



The Dancing Cat by Justine Rendal

A toy cat loves dancing, but her owner, a young girl, likes her toys to fight. The other toys tell the cat that if she does not fight, she will be too dull to bother with. She tries, but her heart is not in it. Finally she refuses and is tossed aside. Rejected she fears she will never be free to dance. The next day her owner's cousin, Ben, comes to visit. He sees the cat and tells her he would love to have such a beautiful cat. The girl gladly gives the cat to Ben who takes it home where the cat is finally recognized for what she is ... a dancing cat. Ages 4-9

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In this passage Paul tells us that all of creation has been "groaning in labor pain" including us. As adopted children of God, we are still learning, growing, and testing the limits, like any child. However, just as any parent would never think of rejecting an adopted child, no matter what the child does, God also would not think of rejecting us. God, unlike the young girl in this story, will take us as we are and will help us strive to make our lives full and joyful. Growing can be painful and does take patience. If you find yourself rejected by those around you or enduring great pain, remember that your adopted Father will provide a "Ben" for you, too, and bring you out of the darkness and into the light.



"The Hare and the Hedgehog" from Kevin Crossley-Holland's Fox and Cat: Animal Tales From Grimm collected by Kevin Crossley-Holland

An arrogant hare makes fun of a hedgehog's feet. The hedgehog challenges him to a race. He knows the only way he can beat the hare is by outfoxing him. On the day of the race he tells his wife to stand at the finish line of the race and he stands at the starting point. The race begins. When the hare gets to the end he finds the hedgehog's wife already standing there and thinks the hedgehog has outrun him. He cannot believe it and challenges the hedgehog to another race, with the same results. This continues through 73 races. Exhausted on the 74th race, the hare drops dead in the middle of the course. Grades K-4

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In this parable, Jesus reassures us that despite the weeds that grow, God has the ability to make it all right. He is our patient, loving Father who will not pull out the weeds until the harvest. To any farmer, this logic makes no sense at all. The same could be said of the hedgehog in this story. Everyone around him thought he was crazy to challenge an animal that could run circles around him. However, he, like God, knew that what often seems to be illogical can be just the thing that saves the day. Pray to God for the patience, wisdom and love to see past what appears to be illogical and hopeless and accept that nothing is impossible. Not a race between a hedgehog and a hare, not weed and wheat growing in the same field — absolutely nothing.