

The Story of Hector

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Once upon a time (a man said, once upon a time, that no story could be good that did not begin with once upon a time. He was a wise man, was he not). Once upon a time a small boy named Hector (perhaps you have heard the expression ‘when Hector was a pup’. It is from a very old and very great story which you should know if you are to consider yourself at all well bred, but it has nothing to do with our story, in which Hector is a small boy.) Once upon a time a small boy named Hector said to his mother (politely, as Hector was a well brought up boy, his mother being a very wise lady), “Mama,” he said, “May I please go outside and play,” (NB – abbreviation for *note bene* or note well – NB he said please for he was a polite young man). “May you, Hector?” said his mother, “let us carefully examine both sides of the question.” (Hector’s mother believed in teaching Hector rationally, as every proper mother does. Moreover she was neither too strict nor too permissive. She was just right.) “Who’s been sleeping in my bed,” yelled papa bear. (No, no, that’s a quite different story, although also an excellent one, though possibly for readers a little younger than yourselves. Maybe you would like to read it to baby sister some rainy afternoon.) “I’m tired of being in the house,” said Hector, “I want to go out.” “Is that the real reason,” thought Hector’s mother (who was not a frivolous mother, but who always thought things out carefully). “Is that the real reason or is there another?” she said aloud. “There is no other,” said little Hector manfully. (Hector always told the truth no matter what the consequences for himself. He was a brave lad.) “Then you may go,” sighed his mother, who, like any good and conscientious mother would miss her son, as your mother misses you when you go out and play. Hector went outside and played and was not sure if he was happier, though he thought very hard about it, as his wise, stern but tolerant mother had taught him. There, wasn’t that a nice story. And the moral is, as a great man named Socrates once said, “Know thyself”. This is a wonderful and useful notion, because it takes time and you will not be bored, even on afternoons when you play outside.