

**ABBOTT  
JACOB**

ROLLO IN THE  
WOODS

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**Rollo in the Woods**

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*Rollo in the Woods:*

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# Jacob Abbott

## Rollo in the Woods

### THE SETTING OUT

One pleasant morning in the autumn, when Rollo was about five years old, he was sitting on the platform, behind his father's house, playing. He had a hammer and nails, and some small pieces of board. He was trying to make a box. He hammered and hammered, and presently he dropped his work down and said, fretfully,

"O dear me!"

"What is the matter, Rollo?" said Jonas,—for it happened that Jonas was going by just then, with a wheelbarrow.

"I wish these little boards would not split so. I cannot make my box."

"You drive the nails wrong; you put the wedge sides *with* the grain."

"The wedge sides!" said Rollo; "what are the wedge sides,—and the grain? I do not know what you mean."

But Jonas went on, trundling his wheelbarrow; though he looked round and told Rollo that he could not stop to explain it to him then.

Rollo was discouraged about his box. He thought he would

look and see what Jonas was going to do. Jonas trundled the wheelbarrow along, until he came opposite the barn-door, and there he put it down. He went into the barn, and presently came out with an axe. Then he took the sides of the wheelbarrow off, and placed them up against the barn. Then he laid the axe down across the wheelbarrow, and went into the barn again. Pretty soon he brought out an iron crowbar, and laid that down also in the wheelbarrow, with the axe.

Then Rollo called out,

"Jonas, Jonas, where are you going?"

"I am going down into the woods beyond the brook."

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going to clear up some ground."

"May I go with you?"

"I should like it—but that is not for me to say."

Rollo knew by this that he must ask his mother. He went in and asked her, and she, in return, asked him if he had read his lesson that morning. He said he had not; he had forgotten it.

"Then," said his mother, "you must first go and read a quarter of an hour."

Rollo was sadly disappointed, and also a little displeased. He turned away, hung down his head, and began to cry. It is not strange that he was disappointed, but it was very wrong for him to feel displeased, and begin to cry.

"Come here, my son," said his mother.

Rollo came to his mother, and she said to him kindly,

"You have done wrong now twice this morning; you have neglected your duty of reading, and now you are out of humor with me because I require you to attend to it. Now it is *my* duty not to yield to such feelings as you have now, but to punish them. So I must say that, instead of a quarter of an hour, you must wait *half* an hour, before you go out with Jonas."

Rollo stood silent a minute,—he perceived that he had done wrong, and was sorry. He did not know how he could find Jonas in the woods, but he did not say any thing about that then. He only asked his mother what he must do for the half hour. She said he must read a quarter of an hour, and the rest of the time he might do as he pleased.

So Rollo took his book, and went out and sat down upon the platform, and began to read aloud. When he had finished one page, which usually took a quarter of an hour, he went in to ask his mother what time it was. She looked at the clock, and told him he had been reading seventeen minutes.

"Is seventeen minutes more than a quarter of an hour, or not so much?" asked Rollo.

"It is more;—*fifteen* minutes is a quarter of an hour. Now you may do what you please till the other quarter has elapsed."

Rollo thought he would go and read more. It is true he was tired; but he was sorry he had done wrong, and he thought that if he read more than he was obliged to, his mother would see that he was penitent, and that he acquiesced in his punishment.

So he went on reading, and the rest of the half hour passed

away very quickly. In fact, his mother came out before he got up from his reading, to tell him it was time for him to go. She said she was very glad he had submitted pleasantly to his punishment, and she gave him something wrapped up in a paper.

"Keep this till you get a little tired of play, down there, and then sit down on a log and open it."

Rollo wondered what it was. He took it gladly, and began to go. But in a minute he turned round and said,

"But how shall I find Jonas?"

"What is he doing?" said his mother.

"He said he was going to clear up some land."

"Then you will hear his axe. Go down to the edge of the woods and listen, and when you hear him, call him. But you must not go into the woods unless you hear him."

# BRIDGE BUILDING

Rollo went on, down the green lane, till he came to the turnstile, and then went through into the field. He then followed a winding path until he came to the edge of the trees, and there stopped to listen.

He heard the brook gurgling along over the stones, and that was all at first; but presently he began to hear the strokes of an axe. He called out as loud as he could,

"Jonas! Jonas!"

But Jonas did not hear.

Then he walked along the edge of the woods till he came nearer the place where he heard the axe. He found here a little opening among the trees and bushes, so that he could look in. He saw the brook, and over beyond it, on the opposite bank, was Jonas, cutting down a small tree.

So Rollo walked on until he came to the brook, and then asked Jonas how he should get over. The brook was pretty wide and deep.

Jonas said, if he would wait a few minutes, he would build him a bridge.

"*You* cannot build a bridge," said Rollo.

"Wait a little and see."

So Rollo sat down on a mossy bank, and Jonas, having cut down the small tree, began to work on a larger one that stood

near the bank.

After he had cut a little while, Rollo asked him why he did not begin the bridge.

"I am beginning it," said he.

Rollo laughed at this, but in a minute Jonas called to him to stand back, away from the bank; and then, after a few strokes more, the top of the tree began to bend slowly over, and then it fell faster and faster, until it came down with a great crash, directly across the brook.

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