

STORY
WALKER
365

7 to 10
YEARS

BUILDING BEAUTIFUL INSIDE

THE FIVE COIN GAME

A Story by Arkedelic

Parents' Guide

STUNNING CONCEPTS

THE FIVE COIN GAME

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THE FIVE COIN GAME

Mario stared at the glossy flyer on his grandparents' fridge. "StepTrack X: the ultimate gaming watch." It tracked steps, rewarded ninja missions, had glow modes, and even made your walk to school feel like a level-up.

"I need it," he declared.

His grandmother, stirring something in a large pot, raised an eyebrow. "Need or want?"

"Both."

"Then here's the deal," she said. "You earn and save half. We'll match the rest."

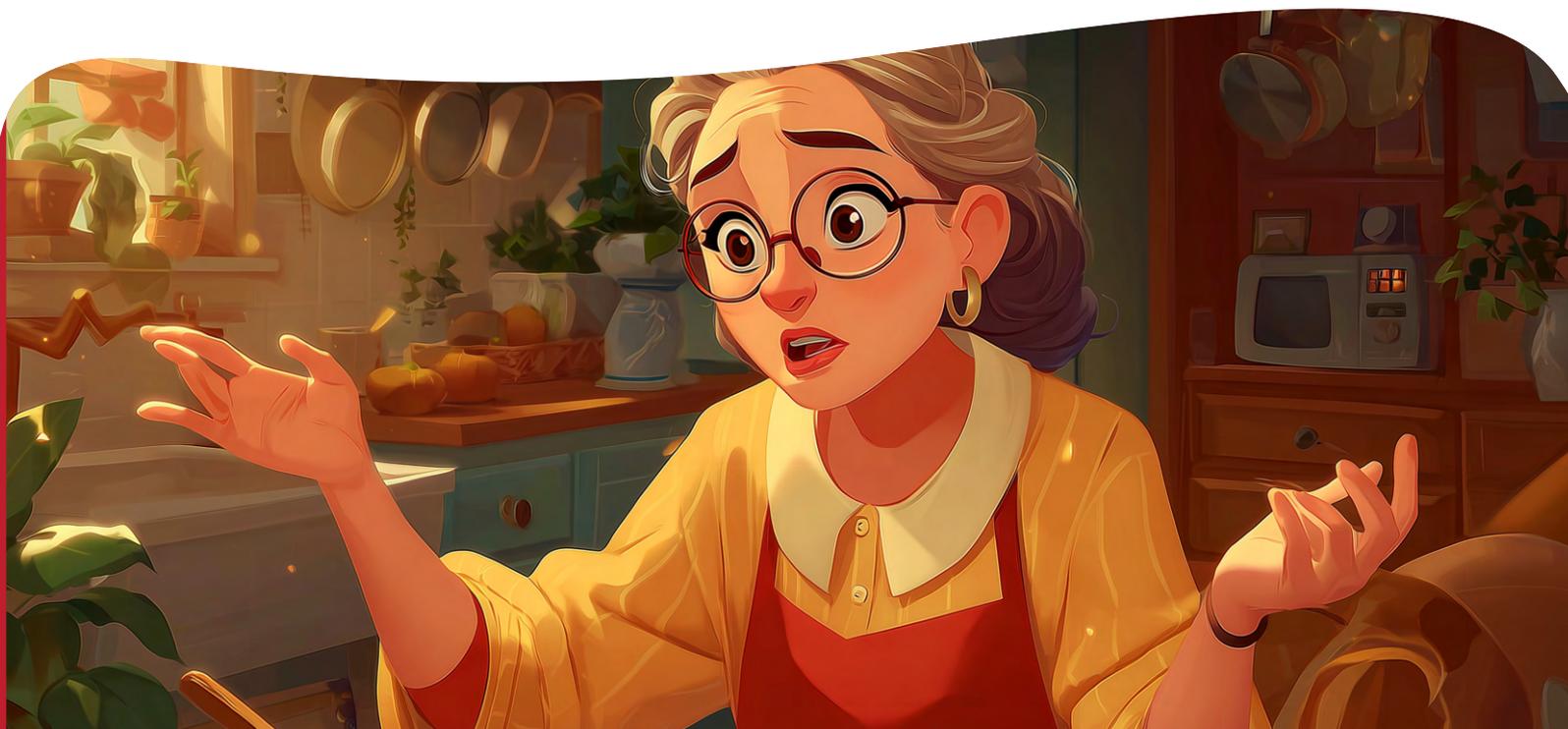
Mario blinked. "Earn? Like... chores?"

"Chores. Tasks. Bits of help. Five coins a job. Starting tomorrow."

Day One: Make his bed. Brush without reminders. Put toys away.

Easy.

Day Two: Carry water to the garden. Wipe the table after lunch. Read a page of a book.



Okay. Still manageable.

Day Three: Fold the laundry pile.

Nope.

“Why are socks always inside out?” he groaned. “And why are there so many?”

Grandma smiled, sipping her tea. “That's five coins talking to you.”

Mario folded the last sock with a grunt.

By the end of Week One, his coin jar had a satisfying clink.

Twenty-three coins.

The flyer was folded in his notebook, with a circle around the price: 50 coins.

Almost halfway.



But by Week Two, the shine started to wear off.

“Walk your baby cousin to the park and back,” Grandpa said. “Don't forget her snack box.”

“Do I have to?”

“You want that watch, don't you?” Mario muttered, “Yeah, yeah.”

Later that day, while waiting on a park bench, he flicked pebbles at his shoe. The baby was asleep in her stroller. The breeze was slow. The minutes dragged.

He pulled out his notebook.

Under the flyer, he scribbled:

Bored.

Saving is boring.

I miss cartoons.

Day Five brought chores and math practice. Grandma handed him a page of sums.

“Five coins,” she said. “If you don’t race through them and actually get them right.”

He sighed dramatically.

But something strange happened.

By sum six, he had gotten into a rhythm. By sum ten, he wanted to check his answers without being asked.

By the end, he smiled.

And grandma added five coins to the jar.

By the third week, the coin jar was nearly full.

That evening, as he counted again, Grandpa sat beside him.

“You’ve done well.”

Mario grinned. “Watch time?”

“You tell me,” Grandpa said. “Is the job done?”

Mario paused. “Almost. One more page of writing. And I need to feed the dog.”

“Still playing the Five-Coin Game?”

Mario looked at the jar. “It’s not just about the coins anymore. It’s like... ticking off stuff feels good.”

Grandpa nodded. “Earning feels better than waiting, doesn’t it?”

Mario thought for a moment. “I thought buying the watch would be the best part. But now I think... this was.”

The next day, Mario handed his coin jar to Grandma.

“Fifty coins,” he said proudly. “I counted twice.”





Grandma opened the top drawer and placed a matching set of coins next to his. “Fifty from you. Fifty from us. The watch is yours.”

Mario held the package in both hands.

He had wanted this watch more than anything.

But now, it wasn't just a cool gadget.

It was something he'd earned.

Every tap, every glow, every beep — a reminder that waiting, doing, and trying had been the real win.

THE END

**VALUES FROM
THE STORY****1. How can I help my child understand the value of money and take good care of what they have?**

Context in the story: Mario wants a gaming watch, but his grandparents ask him to earn and save half the cost. The story follows Mario's journey through a summer of small, consistent tasks — folding laundry, walking his cousin, doing math — where each effort earns a few coins. Along the way, he begins to connect work with reward, understand what it means to wait, and finally takes real pride in something he didn't just get, but earned.

Real-world connection: Many children view money only as something given — not something earned, budgeted, or delayed. Without active practice, they may grow up without real awareness of cost, effort, or value. This story makes that invisible learning visible.

How parents can use the story: Use this story to start a real-life conversation about how money works — not just in theory, but in daily life. Let your child try earning for a want of their own — not through bribery, but contribution. Create a simple system: clear tasks, small payouts, visible progress. Encourage reflection: “Was that task easy? What felt satisfying?” This helps them not just save money — but begin to respect it. And when they finally buy something themselves, the joy will be layered with pride, patience, and care.

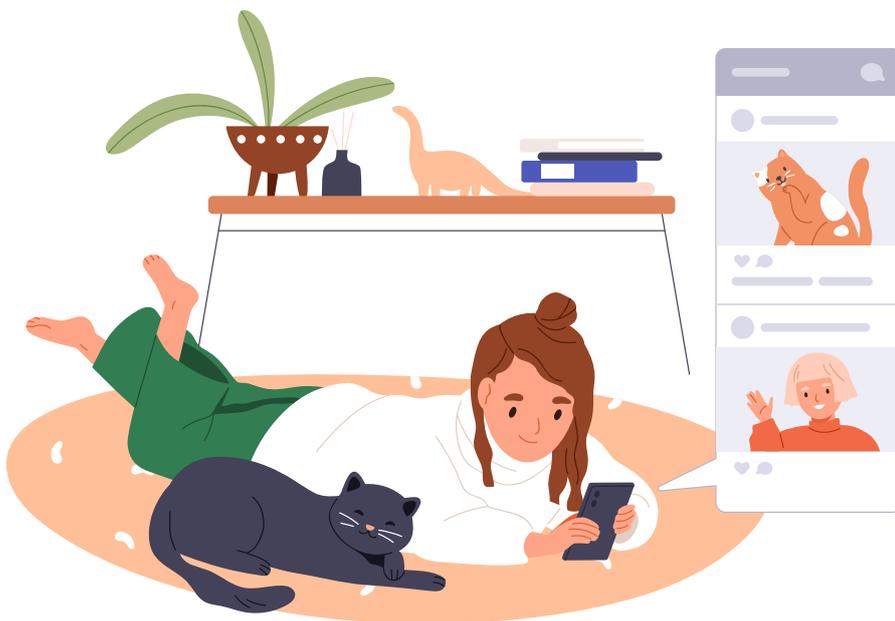


2. How can I help my child learn to deal with boredom in healthy ways?

Context in the story: As the novelty of the coin-earning challenge wears off, Mario starts experiencing boredom, especially during repetitive or quiet moments, like waiting in the park while watching his baby cousin. He resists it at first, scribbles about it, and complains. But slowly, through the rhythm of effort, small wins, and mental engagement (like focusing on math problems), he finds a sense of flow and quiet focus — even in the slowest parts.

Real-world connection: Boredom is often seen as something to fix — but it's actually a gateway to focus, creativity, and self-regulation. Children who learn to sit with boredom without external entertainment develop stronger mental muscles for life.

How parents can use the story: This story shows that boredom isn't the enemy — it's part of the process. Talk to your child about what they do when things feel slow. Offer alternatives to screen time: goal-setting, journaling, silent challenges, or task-based games. But don't overschedule — instead, model being okay with stillness. Ask, “What helped Mario push through the boring bits?” and explore how the feeling of boredom can lead to unexpected satisfaction once we stop fighting it.





3. How can I help my child take charge of daily tasks like homework, chores, and routines?

Context in the story: The heart of the Five-Coin Game is responsibility — not just doing tasks, but showing up daily for them. From folding laundry to feeding the dog and completing a page of writing, Mario isn't just handed the work — he's invited to own it. By the end of the story, he no longer sees chores as obstacles to the reward, but part of a rhythm he finds value in.

Real-world connection: Many children view chores and routines as parental control. When these tasks are reframed as their own “game” or responsibility, children feel a sense of ownership and autonomy which is essential for long-term motivation and executive function.

How parents can use the story: Use this story to gently shift how your child sees routines — not as nagging, but as steps toward independence. Help them set up a task-reward system (with or without money) where completion is tracked visually. Offer them a voice: “Which task do you want to do first?” “What’s a fair daily challenge?” Over time, reduce the rewards and raise the reflection. Ask, “How did it feel to do it all on your own today?” Pride grows when children feel in charge, not just managed.

Assessment Questions for “The Five Coin Game”



Q1. Why did Mario want the shiny watch so badly at the start of the story?

Purpose: To help children feel the pride that comes from effort, not instant rewards.

Follow-Up: Have you ever really wanted something and had to wait or save for it?

Q2. What happened when Mario tried to find shortcuts instead of saving steadily?

Purpose: To show that releasing a memory isn't the same as pretending it never mattered.

Follow-Up: How do you feel when you have to wait for something you want — frustrated or determined?

Q3. How did Mario's idea of what was "worth five coins" change by the end?

Purpose: To help children understand that value isn't in the thing we buy, but the effort behind it.

Follow-Up: What makes something feel valuable to you — its price or what it took to earn it?

Q4. Why did Mario stop himself from spending his coins too quickly?

Purpose: To teach that smart choices often mean saying "not yet" instead of "no."

Follow-Up: When was the last time you stopped yourself from doing something just because it felt right to wait?

Q5. How did Mario feel when he finally reached his goal through saving, not shortcuts?

Purpose: To remind children that true confidence grows from honest work and effort.

Follow-Up: What's something you've earned or achieved on your own that made you proud?

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