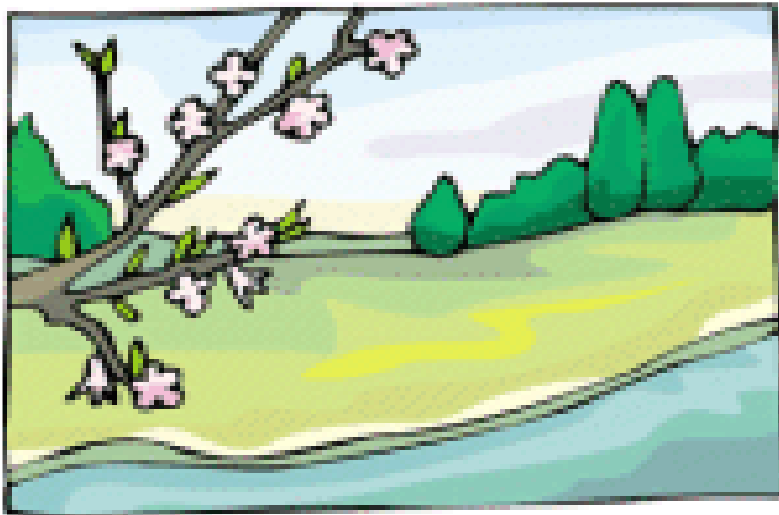


*The Proud Little Apple
Blossom*



*by Hans Christian
Andersen*



The Proud Little Apple Blossom

by Hans Christian Andersen (adapted)

It was the month of May, but the wind still blew cool, for the sun was not yet ready to shed his warmest rays on the waiting earth.

Yet some of the birds had come, and more were on their way, and many beautiful blossoms were already showing their pink and white blooms, so that from bush and tree, field and flower, came the glad cry, "Spring is here! Spring is here." Now, it happened that a young princess rode by a beautiful orchard in full bloom, and she stopped to pick a branch of apple blossoms to take to her palace. All who saw the apple blossom praised its beauty and fragrance until the blossom became proud, and thought that beauty was the only valuable thing in the world. But as the apple blossom looked out upon the field she thought, "Not all of the plants are rich and beautiful, as I am, some seem poor and plain." And she noticed a little, common, yellow flower, which seemed to lift up its sunny head and grow everywhere.

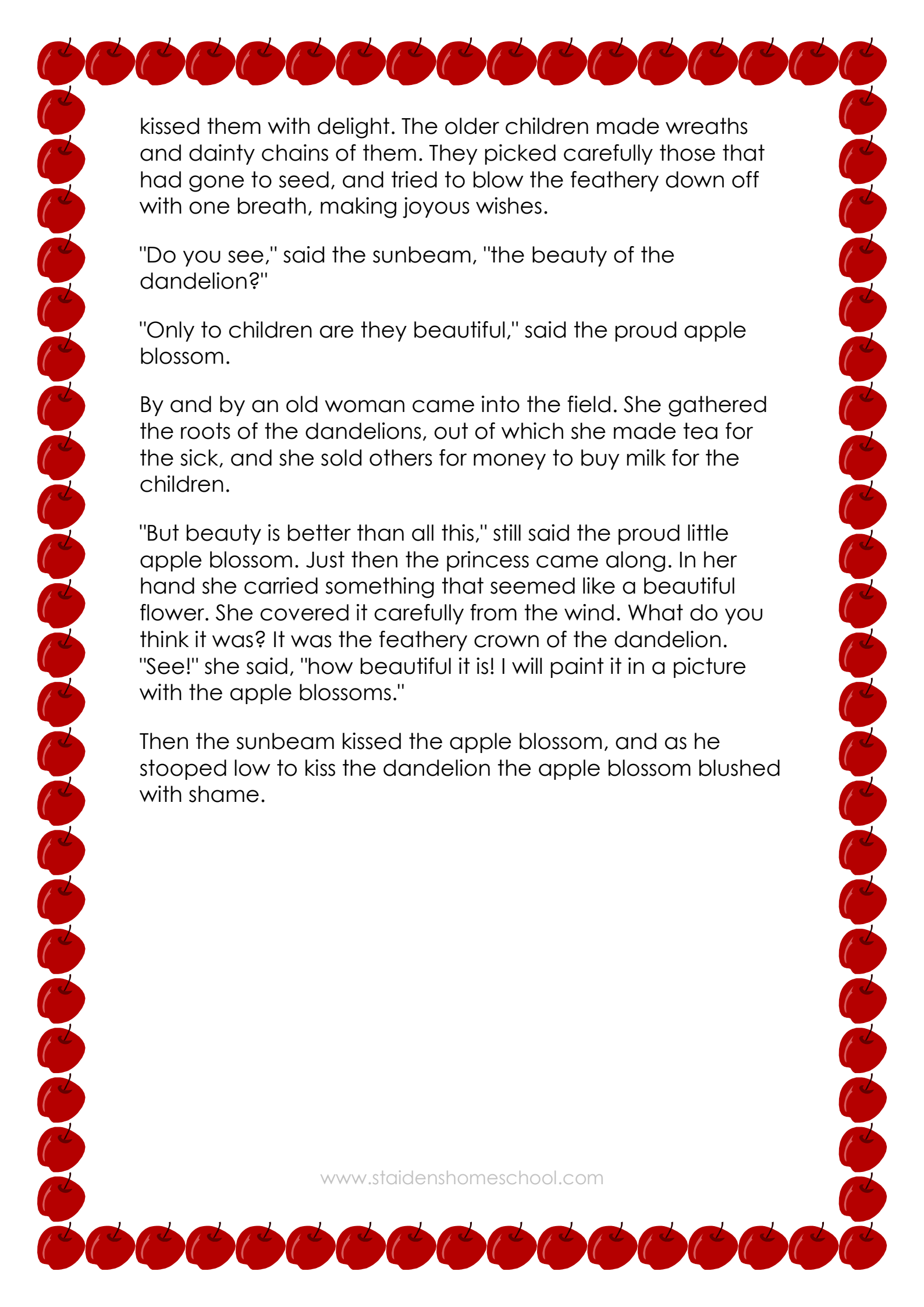
The apple blossom said to the plain little flower, "What is your name?"

"I am called the dandelion," replied the little flower.

"Poor little plant," said the apple blossom. "It is not your fault; but how sad you must feel to be so plain and to bear such an ugly name."

Before the little plant could reply a lovely little sunbeam came dancing along and said, "I see no ugly flowers. They are all beautiful alike to me." And he kissed the apple blossom; but he stooped low and lingered long to kiss the little yellow dandelion in the field.

And then some little children came tripping across the field. The youngest laughed when they saw the dandelions and



kissed them with delight. The older children made wreaths and dainty chains of them. They picked carefully those that had gone to seed, and tried to blow the feathery down off with one breath, making joyous wishes.

"Do you see," said the sunbeam, "the beauty of the dandelion?"

"Only to children are they beautiful," said the proud apple blossom.

By and by an old woman came into the field. She gathered the roots of the dandelions, out of which she made tea for the sick, and she sold others for money to buy milk for the children.

"But beauty is better than all this," still said the proud little apple blossom. Just then the princess came along. In her hand she carried something that seemed like a beautiful flower. She covered it carefully from the wind. What do you think it was? It was the feathery crown of the dandelion. "See!" she said, "how beautiful it is! I will paint it in a picture with the apple blossoms."

Then the sunbeam kissed the apple blossom, and as he stooped low to kiss the dandelion the apple blossom blushed with shame.