean, Daddy? Sin sometimes looks so tame and sometimes looks so pretty. But it only looks that way. Doing the wrong thing is always wrong, no matter how good it looks. I see what you mean.

I think we ought to pray and thank the Lord for protecting you and your friends today, and I think we ought to thank God for letting us know about the awfulness of sin and how it can hurt us, and most of all, I think we should thank God that we know the one who is able to keep us from harm and destroy sin, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you know what a haunted house is? It something scary. I know that that's exactly what Mary and Steve and Billy thought about the old house in the woods near where they lived.

I sure wish we had a big tree to climb in the backyard. There are a lot of trees to climb at the edge of the woods. Billy, why don't you and your friends climb those? Oh, no, Mom. We don't go near there.

That's where the haunted house is. Haunted house? Really? Well, it is? Sure is.

Yeah. Honest. Just ask Steve what he saw there. I saw awful things. No kidding.

One day I got real close and I looked in one of the windows. I saw strange shapes that were moving around in the room, and I heard all kinds of awful sounds. Moaning and groaning, squeaking and creaking coming from the old house. See, Mom?

It is haunted. That's why we don't play around there. I'd rather have no tree to climb at all than to climb one near the old haunted house. That evening at the dinner table, Daddy was told about the old haunted house.

Stories, Aunt Theresa

So because of the noises and the shadows, you say the old house is haunted, huh? It is haunted, dad. Really. Don't you believe me? Would you believe me if I told you it wasn't haunted?

Well, I guess I should believe you. Tell you what. Let's get you and your friends together and we'll spend the night sleeping in the old house. What? Do you really think that's necessary, dear?

I think it's right to be careful of real danger. But I don't think it's right to be afraid of something just because you don't understand it. How about it, Billy? Are you game? Well, I guess so.

Maybe Billy was game. After all, it was his father that was going to be there. But Billy's friends couldn't be talked into going along. If you want to spend the night with a bunch of spooks, that's up to you. But don't count on me.

And so it was that Billy and his dad, with their sleeping bags, walked off through the woods and up to the old house.

Boy, it sure is scary, dad. What is scary, son? I don't know. It. It just is.

There isn't really anything scary here at all. There are shadows because there isn't enough light in the house. The door squeaks because no one has oiled the hinges. You can hear the howling wind better because there are plenty of holes in the walls for it to howl through. But that's only because the house is run down, not because there's anything spooky about.

Billy and his dad stayed the whole night in the old house. They came out the next morning feeling just fine. Didn't anything happen to them at all? No. They had a good night's rest after Billy finally got to sleep.

And you should have heard him telling his friends all about it the next day. Oh yeah, it squeaks a little and the wind moans and it was kind of shadowy. But that's just because the house has run down, not because there's anything spooky about it. You know, it's just like people who were scared of death until Jesus Christ died and came back to life again, and now when we believe in him, we don't have to be scared of death anymore because Jesus went through death and took all the scariness out of it.

Do you sometimes find the Bible hard to understand? Uh huh. But when I'm six, I won't. Some of us have a little trouble understanding all of it, even when we're older than six. But did you know that God has given us many things to look at which help us to understand his words.

Like what? Well, for one thing, the resurrection coming alive again in a new body much lovelier and finer than the one we're in now. I like the way I am. That's funny. That's exactly what Steve said to himself on the day he had the strangest adventure ever.

He was walking along the sidewalk talking to himself. I like the way I am. It's silly to think there's any better way. Is that so? Huh?

Who said that? I did. But look down here, boy, on the ground. There's nothing down there but a caterpillar. How do you do?

But how can a caterpillar bend down? Look me in the eyes and I shall tell you a few things about what you say is silly. What can you tell me? You're just an old caterpillar today. Huh?

Stories, Aunt Theresa

Today I am just a caterpillar. If I were you, I'd say I like the way I am, and that it is silly to think there is any better way. But you see, just as God is going to change you someday into something better, so he is going to change me. Come along and watch.

Steve didn't know how it happened exactly, but suddenly he was only about 3 inches tall, just like the caterpillar, and there they were, walking along through the grass toward the edge of the woods. Boy, it's a long walk when you're only this big. You'll get used to it in time. Shall we climb this tree?

It's about time for my nap. Your nap?

In almost no time at all, Steve and the caterpillar were up in the tree. The caterpillar began making something that looked like very fine string. He wound it round and round himself until he had the nicest little bed you ever saw.

Yes, indeed. Very comfortable. Then he fastened his bed so securely to a small branch of the limb that it couldn't possibly be shaken off. Good night.

When next we meet, I shall be beautiful. Weeks and weeks passed. The snow came and went and there sat Steve, watching the caterpillar's bed and saying over and over. I knew it was silly. Silliest thing I ever heard of an old caterpillar being changed to something beautiful.

Who could do that? God could. Who said that? Up here. The robin.

Did you say something? I said God can change things. Look at me. I'm not bad to look at, am I? No.

As a matter of fact, you look pretty dressed up in that red and brown jacket. Do you know that I was squeezed into the darkest place you ever saw? I didn't have any red and brown jacket either. There I was, crowded into this tiny dark room. You mean your egg?

I suppose that's the name you give it. Anyway, one day in God's time, of course, my tight little room split open and out huffed yours truly. Well, that gave Steve a few things to think about. But it wasn't long before he was watching the caterpillar's bed and saying again, it's silly, this idea being changed. Who could do a thing like that?

God can. Who said that? Down here. The flower. Did you say something?

I was only a tiny dried up brown. Indeed. To look at me, you'd never have thought I'd amount to anything. Then a little while ago, my skin started getting too tight for me. I got a tingly feeling all inside.

Then I started to push through the ground, and look at me now. I could never have done all that. But God could, and God, I would never say that change is silly.

First the bird, then the flower. Let's go home. Get me out of here. What?

It's a caterpillar. Must be waking up inside his bed. Oh, one end of that bed is opening.

He's coming out. Oh, wait a minute. That isn't a caterpillar.

Butterfly.

Stories, Aunt Theresa

How do you do? Well, there now, that's better. Oh. Oh, my. Oh my.

Look at these with their wings. They're beautiful. But they're mine. All colors green and blue and gold. He did it.

He did it. He promised and he did it. Who did it? God did. Remember I said I'd be changed into something beautiful?

God promised that and he did it. Well, look, I can fly. Goodbye, Steve. No more crawling around on cabbage leaves for me. I've got wings.

Did that really happen? Well, Steve, Says it did. But you ought to know that right after the butterfly flew away, Steve woke up to find himself in bed. It was a dream. But a very good dream.

Because now when Steve hears about how the Lord Jesus will give a new beautiful body to all his followers someday, Steve never says that's silly. He just looks around for a caterpillar or a bird or a flower or a beautiful butterfly.

Can you think of anything that talks other than a person? A bird. That's one. Yes. Sometimes a parrot talks.

Yes. Some birds are funny when they talk. Can you think of anything else? Um. A record.

That's a good answer. Yes. This record is talking, isn't it? Uh huh. Have you ever heard the story of the piece of wood that talked?

A talking piece of wood? No. Well, let me tell you about it right now.

This story happened way out in the South Sea Islands, a long, long ways away. As far away as missionaries go, right? This story happened to one of the missionaries who was serving there. The missionary was building a church for the people of the island. Some of the people who lived nearby were helping him.

You're doing a fine job, dundee. Thank you, Mr. Williams. I don't seem to have a tool I need here. I wonder if you'd be good enough to run back to the compound and fetch it for me.

Tondidoo. What is missing tool called? Hand me that piece of wood there, will you? This. Thank you.

Why do you make black marks on wood? This is so the wood will tell my wife what tool I need. The piece of wood, it will talk. I need the tool right away, Tandi. I'll explain later how puzzled Tandi was as he ran to the missionary's wife with a piece of wood.

It has no mouth. It makes no sound. This is foolish. She will never know what missionary men want. What is it, Tandi?

Here. Piece of wood. Hmm. A T, square and level, of course. Wait just a minute, Tondi.

I'll get them from the toolbox. The wood, it tell you it is magic. Missionary people are so smart, they can make wood talk.

Stories, Aunt Theresa

How did I do it? Well, the wood didn't really talk. The missionary had written the name of the tools on the wood with his pencil. All Mrs. Williams had to do was to read what was there.

Oh. You see how important it is to learn to read? Writing can tell us almost everything we need to know, especially if that writing is in God's book. Do you know what book that is? The Bible.

That's right. It's through his book that God speaks to us, and like that piece of wood. The Bible can tell us what God wants us to do.

Did I ever tell you the story about lost mittens? The three little kittens? They lost their mittens and they began to cry. Meow, meow, meow. Yes, this story about lost mittens has to do with a kitty, too.

Mary loved kittens. She loved them any size, shape or color. She loved kittens, but Mary's mother didn't like them one bit.

About the only other thing Mary really loved was a bicycle. It was red with lots of chrome, just her size, and it stood in the window of McGraw's Hardware Store. Mary's daddy would have bought her the bicycle, but there just never seemed to be that little extra bit of money it would take.

And so that was the sad situation Mary found herself in. She loved the two things that looked as though she could never have. One summer evening, Mary was putting together a puzzle on the floor near the doors that opened out into the garage. Mary's mother sat reading the paper, and her father, well, he was pretending to be reading too, but he was really taking a nap.

Daddy sure takes a long time to read one page. Shh. Let's not break him. What was that? What?

I thought I heard a kitty meow. Probably just your father snoring. There it is again, Mother. Look. Standing by the door.

It's a kitty.

In walked the furriest black cat you ever saw. With head held high, it walked about the room just like it was looking the place over, seeing if it was good enough to live in. Look at his cat. Big white feet. They look like mittens.

That cat is someone's special pet. Mary, you know I don't like cats, but this one is certainly handsome. Look at the way he curls up on my lap, just like he knows me. May I keep him, Mother? Please?

Well. Oh, please. You said he was handsome yourself, and look how good he is. Well, you can keep him until we find the owner. Try not to set your heart on keeping him, dear.

Someone is sure to want a beautiful creature like this back.

It was only a few days later that their neighbor, old Mr. Jennings, called to Mary's mother. I see where there's a cat reported missing here in the paper. Sounds a good bit like the one you folks found the other night. Oh, no.

Extra toe on each paw, making it look like it was wearing mittens. That's our cat, all right. Let me see the paper, Mr. Jennings. I'll write the address down and Mary can take the cat home.

Stories, Aunt Theresa

Mary wanted to hold the kitty closer to hide him But Mary was a girl who loved the Lord Jesus Christ with all her heart. God's Holy Spirit living in her heart told her, a Christian is always honest, Mary. That kitty may belong to someone who wants him even more than you do, and as Mary started out to take her kitty to his owner, Old Mr. Jennings said, Bless your heart, child.

You wait and see. You may be a mite lonely for a while, but God rewards those who are honest. A sad little Mary carried her beautiful cat five blocks to the address given in the paper. A maid answered the door, and soon a beautifully dressed woman appeared. How can we ever thank you for bringing back our Mittens?

We just moved here a week ago, and we were so careful with mittens, but she got away. You see, my youngest son, Alan, has been sick for almost a year, and this kitty is the darling of his heart. The doctors said that if Alan didn't stop grieving over the loss of his pet, we might not be able to keep our son with us.

It was a happy little Mary who walked five blocks back home. Imagine. She had been able to help a little boy who was sick.

A few days later, the mailman brought a letter to Mary. When she opened it, a piece of pink paper dropped out. It said, pay to the order of Mary Bingham the sum of \$50. It was a reward from the lady with the sick son. What do you think was the first thing Mary did with the money?

Did she buy a cat? No. Did she buy a bicycle? No. That wasn't the first thing she did.

Well, what then? First she gave a good bit of it to the Lord Jesus. Then she put some of it in the bank, and then? Then she and her daddy went down to McGraw's Hardware Store.

A little bicycle. Right. The red bicycle with the chrome, and do you think that was all? Well, it wasn't.

A few months later. Mother. Mother, look at the letter I just got from that sick boy. Alan. Listen to what it says.

Our beautiful cat called Mittens has a litter of beautiful kittens. Because you returned our lost Mittens, I'll give you one of her kittens. Yes, Mary had the two things she wanted most, and it was just like old Mr. Jennings had said.

God rewards those who are honest.

What do you sometimes have on your cereal in the morning? Milk? Yes. Anything else? Sugar.

Right. Anything else? Sometimes. Daddy's bagels. Is there?

Yeah. I was thinking of berries.

I don't think there was anything that Billy and Mary and Steve liked to do more when summer came than to pick berries. There was a big field of them right near their house, they would get their buckets and run out and pick enough for spring cereal all summer, and pies and jellies. Mary always seemed to be able to pick more berries than Billy or Steve. Maybe that's because you and Steve eat about as many as you put in the buckets.

Stories, Aunt Theresa

Oh, we have one or two now and then, mom, but it isn't anything like that. I just pick twice as fast as they do, that's all. Boy, listen to her. Yeah, let's teach her a lesson today. Let's have a race, Mary.

Yeah. Want a race, Mary? Okay, if you want. Want to lose a race, that's all right with me.

And grabbing their pails, Mary, Billy and Steve ran down the road to the field where the berries grew. What a mad scramble they made through the field. Plunk, plunk, plunk. The first handful of berries hit the bottom of the tin bucket. Then the sound was just a plop, plop, plop as other berries landed on top.

Later in the day, when Billy's dad came in the car to give them a ride home, it seemed that each of their pails had about the same amount. Well, it looks as though we'll have to count every berry to see who has the most. Ah, you don't need to count mine. I can see I don't have as many as Billy and Mary do. But you have a lot more juice on your chin than we do.

Well, then it looks like a contest between Billy and Mary. Now, let's weigh the buckets and see who won. There's Billy's mm.

And there's Mary's Mm. I win. I win. I'm the champion berry picker again. Congratulations.

Oh, I can't wait to run home and tell my mother. See you later, August. I better be going, too. Shall we put a cover on your pail, Steve, so you'll get home with as many as you have now? Nah, it's okay.

Pretty well sick of them anyhow. I'll walk along with you. I want to talk to your father about something anyway. Well, you. You didn't win after all, did you, Billy?

It didn't pay you, did it? I don't know what you're talking about, Mom. I think you do, Billy. Oh, mom, how could you see me? Did you go to the berry field?

No, I never left the house. I was doing some cleaning up in the attic, and I came across a pair of powerful field glasses. So I. I went to the attic window to try them out. The trees and the bushes and things a block away looked Close enough to touch.

I thought it'd be fun to watch you and Mary and Steve, so I turned the glasses toward that field. Oh, I saw Mary walk away from her pail, and then I saw you sneak over and put some of her berries in your pail. Oh, Mom. Could you see me real plain?

Almost as plain as I can see you now. Mom, I'm sorry. Honest I am, and I'll never, never do it again, and I'll tell Mary what I did, too, even if she gets mad.

And I won't even eat any of the jelly you're gonna make. I'll just eat my bread plain with water. If you're really sorry, and if you tell Mary you are, I think you can have a little jelly on your bread. You know what I did when I saw you take those berries, Billy? No.

I knelt right there by the attic window and I said to God, father, Billy is yielding to sin out there in the field. Forgive him, please, and make him a stronger Christian, one who can overcome temptation. You know what Jesus was doing for you at the very same time? No. He was praying for you, too, from up there in heaven.

Stories, Aunt Theresa

He saw you, too. He saw you and he was sad, and he said, father, a little boy named Billy is being tempted to do a wrong thing. Help him to be a good, strong Christian. I.

I don't want to make Jesus sad, Mom. I know you don't, honey. Not any more than you want to make me sad. Right, Mom? Could you see me real plain?

We sometimes forget, don't we, that God sees us all the time? And he sees even better than with field glasses because he can see way inside you to what you're thinking and why you do things.