

# The Earliest Political Cartoons – Nursery Rhymes

At one time, it was quite dangerous to criticize the government. An offended king or queen would have your head removed from your shoulders. There was no freedom of speech, so those who did have complaints often hid them in happy little rhymes. The adults would make up silly little stories, using common people and common daily things, but those people and things stood for the nonsense that was going on at court. It was the only safe way to poke fun at the nobles. Those rhymes still exist today, but for the most part, we've forgotten their beginnings. Let's look at a few.

*Georgie Porgie pudding and pie  
Kissed the girls and made them cry.  
When the boys came out to play  
Georgie Porgie ran away.*

Georgie Porgie is believed to be about George Villiers, an English duke who lived in the early 1600s. He was quite attractive and had very few morals, so he was always getting into romantic trouble. The common people loved to make fun of the nobles who couldn't remember to whom they were married. We still do that today, don't we?

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.  
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.  
All the king's horses and all the king's men  
Couldn't put Humpty together again.*

Humpty wasn't an egg as is usually pictured, but a cannon used in an English civil war in 1648. The cannon was perched on a wall, but the wall crumbled under fire and the greatly feared weapon broke. The "king's men," or the people loyal to the crown, lost that battle due to the loss of the cannon called Humpty Dumpty.

*Little Jack Horner sat in a corner  
eating his Christmas pie.  
He stuck in his thumb and pulled out  
a plum and said, "What a good boy am I."*

In the 1530s, King Henry VIII, who had left the Roman Catholic Church, started breaking up the great monasteries of England and taking their land and riches. One monastery tried to bribe the king by sending him paperwork that gave him the titles to 12 large castles and pieces of land. The paperwork was hidden inside a pie. That was normal at the time because thieves were everywhere on the roads. The messenger was named Richard Whiting, not Jack Horner, but it is believed he stole the title to the best piece of land. The monastery was eventually destroyed, but that one piece of land was never retrieved, and Richard Whiting was never caught. He was a "good boy."

*Mary, Mary quite contrary  
How does your garden grow?  
With silver bells and cockleshells  
And pretty maids in a row.*

This one refers to Bloody Mary, the daughter of Henry VIII. She wanted to return England to the Roman Catholic Church and she had anyone who disagreed tortured or killed. The garden in the rhyme is really a graveyard. Silver bell was a nickname for a thumbscrew. Cockleshells were also an instrument of torture, but they were connected a bit lower than the thumb. A guillotine was commonly known as "the maid."

Following are elements necessary for a good, old-fashioned nursery rhyme:

- It talks about a bit of history
- It turns major players into common folk
- The evilness or stupidity of subject's actions are hidden but still understandable in a story that doesn't seem as awful as what is really happening
- It possesses a happy rhythm and rhyme that makes the story easy to remember
- It includes a fun children's picture that helps hide the true meaning

# The First Crusade

Bishop Adhemar led the first official crusade in 1096. He was in charge of five different armies, each led by its own noble. In battle, the former barbarian soldiers now were Christian crusaders who were disciplined and steady. They managed to win against incredible odds. At one point, 30,000 crusaders, led by a warrior named Bohemond, held off 360,000 Turks. Some say that had to do with the fact that the Turkish kingdom and armies were in a state of upheaval as they fought among themselves. The Turks were never very cohesive; many rivalries existed. At a particularly low point of battle, the Christian crusaders found what they believed to be the holy lance, the lance that pierced the side of Jesus when he was crucified. This miracle renewed their spirit and they continued their conquests.

Before the crusaders could reach the walls of Jerusalem, the Turks who had overrun it were expelled by another group called the Fatimid Muslims. The Fatimid Muslims had been friendly and accepting of Christian people, but the crusaders had come too far to be calmed. Even though the Fatimid Muslim people offered to share the city that is holy to both religions and give Christians easy access to Jerusalem and Mount Zion, the crusaders decided to change the holy war against the Muslim Turks into a holy war against all Muslims and the entire Islam religion.

The Christian crusaders broke through the walls of Jerusalem using battering rams and siege towers. Once inside, they killed and disgraced the dead bodies of 70,000 Muslims and Jews who were living there. Jerusalem was officially a Christian city. The year was 1099.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# The Second Crusade

The Second Crusade was only talk and tales until a very persuasive speaker named Bernard of Clairvaux started selling the idea. He spoke of the "horrors" of the Holy Land falling into unbelievers' hands and promised that God would reward the souls of those who fought for him. Bernard's power of persuasion was amazing. People listened and vowed to follow.

In 1145, two kings, Louis VII and the Holy Roman Emperor Conrad II, amassed their armies and headed for Jerusalem. Almost 1 million people were involved in the Second Crusade. The crusaders changed direction for an unknown reason, and instead of attacking the Muslims who overthrew Edessa, they attacked the only Muslim friends the Christians had, who lived in the city of Damascus. This strategy only helped to unite all the Muslim nations together against the Christians.

Once the crusaders were outside the walls of Damascus and the city's Muslim people sent notice of surrender to them, the victorious crusaders milled about a bit and then left. They never even entered the city and to this day no one knows why. They packed up and went home. The only thing they accomplished was to make the Muslim nations more solidified.

Years later, a Sunni Muslim of Kurdish descent built his own army. Historically, he is known as Saladin. His hope was to further the unintended result of the Second Crusade by joining all Muslim forces together under one leader. He conquered all of Egypt and then officially took back Jerusalem from the Christians knights who conquered it. To make his point, he didn't harm the common Christians but he allowed the captured Christian knights to be beheaded by people unskilled in the art. It took a great many chops and swings, and the unfortunate people bled to death before the heads were finally removed. Jerusalem was once again a Muslim city. The year was 1149.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# The Third Crusade

Pope Gregory VII said sinful people were the reason Jerusalem had fallen into Muslim hands again. He taxed the common people to build up enough money to send out a third crusading army. These crusades must have been quite a headache for the poor commoners. As all this was happening, King Richard ruled England, but he didn't care much about his country. He used his title to raid the churches and countryside and then in 1189 left on the Third Crusade. King Phillip of France and his armies joined him along the way. They decided to go by ship rather than by land as the ones before them had gone. Along the way, King Richard conquered Sicily and Cyprus with brutal ease. This built up his reputation and earned him the name Richard the Lionheart.

Eventually the French armies under King Phillip returned home and Richard went on by himself. He conquered the city of Acre, sending word that he wanted to meet with Saladin. Saladin didn't respond quickly enough, so Richard took 3,000 captured Muslim men, women and children to a hillside within view of Saladin and had the innocent people slaughtered to show the Muslim warrior and king the power of a Christian warrior and king.

The two great leaders fought on against each other in many different cities and became respectful enemies. It is said that Richard could ride in front of the army of Saladin unarmed and not be attacked because those warriors had too much respect for his abilities. Eventually Richard the Lionheart and Saladin drew up a truce. Some of the Holy Land went to the Christians and some to the Muslims. Saladin still held Jerusalem, but he allowed Christians to make pilgrimages freely. The agreement was only for three years only because Richard believed he could return and retake Jerusalem. He never did. The year was 1192.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

