

Stories for Lipreading



THE MAGIC SKIRT by Sarah Lovett.

[This text is read aloud at the beginning of this video:]

Welcome to Stories for Lipreading. If you haven't used our website before, we suggest you look at our 'How to Use' page before you begin. We hope you enjoy this story, which is called 'The Magic Skirt' by Sarah Lovett.

The Magic Skirt by Sarah Lovett.

Jessica stood on my doorstep dressed in a pink net skirt. It was covered in silver sequins which sparkled in the sunlight.

"You look like a fairy," I said.

She pouted. "I'm a princess, a magic one."

I bent down to kiss her cheek. "How lovely."

She skipped past me into the house, and my daughter followed her in. "Sorry, Mum; she's not really dressed for the beach, but you can take off the skirt when you put on her swimming costume. I'll leave you her shorts for later."

She handed me a huge bag full of Jessica's essentials for a day away from home.

I laughed. "We'll be fine. Don't worry."

As her mum kissed her goodbye, Jessica asked, "Can we go to the beach now, Granny?"

"I'm ready if you are," I said.

It was just a few minutes' walk to the beach from my house. Jessica hopped and skipped all the way along the cliff path and onto the sand. There she stopped suddenly. An elderly couple were sitting on deckchairs watching a lively Springer Spaniel running in and out of the sea. Jessica was afraid of dogs. She had been bitten on the ankle last summer when a Jack Russell erupted out of a drive as she was skipping past. She ran back to me now and clutched my knees so suddenly that I nearly fell over.

"It's all right," I said. "It's a friendly dog. Look - it's wagging its tail."

I took her hand. "We'll go a little past it, though."

We sat down on the sand and changed into our swimming costumes.

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“Put my magic princess skirt down on the towel,” she said, “to keep it safe.”

We held hands and ran into the little waves together. The dog was still barking and splashing with excitement. Jessica looked across, her forehead wrinkled with anxiety.

“It’s just playing,” I said.

She turned back to me and carried on with her game of jumping the waves. She laughed as salt water splashed her face.

I was shivering by the time she had had enough. We trudged out of the sea and sat on the sand next to our things. She was fascinated by the spaniel. Every time it came out of the sea, it ran over to the couple in the deckchairs and shook itself so hard that water sprayed all over them. Jessica laughed each time it happened.

I was towelling her hair dry when she asked, “Can I go and play with the dog?”

I was shocked. I hesitated. Wouldn’t it frighten her, a big, bouncy dog like that? Or would a game with it help to overcome her fear?

She looked so eager that I could not disappoint her. I nodded. She jumped to her feet and the dog looked in our direction. It turned and raced towards us. As it got near, she started screaming, “Don’t let it get me, Granny!”

I grabbed the nearest thing handy as the dog thrust its nose towards her. Too late, I realised it was her magic princess skirt. I pushed it firmly into the dog’s face. The dog backed up with surprise as I continued to hold its head away from her through the skirt. It shook its head and wriggled in my grasp. Then suddenly it sat down. I let go and somehow the dog was wearing the skirt around its neck like a clown’s ruffles. Its tail was still wagging madly as it sat there wearing a silly, happy smile with its tongue lolling out of one corner of its mouth.

Jessica started to laugh. “That’s my magic skirt,” she said. She sat beside the dog and patted it.

I breathed a sigh of relief. “Magic indeed,” I said.