



The Flea and the Louse

I have adapted this from a traditional story that is in the Grimm's collection of folk tales. Variations of this tale are found in many different countries.

Props to use with the story:

- *Any kind of tin, jar or container will do if you don't have a tea caddy. Put some tea, rice or beans inside so that it rattles when you shake it.*
- *A large piece of fabric works well for the 'boggy loch' (for example, a sheet). If you have something blue so much the better.*
- *The other props are: a pot with a lid, a mixing bowl and spoon and a yellow duster (or any kind of cleaning cloth).*
- *This story is very adaptable. If you don't have these objects handy you can simply substitute different ones. Look for things that make a noise or have interesting tactile qualities.*

Remember – not all of my props recommendations are toys! The props I suggest should not be used by children unsupervised.

Actions to go with the story:

- *Hold your thumbs up 'facing one another'; one thumb is the flea and one is the louse.*
- *Make a little 'house' using your hands to make the roof.*
- *Mime shaking the sheets.*
- *'Roly poly your hands over each other when the flea 'falls'.*
- *Make the fire by waving your fingers to indicate flames*
- *Make 'tears' with your fingers for the louse 'weeping'.*
- *If you don't have the objects then mime their actions in the story*
- *At the end make your 'flea' (thumb) hop out of the fire. Repeat the actions from the beginning as they 'find a new little house.'*

[Use your props to make the actions, or if you are not using props then mime the actions.]

A flea and a louse lived together in a little house.

One day they were shaking out their sheets

The flea and the louse were shaking their sheets.

The flea she fell and she fell in the fire.

And the louse she weeps.

On the mantelpiece was the tea caddy.

The tea caddy saw the louse crying.

'Louse! Louse! Why are you crying?'

'Oh! The flea and I were shaking our sheets

The flea she fell and she fell in the fire.

So what can I do but weep?' said the louse.

'Oh then' said the tea caddy.

'If you weep, I will jump.'

So the caddy jumped and jumped and jumped.

On the counter was a little blue pot.

The pot saw the tea caddy jumping.

'Caddy, caddy why do you jump?'

'Oh! The flea and the louse were shaking their sheets

The flea she fell and she fell in the fire.

So the louse she weeps and I jump!' said the caddy.

'Oh then' said the little pot, 'if you jump, I will crash!'

So the pot crashed and crashed and crashed.

Next to the pot on the counter was a mixing bowl and a wooden spoon.

'Pot, pot why do you crash?' said the bowl.

'Oh! The flea and the louse were shaking their sheets

The flea she fell and she fell in the fire.

And the louse she weeps. Caddy jumps. And I crash!' said the pot.

'Oh then' said the bowl, 'if you crash, we will mix!'

And the bowl and spoon mixed and mixed and mixed!

Now on a peg was a wee yellow duster.

The duster saw the bowl and spoon mixing.

'Bowl, bowl why do you mix?'

'Oh! The flea and the louse were shaking their sheets

The flea she fell and she fell in the fire.

So the louse she weeps. Caddy jumps, pot crashes and I mix!' said the bowl.

'Oh then' said the little duster, 'if you mix, I will flap!'

And the duster flapped and flapped and flapped.

Now down at the bottom of the garden was the boggy loch.

The boggy loch saw the duster flapping.

'Duster, duster why do you flap?'

'Oh! The flea and the louse were shaking their sheets

The flea she fell and she fell in the fire.

So the louse she weeps. Caddy jumps, pot crashes, bowl mixes and I flap!' said the duster.

'Oh then' said the boggy loch, 'if you flap then I will swell.'

And boggy loch began to swell.

She got bigger and bigger and bigger!

Down came the water from the loch.

And it covered the duster and the bowl and the pot and the caddy.

And it even covered the fire.

And the fire went out.

Hop, hop, hop, hop, hop!

Out hopped the flea.

He looked around that little house.

'This house is too noisy. And too wet,' he said.

'Let us find a new little house.'

And so flea and louse went away to a new little house.

And lived happily ever after.

I would love to hear your feedback or comments on this story – please email me if you get a chance: info@flotsamandjetsam.co.uk

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