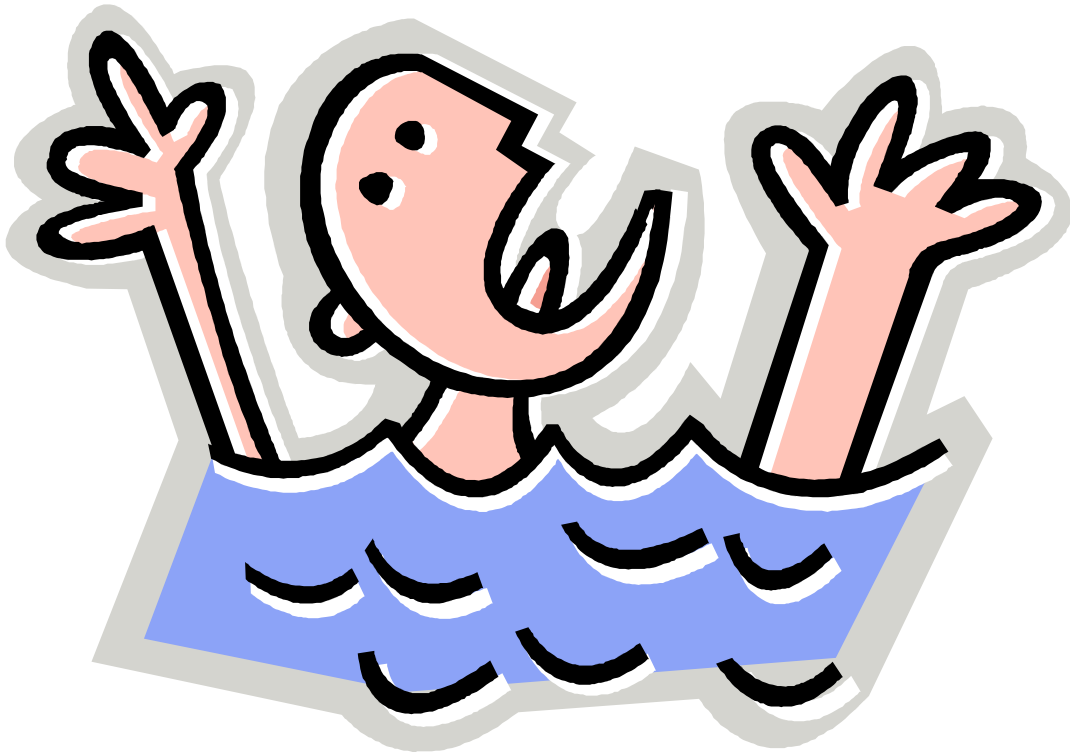


Jill's Trade



Once there was a little girl named Jill. She had pretty blonde hair and brown eyes and green earrings that only matched two shirts. Jill had a friend named Jack. Jack was a smart boy, but sometimes he could be very mischievous. Jack and Jill often played together, especially when their moms were stressed out and wanted them out of the house.

One day while they were playing along the river in the mud, Jill showed Jack her new ring that she got for her birthday from her parents. It was a very beautiful ring and was actually not a cheap one from a crackerjack box but was pretty expensive. Jack saw the ring and thought to himself that he would like to have the ring for himself. Jack sneakily said to Jill that he would trade her the ring for a very secret thing. Jill was immediately intrigued but remembered that her parents warned her to be very careful with her new ring and not to give to weird people. Jill politely, but firmly, said no by shoving Jack into the water and giggled.



Jack did not take that lying down. He shrugged it off and came out of the river soaking wet, reminding Jill that the thing was very secret and very cool. Jill didn't care however and didn't hesitate to push him back in the water. Jack was not happy. The next day Jack found Jill by the river again and walked up to her to play. He sneakily pretended to hide a box in his hands which pricked Jill's curiosity. Jill asked what it was and tried to get a good look at what Jack had in his box. Jack replied that it was nothing and hid it behind his back again so that Jill couldn't see it. Jill was by this time thoroughly captivated by the box and demanded that Jack let her see what was in it. Jack told her that it was the very secret and very cool thing that she refused to trade him for her ring.





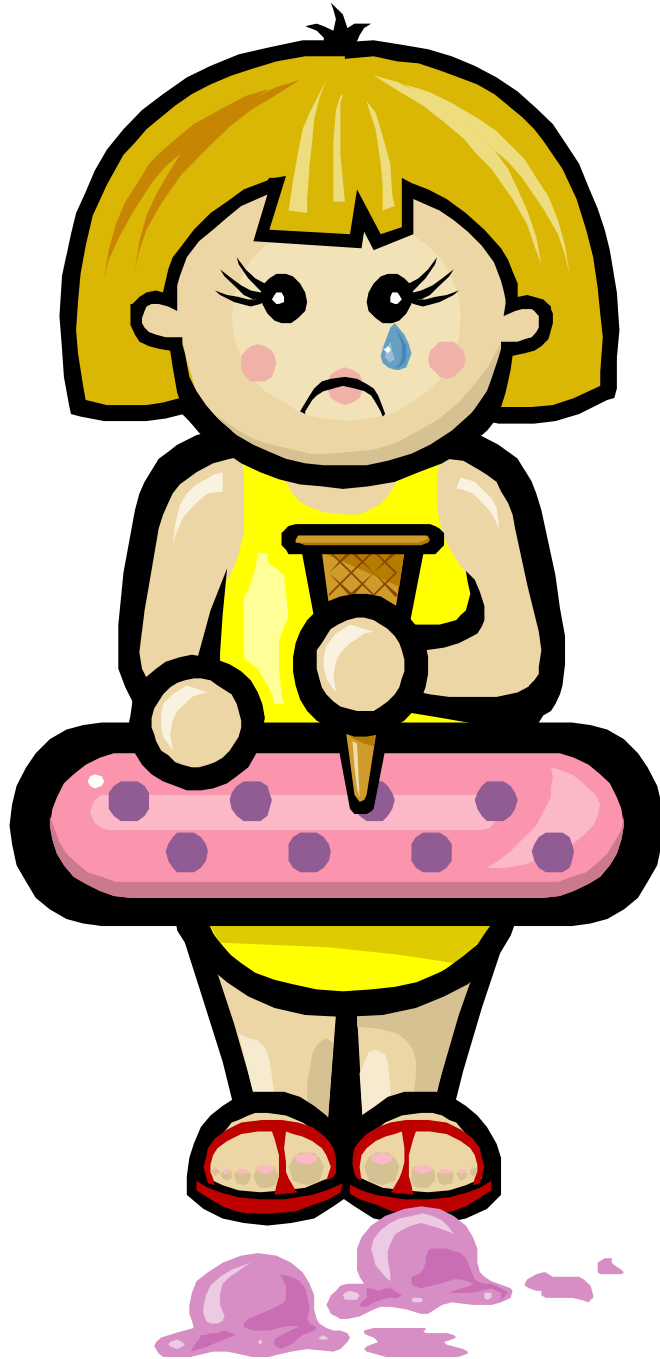
Jill thought about this. She said that she might reconsider if Jack would show her the secret thing. Jack said his offer no longer stood and told her to occupy her thoughts with something besides his secret thing. Jill, being a very curious little girl, refused. She pleaded with Jack to let her see it but Jack was adamant. He wouldn't let her see the secret thing. Ever.

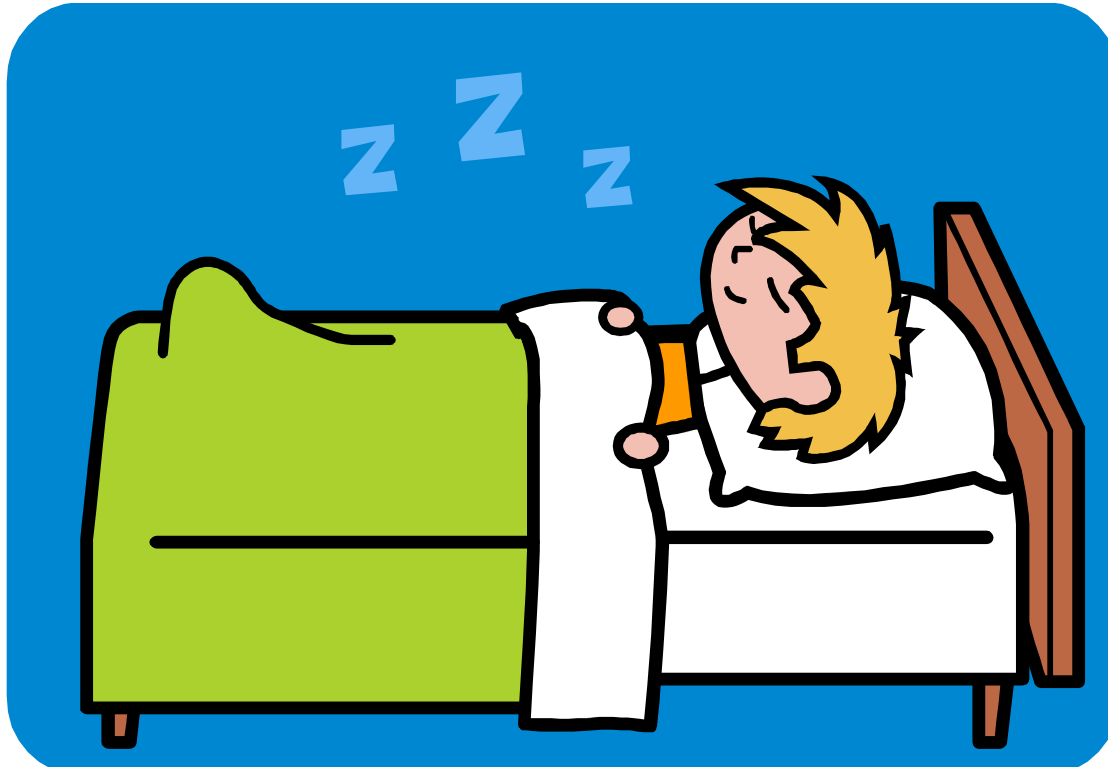


Jill was so upset by this that she begged Jack to trade the box with the secret thing inside for her ring. Jack still refused her offer and started to make some mud pies. Jill smooshed Jack's mudpie and demanded he trade her the thing for the ring. Jack paused. Jack considered. Jack said yes. Jill was so happy and quickly took off her new ring and gave it to Jack. Jack handed her the box and she hastily opened it to find a rock with a face on it made in marker. Jill was very upset and started to cry. Jack, not expecting this reaction from such a tough young girl, was overwhelmed and startled.



Jill's sadness soon turned to anger. She demanded her ring back from Jack. Jack refused, saying that she already traded with him and couldn't ask for it back. It was too late. Tears once again poured from Jill's eyes. She threw the box with the rock to the ground as hard as she could and ran away sobbing.





Jack's happiness was short lived. Seeing his best friend in such a hysterical state moved him to unhappiness. He refused to let his friend's silliness take over him and he started admiring his new ring. His fascination didn't last long and he soon wondered what girls thought was so neat about rings. All they had was a circle with a gem to put your finger in. Jack tried it. He didn't particularly think that it was fun so he took it off. He thought of Jill. He had cheated her out of her new ring that she so evidently loved. He started feeling guilty. But, being a stubborn little boy, Jack went home and put the ring in his undies drawer and went to sleep.

Jill went home and was so embarrassed that she didn't even tell her parents what had happened. She went to her room and cried and thought about how stupid her decision was. She started thinking about why her decision was a dumb one. She realized that she didn't know what she was dealing with when she went and made the trade. She came to see that she wasn't thoroughly educated on the matter at hand when she made this important financial decision. She realized that she was very stupid to have made such a hasty decision and decided that from now on she would always know what she was dealing with and would always think long and hard about something before she did it.



The next day Jack was by the river again. Jill came down and told him what she had been thinking. She said that if he didn't give her the new ring back that she wouldn't play with him again because he was a dishonest and mean little boy. Jack started to cry, especially after she smacked him across the face for saying no. Jack remembered that his parents had told him many, many times not to be mean but to be nice and not to lie but to always be honest and tell the truth. Jack realized that what he did was mean and wrong. He gave Jill back her ring and told her he would never cheat her out of something again. Jill smiled and gave him a big hug. Then she pushed him back in the river.



THE END