

Hat in the Wind

This is a children's story adventure about a top hat that keeps blowing away.

几 jǐ *wind

What is the wind? You can feel it on your face. You can see things move when it blows by. Some say it whispers or howls. It can puff or swirl or tear through. In this story, the wind is mischievous and stays one step ahead.

Our story starts in the wheat field. It has already been harvested into sheaves and the first cold wind of the season arrives in a storm. It blows against the sheaves, but they are tied tight, so the wind has to go up and over them as it passes through the field.

风 fēng wind [n.], *windstorm

几 + 叉
wind + sheaf

The wind passes the farmhouse and pushes straight for the vegetable garden where it meets the farmer's scarecrow. Scarecrows aren't supposed to get scared, but the wind surprises this one as it swirls up and under his top hat. Away the hat goes in the wind!

亢 kàng *whirlwind

𠂔 + 几
top hat + wind

The wind carries the hat bouncing and dipping until it hits the edge of a pit at the far end of the field, falls in and skids to a stop, kicking up the soil.

坑 kēng pit

土 + 亢 kàng
soil + whirlwind

It would have remained there for a while had the farmer's daughter not observed the wild ride. As she stretches down to grab the top hat, the naughty wind picks it up again and dances it over her head. She reaches up her hand, but it is too high, so she jumps and punches it down. The wind is having too much fun and pushes it to the side just in time. She side swipes and lunges, but no luck. From the porch her mother laughs at the windy combat.

抗 kàng combat [v.]

扌 + 亢kàng

hand + whirlwind

The girl chases the hat to the edge of the property where a creek divides their farm from the neighbor's. The nearest creek crossing is up near the road, and besides, the top hat has landed in her family's rowboat, which is tied to an old stump. She pauses to look at the sky, wondering if the windstorm has brought rain, as well. It doesn't seem threatening, so she steps down the bank and into the rowboat. As she picks up the hat, she gets an idea. She'll row to her best friend and surprise her. She puts the top hat on her head, puts the oars in the water, and navigates her way downstream, pushed by the wind.

航 háng navigate

舟 + 亢kàng

boat + whirlwind

The girl rows happily along, laughing inwardly at how she must look wearing the scarecrow's top hat. Up ahead, she sees her friend and opens her mouth to call out, when instead, out comes a belch!

台 yǎn *belch

几+口

wind + mouth

Her friend laughs and says, "My ship's come in! With a smoke stack that belches!"

船 chuán ship [n.]

舟+台yǎn

boat + belch

The friend runs along side the water, encouraging the belching by returning a few herself.

沿 yán along [prep.]

辶 + 台yǎn

water + belch

The girls laugh as they tie up the "ship" together and walk arm-in-arm to the friend's house. The girl feels a drop of rain and the ordinary wind that comes with it. She wonders where the naughty wind that followed her has gone.

凡 fán ordinary

几+丶

wind + drop

But, the wind isn't through with her yet. With a whoosh from behind, it ascends the steps to the porch and knocks over the bench by the door.

凳 dèng bench

登dēng+几

ascend + wind

Grandma, who was sitting on the bench, but is now flat on her behind, curses the wind—twice!

咒 zhòu curse [v.]

囁+几

chatterbox + wind

“Don't be mad at the wind, Grandma! Look at the windmill!” Sure enough, the old wooden windmill is turning full-tilt.

机 jī machine

木+几jǐ

wood + wind

Someone else is pleased with the wind. Little brother is sitting on the edge of the porch, swinging his legs. The tiny scene he is watching is put in motion by the wind. Tiny ants have lined up in a queue, and he is ordering them to march up a mountain of sand, but it is really the wind who is taskmaster, blowing them up and over the hill.

微 wēi tiny

彳 + 山 + 一 + 几 + 攴

queue + mountain + one + wind + taskmaster

The little boy says, “Wind, I appoint you wind-master over these knights. I have proof now that you have what it takes!”

凭 píng proof

任+几

appoint + wind

And the wind does have what it takes to bring change and delight. It can shape a cloud to look like a flower or shake a tree into a shower of leaves.

朵 duǒ [m.w. for clouds and flowers]

几+木

wind + tree

The wind slips and slides, darts and dodges, around somebody, behind a tree.

躲 duǒ dodge

身 + 朵 duǒ OR 身 + 几 + 木

somebody + m.w. OR somebody + wind + tree

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