

Red Robbie

Name:

Red Robbie, was always a sight – a real scruffy lad. It wasn't his fault that he was so untidy.

Robbie had a crop of red curly hair and a real temper to go with it. People called him Red Robbie and woe betide anyone who teased him about his appearance or anything else. His dad used to say to him, "You have to stand up for yourself, laddie, because nobody else will."

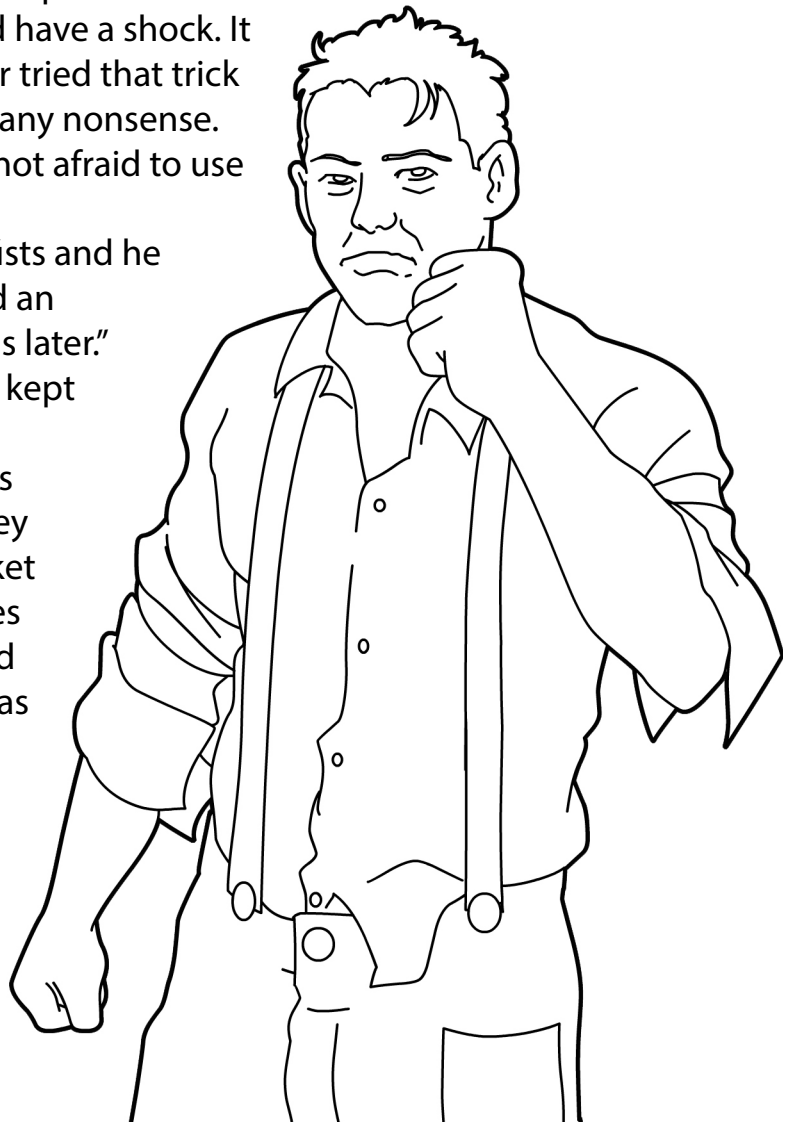
Being so small and scruffy, Red Robbie did find himself the target of other lads jokes and remarks, especially at the beginning of the school year when many of the boys had new school uniforms or at least, clothes that fitted them properly, but not Robbie. He held his oversized trousers up with a belt pulled in to his narrow little waist making lots of pleats where they should have fitted and been smooth. The trousers always looked as if they had half a dozen extra pockets in them.

Many an unsuspecting bigger boy would taunt him "What d'ye have in yer pocket, laddie?" and reaching into one of the pockets in the material to pinch Robbie, he would have a shock. It would be the last time the boy ever tried that trick on Robbie. Robbie would not take any nonsense. He had hard little fists and he was not afraid to use them.

As he grew older he had hard big fists and he began to enjoy using them. He had an expression, "Fists first, ask questions later." People were afraid of Robbie. They kept their distance from him.

He noticed how his brothers always had friends, and girlfriends too. They got Saturday jobs and earned pocket money and went out to the pictures with their pals. They always seemed to be joking and laughing – whereas Robbie was always cross, always looking for trouble and ready for a fight.

Robbie's elder brother, Fergus, had a girlfriend called Kathy. She was a lovely girl. She too had lots of red curls. Sometimes when she was waiting for Fergus to come home from his Saturday job, she would



chat to Robbie. She was the only girl Robbie ever spoke to. Somehow his rough manner put the girls off and boys too, for that matter. Kathy could see that Robbie was unhappy. One day she asked him why he was always scowling and angry. Robbie blushed. He jumped to his feet and held out his fists as if he was going to hit Kathy. "Fists first, ask questions later," he said.

Kathy knew he would never hit her. They were friends. Suddenly she understood. She knew how poor the family had been when the kids were small. She looked at Robbie and noticed how scruffy he was, and yet his family had enough money these days. Robbie had got into the habit of defending himself so fiercely that he had learnt to attack even before he had good reason to – just in case. In the same way he had got into the habit of always wearing old clothes and looking scruffy.

Robbie's chats with Kathy helped him to understand that violence was no way to make friends. He needed to learn to give people a chance and not to think they were all out to get at him. He also learned to start to take pride in his appearance. Being neat and clean helped him to look more approachable to other people. He learnt to make friends and he became a much happier person.

Courtesy yogastories.co.uk

Answer the question that follow in your class workbook.

1. How did you feel when you heard this story?
2. Did it remind you of anything in your own life?
3. How many people had worn the trousers before Robbie got them?
4. Why was Robbie teased?
5. What did Robbie's father advise him to do?
6. How did Robbie stand up for himself?
7. Could Robbie have done it in a better way?
8. What did Kathy teach him?