

'No, Father, no,  
Don't stamp on me!

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No, Father, no,  
Don't stamp on me!

For my stepmother has buried me alive.'

At once Queen Melissa felt nervous. Prince Wilmot, who had heard the singing once before, fetched a shovel and quickly began to dig up the dirt by the pepper bush. There she was, Princess Louisa, alive and well!

'Father, Melissa buried me alive!' Princess Louisa cried.

And the wicked witch, Melissa, ran as fast as she could away from the palace and was never seen again.



## *Compère Lapin and the Good Sense*

*This story is based on a folk tale from  
St Lucia and the Commonwealth of Dominica*

Now, good sense is something most people don't have enough of. Good sense tells you to carry an umbrella with you when the clouds look grey, or tells you to look left and right to be safe when you're crossing a road, or to eat all your greens in order to stay healthy. It has been said that there was a time when good sense grew on trees. They say you could even find it in a flower or a bush, or stuffed in a corner or behind a wall or just sitting there on the ground. Well, so I have heard.

The trouble with good sense was that it wasn't easily visible. It did have a blue hue, which you could see

shimmering if you squinted but, because it was so difficult to spot, some folks could not get their hands on it easily.

The animals in the forest would compete on a special day every year called Good Sense Day to see who could find and collect the most good sense, and the winner would get a trophy for his or her efforts.

Now Compère Lapin was a troublesome rabbit, always trying to get more than his fair share of anything he could get his hands on. When Good Sense Day arrived that year, Compère Lapin woke up with a fine plan. Not only did he want to collect the *most* good sense, Compère Lapin wanted to have *all* of the good sense for himself! The thing was, Compère Lapin didn't want to collect the good sense himself. He wanted to relax while everyone else collected the good sense for him.

So on the day of the annual competition Compère Lapin watched as all the animals scurried around the forest trying to collect as much good sense as they could. While they all scurried around, he did nothing but relax in the sun. The rest of the animals were not impressed.

'That rascal Compère Lapin thinks he can get away with doing nothing whilst we do all the work!' said Compère Dog.

'Well, he'd better not think he's getting any of my good sense!' clucked Compère Cockerel.

'Or mine,' said Compère Goat.

When all the animals had collected as much good sense

as they could carry, Compère Owl did his best to count up to see who had the biggest pile. It was announced that Compère Duck was this year's winner and, as Compère Owl presented him with the Good Sense trophy, Compère Lapin took the opportunity to step forward and say, 'Wait! Wait! There's a problem!'

No one was really surprised to see Compère Lapin step forward, as they knew he was up to something. They were curious, though, to hear what he had to say.

'The problem,' said Compère Lapin, 'is storage. Every year we collect all this good sense and we have piles and piles of it, but nowhere to put it! When all that good sense is left hanging around, it could cause all sorts of accidents.'

The other animals could not recall any accidents being caused by the lack of storage for good sense. But no one wanted to be thought uncaring, so they all agreed that finding some storage for the good sense was a great idea.

'Well,' said Compère Lapin, 'I suggest we put it all in one place and have someone look after it.'

'Good idea!' said Compère Turtle. Compère Frog and all the other animals agreed.

'Just give me all your piles of good sense,' said Compère Lapin, 'and I'll look after it all for you.'

Well, the animals weren't sure about that! Compère Lapin wasn't very trustworthy and they were reluctant to

hand over all the good sense they had collected just like that.

'How do we know you won't steal it from us?' Compère Frog croaked.

Compère Lapin was taken aback. 'I'm not a thief,' he said angrily. 'But just to prove that I have no interest in your good sense, I will give everyone a receipt.'

The animals talked amongst themselves and agreed that getting a receipt from Compère Lapin was a good idea. At least they would know which good sense belonged to whom. So all the animals gave the good sense that they had collected to Compère Lapin, and Compère Lapin gave each of them a receipt. It seemed like a perfect plan and everyone was happy – but especially Compère Lapin, who had no intention of giving any of the animals back their good sense, receipt or no receipt!

Once Compère Lapin had everyone's good sense and all the animals had gone home, he poured it all into a big iron cooking pot. He decided he would hang the pot at the top of a big tree in the centre of the forest, far out of the reach of the other animals. He laughed at how foolish they had been, handing over their good sense for him to take care of. Well, he was going to take care of it all right! Now all the good sense belonged to him!

Compère Lapin dragged the big iron cooking pot to the tree at the centre of the forest. But as he tried to climb the tree, pot in hand, he found the pot was far too big.

Compère Lapin didn't listen to the good sense telling him that it wasn't a good idea to be climbing so high with a big pot, and it wasn't long before he lost his balance and dropped the pot. All of the good sense that had been collected scattered all around the forest.

Compère Lapin was vexed. He hopped around angrily, moaning about how he had lost all the good sense he had tricked the others into handing over.

When the animals in the forest each came to Compère Lapin bringing their receipts and asking for their portion of good sense, Compère Lapin told them he had tried to keep hold of the good sense for them but, despite his efforts, it had decided to flee from him, so they would have to wait until next Good Sense Day to get some more. The animals were not happy and vowed they would never let Compère Lapin trick them again!