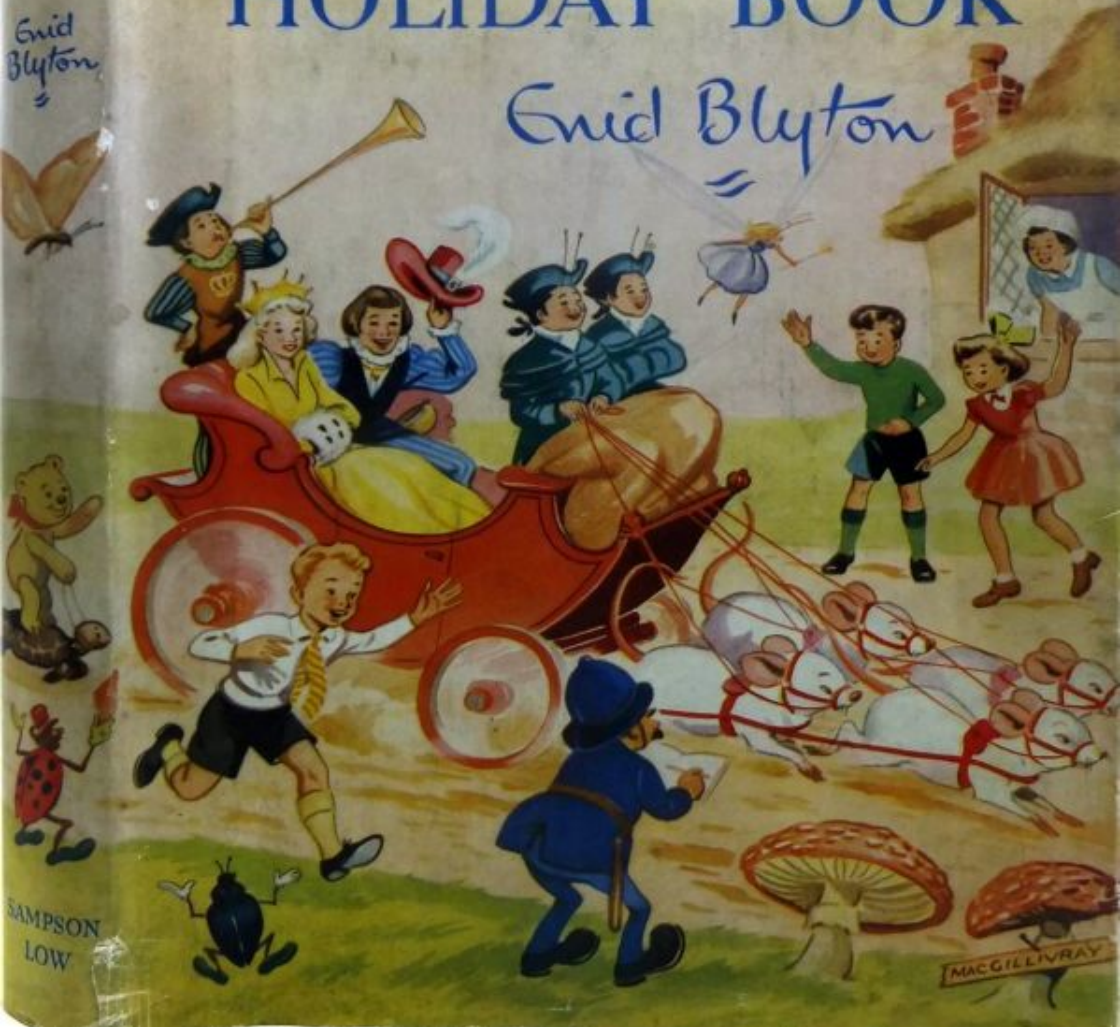


THE  
SIXTH  
HOLIDAY  
BOOK

Enid  
Blyton

# THE SIXTH HOLIDAY BOOK

Enid Blyton



SAMPSON  
LOW

**\* A Distributed Proofreaders Canada eBook \***

This eBook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the eBook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the eBook. If either of these conditions applies, please contact a <https://www.fadedpage.com> administrator before proceeding. Thousands more FREE eBooks are available at <https://www.fadedpage.com>.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. IF THE BOOK IS UNDER COPYRIGHT IN YOUR COUNTRY, DO NOT DOWNLOAD OR REDISTRIBUTE THIS FILE.

*Title:* The Sixth Holiday Book

*Date of first publication:* 1951

*Author:* Enid Blyton (1897-1968)

*Date first posted:* Feb. 7, 2022

*Date last updated:* Feb. 7, 2022

Faded Page eBook #20220214

This eBook was produced by: Alex White & the online Distributed Proofreaders Canada team at <https://www.pgdpCanada.net>

# THE SIXTH HOLIDAY BOOK

*By*  
Enid Blyton



LONDON  
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & CO. LTD.

Individual stories were first printed in Sunny Stories magazine.

Derek's Loose Tooth	No.362 Sep 7, 1945
Sammy the Scribbler	No.360 Aug 10, 1945
Little Shaving Brushes	No.250 Oct 24, 1941
I Certainly Didn't	No.380 May 17, 1946
The Wonderful Torch	No.351 Apr 6, 1945
The Smugglers' Caves	No.386 Aug 9, 1946
Take Firm Hold of the Nettle	No.374 Feb 22, 1946
The Mouse and Rat Robber	No.348 Feb 23, 1945
The Magnificent Treacle Pudding	No.381 May 31, 1946
He Couldn't Be Trusted	No.372 Jan 25, 1946
Patter's Adventure [Patter Has an Adventure]	No.380 May 17, 1946
Gold for Everyone	No.380 May 17, 1946
The Monkey and the Pop-gun	No.357 Jun 29, 1945
A Hole in Her Stocking	No.317 Dec 17, 1943
The Bear on Wheels	No.379 May 3, 1946
Billy's Butterfly	No.321 Feb 11, 1944
The Surprising Buns	No.379 May 3, 1946
Simple Simon Goes to Camp	No.361 Aug 24, 1946
The Cuckoo in the Clock	No.371 Jan 11, 1946
He Was Sorry for Himself	No.366 Nov 2, 1945
It Really Served Him Right	No.363 Sep 21, 1945
The Old Red Cushion	No.378 Apr 19, 1946
The Wrong Bus	No.382 Jun 14, 1946
The Talking Doll	No.381 May 31, 1946
Bicycle Magic	No.386 Aug 9, 1946
The Toys Go On Strike	No.383 Jun 28, 1946
"I Was Here First!"	No.383 Jun 28, 1946
The Dirty Old Hat	No.377 Apr 5, 1946

# Contents

			Page
DEREK'S LOOSE TOOTH	<i>illustrated</i>	by Hilda McGavin	<a href="#">7</a>
SAMMY THE SCRIBBLER	„	„ Joyce Horn	<a href="#">15</a>
LITTLE SHAVING BRUSHES	„	„ John Wardle	<a href="#">21</a>
MR. SPELLS SETS YOU A RIDDLE	„	„ Lillian Chivers	<a href="#">25</a>
I CERTAINLY DIDN'T	„	„ Cicely Steed	<a href="#">26</a>
THE WONDERFUL TORCH	„	„ Helen Haywood	<a href="#">33</a>
THE SMUGGLERS' CAVES	„	„ William Gale	<a href="#">39</a>
TAKE FIRM HOLD OF THE NETTLE	„	„ William Gale	<a href="#">47</a>
THE MOUSE AND RAT ROBBER	„	„ Grace Lodge	<a href="#">54</a>
THE MAGNIFICENT TREACLE PUDDING	„	„ Vera Rice-Jay	<a href="#">59</a>
HE COULDN'T BE TRUSTED	„	„ Lillian Chivers	<a href="#">65</a>
PATTER'S ADVENTURE	„	„ Mary Brooks	<a href="#">72</a>
GOLD FOR EVERYONE	„	„ Mildred Entwhistle‡	<a href="#">79</a>
THE MONKEY AND THE POP-GUN	„	„ Elizabeth Flinders	<a href="#">84</a>
TWO WAYS OF TRAVELLING	„	„ Lillian Chivers	<a href="#">91</a>
A HOLE IN HER STOCKING	„	„ Ellen Dawson	<a href="#">92</a>
THE BEAR ON WHEELS	„	„ Vera Rice-Jay	<a href="#">97</a>
BILLY'S BUTTERFLY	„	„ Mary Brooks	<a href="#">106</a>
A LITTLE MATCH TRICK	„	„ Lillian Chivers	<a href="#">111</a>
THE SURPRISING BUNS	„	„ Robert MacGillivray	<a href="#">112</a>
SIMPLE SIMON GOES TO CAMP	„	„ Hilda McGavin	<a href="#">117</a>
THE CUCKOO IN THE CLOCK	„	„ Raymond Sheppard‡	<a href="#">123</a>
HE WAS SORRY FOR HIMSELF	„	„ Grace Lodge	<a href="#">129</a>
IT REALLY SERVED HIM RIGHT	„	„ Helen Haywood	<a href="#">138</a>
HIDDEN FLOWERS	„	„ Lillian Chivers	<a href="#">145</a>
THE OLD RED CUSHION	„	„ Dorothy Hall	<a href="#">146</a>
THE WRONG BUS	„	„ Raymond Sheppard‡	<a href="#">154</a>
THE TALKING DOLL	„	„ Cicely Steed	<a href="#">161</a>
BICYCLE MAGIC	„	„ Charlotte Hough	<a href="#">169</a>
THE TOYS GO ON STRIKE	„	„ Eric Rickers	<a href="#">174</a>
FUNNY LITTLE DANCING DOLL	„	„ Lillian Chivers	<a href="#">182</a>
“I WAS HERE FIRST!”	„	„ Marjorie Davies	<a href="#">183</a>
THE DIRTY OLD HAT	„	„ Mildred Entwhistle‡	<a href="#">188</a>

Dust wrapper and colour plates by Robert MacGillivray  
 Endpapers designed by Cicely Steed

*Transcriber's Note: For the majority of the illustrators their death date is unknown, or they are not yet in the Public Domain in Canada. At the time of publishing this eBook, illustrators with a known death date in 1971 or prior are considered in the Public Domain.*

*The illustrators which are included have been marked with a double-dagger (‡).  
Some images do not have an illustrator identified, and have been included.*

# Derek's Loose Tooth

Once when Derek went to find wild strawberries in the wood he found something else that surprised him very much!

In a tiny silver bowl, no bigger than a small ash-tray, he found a very queer collection of small things. There was the petal of a blue flower. There was a tiny downy feather from a baby bird's breast. There was the top of a very small mushroom, and there was a blade of grass hung with two shivering dewdrops. Derek looked at them all in wonder. Whatever were they doing in that tiny bowl? Whom did they belong to? Why were they put there?

He put out his hand to take the things out of the bowl, when a sharp voice, as high as a bird's, called out to him.

"Now then! Don't you touch those! I'm going to make a spell when the moon shines to-night. A moonbeam will just catch that bowl, and when I stir everything in it I shall make a lovely spell."

Derek was astonished. He looked all round for the owner of the little high voice, and he suddenly saw a small man peeping at him from behind a foxglove. "Oh—are you a brownie or a gnome?" he said.

"A brownie," said the tiny man, coming out from his hiding-place and taking off his pointed hat to bow very politely. Derek felt he had to do the same. He couldn't help feeling excited. He had so often wanted to meet one of the Little Folk, and now he had.

"What's the spell you're making?" he asked. "Do tell me."

"Well—it's rather a nice one," said the brownie, and he shook the silver bowl a little so that the dewdrops almost fell off the grass-blade. "It's a spell to give mothers a happy birthday. You know—they're always planning happy birthdays for their children, and I think they deserve happy birthdays themselves. When this spell is made it will turn into a gleaming powder—and any mother who has it shaken over her will have a very happy birthday indeed."

"Oh—that's a lovely idea," said Derek. "My mother had a horrid birthday last year—I was very ill on the day—and the year before that she had a horrid birthday, too, though we planned such a nice one. A fox got into our hen-run and duck-yard and killed half Mummy's hens and ducks, and she was very unhappy."

"Well, there you are!" said the brownie. "It often happens that mothers don't have as nice a birthday as they should. There's powerful magic in my spell—magic that will be sure to give any mother, however unlucky she is, a very, very happy birthday."

"How do you make the spell?" asked Derek.

"Well—I get all the things you see there," said the brownie, "and one more, which I'm hoping will come along soon. I've sent my cousin to get it for me. It's a child's tooth."

"Oh—what a queer thing to put into a spell!" said Derek.

"Ah, but mothers like their children's first little teeth," said the brownie. "I grind the tooth up, you see, in this little grinder. It makes a nice white powder. Ah—here is my cousin, Flim. Now I shall be able to get on with my spell!"



Another brownie came up, even smaller than the first one. “Hallo, Flam!” he panted. “Sorry to keep you waiting, but I haven’t been able to find a child’s tooth anywhere.”

“Oh, now I can’t make the spell!” said Flam sadly. “Did you look simply *everywhere*, Flim?”

“Yes,” said Flim, sinking down under the foxglove and fanning himself with a very tiny hanky.

“Now my spell’s no good, no good at all!” said Flam, and he looked ready to cry. Then he looked up at Derek.

“I suppose you haven’t got a tooth you could let me have—one you’ve pulled out at some time?” he asked.

“No, I haven’t,” said Derek. “I’m very sorry. But I’ve got a very loose one, look!”

He opened his mouth and waggled one of his front teeth. It certainly was very loose indeed. The second tooth underneath it was already growing and wanted the first one out of the way.

“Now look at that!” said Flam, pleased. “Pull it out, will you, little boy? Then I can make my spell.”

“Well—I’m a bit of a coward about pulling out loose teeth really,” said Derek, and he went red. “Mummy wanted me to pull it out this morning, but I didn’t dare.”

“It’s so loose it’s almost *dropping* out,” said Flim. “I do think you might let us have it. After all, it’s to give mothers a happy birthday. I’ll let you have some of the spell next time your mother has a birthday—and I’ll pay you sixpence for the tooth, too!”

“My mother’s birthday is next week,” said Derek, “and I don’t think it will be very happy for her, because Daddy is away and won’t be able to get home. I would like some of that birthday spell—but really I can’t pull out my loose tooth.”

“I don’t think much of you,” said Flam. “Just one good tug and it would be out—and hardly hurt you at all, either. Go on—do pull it.”

Derek put his finger and thumb to the loose tooth and waggled it, trying to make up his mind to give it a tug. But he simply could *not* make up his mind. You know how hard it is to give that one last tug.

“All right. Don’t bother,” said Flam, getting impatient. “I’ll try and find a child who’s a bit braver. A girl perhaps. Boys are supposed to be braver than girls, but I don’t believe they really are. I think you’re a silly sort of boy—can’t even do something that will at any rate get a spell to give your mother a happy birthday.”

Derek went very red again. He waggled his tooth a bit harder, but it didn’t come out. “I *want* to pull it out for you, but I can’t make myself!” he said. “Give me a little time.”

“Can’t,” said Flam. “Flim and I have got to go and see a pixie about a kitten. Good-bye.”

“Wait!” said Derek. “Do wait. Listen, if I feel brave enough to pull it out to-day, I’ll give it to you—but where will you be?”

“Don’t know,” said Flam, walking off. Then he stopped and looked back. “Well, listen—if you *are* brave enough to pull out that little waggling tooth, just put it under your pillow to-night when you’ve pulled it out and I’ll come and fetch it. I’ll leave a sixpence there for you, of course—and if you want a bit of the spell for your mother’s birthday, look under the lilac bush in your garden the night before. All you have to do is to blow the powder-spell over her when she’s not looking.”

He and Flim walked off, and Derek saw no more of them.

"I'm always silly about pulling out my loose teeth," he thought. "Daddy gets cross with me and says I'm a little coward. Mummy laughs at me. But I just can't make myself somehow. Still—if I got a sixpence for it, which I could spend on Mummy's birthday, and a bit of that spell to blow over her to make her happy, it would be lovely."

Well, Derek waggled that tooth of his a dozen times an hour, trying to make up his mind to give it the real tug it needed. But he just couldn't. "I'm not a bit brave," he thought. "I'm awfully silly."

Then, when bedtime came, he had another big think about the little men and the birthday spell they were making. Derek was very fond of his mother. He wanted her to have a happy birthday. He thought it would be very nice indeed if *all* mothers could have happy birthdays. Mothers were such nice people.

"Mummy—look how brave I am!" said Derek suddenly, in a very loud voice, and to his mother's enormous surprise and pleasure he put his hands to his tooth, gave a fine big tug—and out it came in his hand, a tiny little white thing not even as big as a pea.

"Gracious! Brave boy!" said Mummy, looking very pleased. "Shall I have it?"

"No. I want to put it under my pillow for a very special reason," said Derek. "Goodness, Mummy, it was quite easy after all. And I hardly felt it."

"What is difficult is making up your mind," said Mummy. "The thing itself is easy. You want to make your mind strong just for a second—and the tooth is out! Put it under your pillow if you like."

So Derek put the tiny tooth under his pillow, hoping and hoping that Flim and Flam would come and fetch it. He kept awake for a long time, but the little men didn't come.

In the morning he put his hand under his pillow to feel if the tooth was there. It wasn't—but something else *was*! He drew out a round and shining sixpence, perfectly new. His eyes shone as he looked at it.

"Oh, good! They came after all. I shall be able to spend the sixpence for Mummy's birthday, and the night before I'll be sure to look under the lilac bush and see if Flim and Flam have left the birthday spell there."

He bought a little china kitten with the sixpence. His mother was fond of kittens, so he knew she would like it. Then, on the evening before her birthday, he went to look under the lilac bush.

At first he saw nothing. Then, done up very neatly in a small blue envelope, he saw what must be the birthday spell!

He opened the tiny envelope. It was full of a shining powder, made of all the things he had seen, and his tooth as well. Flim and Flam had powdered it well, and had stirred and mixed in everything else, and then let a moonbeam finish off the spell for them. It had all made a gleaming powder.

"Now I'll go and blow it over Mummy when she's not looking," said Derek, very happy. He went indoors and saw his mother sitting sewing in a chair. He crept up behind her, opened the envelope and carefully blew the fine shining powder all over her. It had the smell of honeysuckle, and his mother sniffed in pleasure and looked round.

"Well! I'm sure I can smell honeysuckle—and yet there's none in the garden. It's a nice smell, honeysuckle—it makes me feel happy."

The spell gave Derek's mother such a happy birthday! She loved the tiny china kitten. She was pleased because somebody sent her a great sheaf of roses. She had eleven loving letters and eight birthday cards, and the postman brought her six nice presents.

But best of all, about twelve o'clock the gate swung open, and in came—who do you think? Yes, Derek's daddy, who had been away for such a long time! Mummy flew to meet him and soon they were all there hugging one another and Daddy was giving Mummy a most beautiful necklace for her birthday. "Oh," said Mummy, "this is the happiest birthday I have ever had. It seems almost like a magic spell."

Derek didn't say a word. It was the brownie's secret and he didn't want to give it away. But wasn't he glad he had pulled that waggly tooth out after all!

Do *you* ever have a loose tooth? Well, pull it out and put it under your pillow. If you find it gone in the morning and sixpence there instead, you'll know what's happened.

# Sammy the Scribbler

There was once a little boy called Sammy. The other children called him Sammy the Scribbler because he scribbled over everything.

He chalked on walls. He scribbled in pencil over desks and tables. He ran a white chalk across every fence he came to. He was really a perfect nuisance.

“My mother won’t let me scribble or chalk over walls and fences,” said Tom. “She says it’s an ugly thing to do.”

“Mine doesn’t mind,” said Sammy. “She never scolds me for that. I was out with her yesterday, and I wrote my name all over the fence of my auntie’s house. My mother didn’t tell me not to.”

“Then she must be the sort of mother who spoils her children,” said Hilda. “I guess your auntie won’t be pleased when she sees the mess you have made of her fence.”

Hilda was quite right when she said Sammy’s mother spoilt him. She hated to say “No” to him, and she hated to scold him. So he was allowed to do all sorts of things that the other children were forbidden to do. And that was very bad for Sammy, as you can guess.

Well, he went on scribbling. He scribbled on the wall of the village hall. He put red and white crosses all over the new fence round the school playground. He scribbled over the wall of the new cloakroom in his school. He scribbled silly things there and made the teacher very angry.

He scribbled “Hilda is silly” and “Tom is a baby” and “Will is greedy”. Then, when the teacher wanted to know who had done the scribbling, Sammy wouldn’t own up.

The other children didn’t give him away, for they were not tell-tales, and the whole class was punished by being kept in at playtime.

They were very angry indeed. Afterwards Tom went to Sammy and said: “Now you take a wet cloth and go and wash out every single thing you have scribbled in our new cloakroom. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.”

Sammy had to wash out his scribbings, but he wasn’t ashamed of himself. He soon began again!

One day he went out into the country for a walk. He went into a wood and down a little narrow path that looked like a rabbit path. And very soon he came to a very clean and tidy little cottage.

Its walls had just been whitewashed. They were smooth and white and clean. Sammy looked at them and his fingers went into his pockets to get out his coloured chinks. Oh, how fine it would be to write all kinds of things on that nice white wall! He could draw pictures, too. He would draw his teacher.

He went cautiously round the cottage to see if anyone was in. But it was empty. Nobody came to see who was knocking at the door. Sammy meant to ask for a cup of water if anyone did come. “Good,” said Sammy. “There’s no one here. I can have a fine time scribbling!”

So he began. He scribbled his name heaps of times. He drew his teacher. He drew the other children and put something rude under each one.

He drew Tom and scribbled underneath, “This is Tom. He is a mean boy.” Then he drew Hilda, and wrote underneath, “This is Hilda. She tells stories instead of the truth.” He drew Will and wrote, “What a horrid boy Will is! He always has dirty knees.”

He had a perfectly lovely time. He finished by writing his name “Sammy Brown, Sammy Brown” in every empty space that was left.

Then he went home, pleased with himself. He had never had such a lovely big scribble in his life before!

Now that night, when he was in bed, a knock came at his window. Sammy was startled. People don’t usually knock at windows. They knock at doors.

The knock came again, more loudly.

“Come in!” said Sammy. And somebody opened the window and came in!

It was a brownie, a small man with a long beard, dressed in green. He had very bushy eyebrows that almost hid his eyes and made it seem as if he was frowning hard.

He looked at Sammy and spoke in a stern voice, “Is your name Sammy Brown?”

“Yes,” said Sammy. “Who are you?”

“I’m the brownie who lives in the whitewashed cottage,” said the brownie, and he glared at Sammy. Sammy began to feel uncomfortable.

“Oh, are you?” he said. “I don’t think I know it.”

“Oh yes you do,” said the brownie. “You scribbled disgusting things all over my nice clean walls. Horrid little nuisance of a boy! How dare you?”

“How—how did you know it was me?” stammered Sammy, frightened.

“Well, you signed your name all over the wall, didn’t you?” said the brownie, coming close to the bed. Sammy saw that he had green eyes, a sign that he belonged to the fairy folk. “Yes, it was there all right. ‘Sammy Brown, Sammy Brown, Sammy Brown.’ So I found out where Sammy Brown lived and came to see you about it.”

“Well, I haven’t done anything very dreadful,” said Sammy.

“It’s a disgusting, ill-mannered, mean habit,” said the brownie. “Didn’t you write horrid things about your friends? Yes, you did! Mean little boy. You deserve to be taken out of bed, turned over, and spanked!”

“Now, look here, I shall call my mother if you do anything like that,” said Sammy in alarm. “My mother doesn’t mind my scribbling, neither does my father. So I don’t know why *you* should mind. Go away.”

It wasn’t true that his father didn’t mind. His father did mind. He was always cross if he found Sammy’s scribbles anywhere. But his mother spoiled him, as you have heard.

“Dear me!” said the brownie, raising his enormous eyebrows. “So you have a mother and father as bad as yourself! Well, well. I’d better punish them as well.”

He didn’t say a word more. He went out of the room and shut the door. Sammy did not dare to follow in case the brownie really did spank him. He went to sleep. In the morning he woke up to hear his father being very angry!

“Who’s done this? How dare Sammy do this? Sammy, come here!”

Sammy was frightened. What had happened? His father sounded dreadfully cross. He crept out of bed and went to the bathroom, where his father was.

All round the nice yellow walls were scribbles—and scribbles just like Sammy’s! There were silly drawings, too. One was of his father, and underneath was written in writing very like Sammy’s “This is Daddy. He makes silly jokes.”

Sammy shook and shivered. His father glared at him, very angry. "How many times have I told you not to do this kind of thing? How dare you do it in the bathroom? I shall spank you hard."

Sammy's mother came in, frightened. "Oh, no, don't spank poor Sammy," she said. "He didn't mean to be naughty, did you, Sammy? He's only little, Daddy." But Mother changed her mind when she went downstairs and saw that there were scribblings in chalk all over the dining-room wall too! And there was a picture of her, too, with writing underneath. "This is Mother. She lets me do as I like."

"Oh, you bad boy!" she said, and she gave Sammy the hardest slap he had ever had. "Daddy, you're right. He badly needs a spanking."

"He's going to get it," said Daddy. "What have you to say about this, Sammy?"

"Only that I didn't do it, I didn't, I didn't, I didn't!" said poor Sammy. "Do believe me."

But Daddy didn't. "Then who did do it, if you didn't?" he asked scornfully.

"It was the brownie who came in at my window last night," said Sammy, beginning to cry. "He said he would punish me, and punish you and Mother, too. He said you were as bad as I was."

"Well, well, well," said his father. "Perhaps we *are* as bad as you are, because we haven't stopped you doing these silly things. But I'm afraid I don't believe that a brownie came in at your window in the night, Sammy. That isn't true."

"But it *is* true!" wept Sammy. "I chalked on the walls of his cottage in the wood, and he came to see me about it. It was the brownie who scribbled, I know it was."

But not even Mother believed that. She was very angry indeed. Sammy got a hard spanking and went to bed for the whole of the day. The next day he had to wash off all the brownie's scribblings, and it took him all the morning. "I've a good mind to go and scribble on the brownie's cottage, and say, 'The brownie is a mean fellow'" thought Sammy. But he didn't. He never did any scribbling on walls or fences again.

"That's the end of our spoiling Sammy," said his father. And it was. His father and mother were strict with him after that, scolded him when he needed it, and saw that he did what he ought to do.

And Sammy is so much nicer now! You'd never know he was once horrid little spoilt Sammy the Scribbler. He went one day to the wood to find the white cottage again, for he wanted to say he was sorry to the brownie for having spoilt his walls. But there was no cottage there, and no brownie either.

I expect he moved himself and his house to a place where Sammy could never come to scribble, don't you?

# Little Shaving Brushes

Once upon a time the Prince of Faraway thought he would visit the Princess of Nearby. She was very beautiful, and the prince felt sure she would make a splendid wife for him.

“She is a very particular sort of princess,” said Kirri, one of his lords. “She only likes people with good manners, and she hates anyone untidy and dirty. So you will have to wear your best clothes, Your Highness.”

“Well, of course I shall!” said Prince Brown-Eyes. “And I hope I have good manners! I don’t think that the Princess Blue-Eyes will be able to find fault with *me!*”

“Of course not!” said Lord Kirri. “I am only just telling you. You must have your hair cut, though. It is getting much too long.”

“Well, really!” said the prince, feeling his hair. “You’ll be telling me I must have my toenails cut next!”

“Let me see—it is two days’ journey away,” said Lord Kirri, looking at a map. “Shall you take your field-mouse carriage, Your Highness? Or do you think it would look grander to get the swallows to fly through the air with you in your balloon car?”

“You’re not being sensible,” said the prince. “It is autumn and the swallows have gone. We shall have to take the field-mouse carriage. Anyway, it has just been painted gold and looks very nice. We’ll go on Thursday. Send a letter to the Princess Blue-Eyes and tell her. We can spend the night in Cuckoo Wood. There are some pretty red toadstools there and they will give us shelter.”

So on Thursday morning Prince Brown-Eyes set off with Lord Kirri and some more of his noblemen. They all looked very grand in their shining uniforms, with polished top-boots and gleaming swords. Prince Brown-Eyes had a wonderful white cloak lined with red that swung out round him as he walked.

He had his hair cut, and he even had his eyebrows trimmed. “That’s right,” said Lord Kirri. “You look fine.”

They travelled in the field-mouse carriage all Thursday towards the setting sun. They were tired when they came to Cuckoo Wood. The red toadstools were there, and the pixies in the wood had draped curtains of cobweb from the edges of them to the ground, so that they were like sturdy little tents.

“This is splendid,” said the prince, delighted. “Thank you, Pixies. Oh, and what a lovely meal you have got ready for me!”

The pixies had found a few very short toadstools and used them as tables. On them they had spread all kinds of jellies and cakes and sandwiches, and tall goblets of honey-lemonade. The prince and his noblemen sat down and ate a very good supper. Then they went to bed and slept.

But in the morning what an upset there was! Lord Kirri, who had done the packing, had quite forgotten to bring any shaving-brushes! And there was the prince with his unshaven cheeks covered with short prickly black hairs—and no shaving-brush to shave his cheeks smooth and clean!

“Good gracious! You reminded me to have my hair cut, and told me to mind my manners—and *you* go and forget the shaving-brushes!” cried Prince Brown-Eyes. “You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Kirri.”

“Well, I am,” said Kirri humbly. “I simply can’t imagine how it was I forgot them. I packed all our shaving-creams, and our razors—but not a single brush. Most extraordinary!”

“Most,” said the prince. “Well, see if you can borrow some from the pixies.”

But the pixies didn’t shave at all. They never grew beards because they were the kind of fairies that didn’t grow up. They shook their little heads.

“We’ve no shaving-brushes,” they said. “None at all. Whatever will you do? You can’t possibly visit the princess without shaving. She is MOST particular.”

“Oh, don’t keep telling me that,” said the prince. “I feel quite nervous. For goodness’ sake find some shaving-brushes *somewhere*.”

Well, such a hunt began all over the place for shaving-brushes. Kirri went hunting, too. He knocked at every cottage door he saw and asked the fairy or elf who lived there to lend him a shaving-brush. But nobody had one.

And then, just as he was going back to the prince in despair, feeling quite certain that he would be put into prison for his carelessness, he saw something that made him stare in surprise. A little plant was growing nearby—and will you believe it, it grew shaving-brushes! There they were, neat little grey-white brushes set in green handles, growing on small stalks. Kirri stared as if he couldn’t believe his eyes! Then he ran to the plant and picked off half a dozen of the brushes. He rushed to the prince, shouting loudly:

“I’ve got you some shaving-brushes, really lovely ones—so soft and pretty!”

Everyone stared in delight at the delightful little brushes. “Just the thing!” cried the prince joyfully. “Exactly the right size! I can shave at once now!”

So he did—and then Kirri took him to see the plant on which the little shaving-brushes grew.

“Why, there are some brushes with yellow hairs instead of grey,” said the prince. “We must always get our brushes from this plant. What is it called? It is simply marvellous!”

The pixies told him that it was called groundsel and that if he planted one of the little grey-white shaving-brushes in the ground, a whole plant would come up and bear the shaving-brushes he so much liked!

So he put some of the shaving-brushes in his pocket when he went off to visit the Princess Blue-Eyes. She liked him very much and he liked her, and they soon got married and lived happily ever after.

And the funny thing is that the groundsel still grows little yellow shaving-brushes that turn white as they ripen. Have you seen them? You simply *must* go and find them. Pick some off the stalks and you will see that they really are the tiniest, daintiest shaving-brushes imaginable!



# Mr. Spells Sets You a Riddle

“Hey, Tumpy!” says Spells,  
“Here’s a riddle for you,  
Now just use your magic,  
It’s easy to do.  
Take the front of a car,  
And the back of a kite,  
And half of a duck,  
(Are you doing this right)?  
And now take the end  
Of a sheep, and then add  
The front of an ox,  
And the middle of dad!  
Mix them up well,  
And stir them together,  
If the riddle is right,  
You’ve a bird of fine feather!”

You must find all the letters, then sort them  
out and put them in the right order, and you  
will have a beautiful bird!

**Answer on page [38](#).**

# I Certainly Didn't

It all began one morning when Dame Click's little grandson, Rolly, let his ball go over the wall into Mr. Shouter's garden. That wouldn't have mattered much if only Mr. Shouter hadn't been sitting in his deck-chair, fast asleep and dreaming, exactly underneath the falling ball.

The ball fell bang on Mr. Shouter's head and in his dreams he thought a bomb had fallen on him—and he woke up, trembling and afraid.

But when he saw that it was only a ball that had hit him he jumped up in a tremendous rage. He saw Rolly's head sticking up over the wall, and he let out a tremendous roar. Rolly was frightened and slid back into his grandmother's garden.

"You bad boy! You wicked little scamp!" yelled Mr. Shouter. "Throwing a ball at a sleeping old man! I'm coming over to spank you—and I've got the hardest hand in Cheer-Up Village!"

Mr. Shouter had a very loud voice. Rolly ran into Dame Click's house and hid behind the mangle in the kitchen. Mr. Shouter jumped straight over the wall and came after him.

"I'll put you through the mangle!" he shouted when he saw poor trembling Rolly. "I'll iron you out flat! I'll peg you up on the line! I'll beat you like a carpet. I'll——"

Dame Click bustled into the kitchen, quite alarmed. When she saw Mr. Shouter she shooed him as if he was a cat.

"Shoo! Go away! Shoo! Shoo!"

"Stop shooing me!" yelled Mr. Shouter. "I've come to get that grandson of yours! Hitting me on the head with his ball!"

"Did you do that on purpose, Rolly?" demanded Dame Click.

"I certainly didn't!" said Rolly from behind the mangle. "It was quite an accident. I was just looking over the wall to say I was sorry, when——"

"You did it on purpose! You're a bad boy, a wicked scamp!" began Mr. Shouter all over again. He grabbed at Rolly and the handle fell off the mangle on to his big foot. Then how Mr. Shouter leapt around on one leg, shouting and holding his hurt foot!

"Serves you right for losing your temper!" said Dame Click. "Shoo!"

"If you shoo me again I'll turn you into a hedgehog, you prickly old woman!" cried Mr. Shouter.

"Now, that's enough!" said Dame Click, and, picking up a broom, she swept round Mr. Shouter's feet as if she was sweeping him up! How angry he was!

"You wait!" he said. "You wait! As soon as I get back I'll look up my magic books and I'll work some magic that will make you very, very sorry. You wait! You'll be surprised at some of the things that will happen to you to-day!"

"Shoo!" said Dame Click and swept him up again! He went off to his own house, muttering and grumbling. Old Mr. Shouter had a very hot temper indeed!

"Now, don't you let your ball go into Mr. Shouter's garden any more," said Dame Click to Rolly.

“I can’t. It’s still in his garden and I guess he won’t throw it over now,” said poor Rolly, scrambling out from behind the mangle. “Are you soon going out, Gran? I’ll go with you.”

Now Dame Click had her little granddaughter staying with her, too. She was only a year old and she went out in a big pram. Dame Click sat her in and put a rug over her, for it was a cold morning. Then she and Rolly and little Sunshine set out for the village shops.

Mr. Shouter also set out, carrying a basket. Dame Click saw him and kept carefully out of his way. She didn’t want any shouting in the middle of the village street!

She came to the market-place. Rolly loved that. There was always such a lot going on. Hens clucked, ducks quacked, old countrywomen sat on tubs to sell butter and eggs, rhubarb and early lettuces.

“Now,” said Dame Click, “I’ll put the pram just here, where it will be safe. You come with me, Rolly, because I’m going to buy a nice lot of things and you can take them back to the pram for me and put them under Sunshine’s rug.”

So off they went, leaving Sunshine fast asleep in her pram.

Dame Click bought a great many things. She bought a fat chicken, ready for cooking. She bought a beautiful new red shawl for herself. She bought a silver bowl for Sunshine to eat her porridge from, and she bought a pair of blue shoes for Rolly. She gave them all to him.

“Now run back to the pram and pop them into it,” she said. “Under the rug, mind—and don’t you wake Sunshine!” Rolly ran off, and Dame Click began to talk to a friend of hers. When she had had a very good chat, she went off to find Rolly and Sunshine and the pram. Sunshine was still in the pram, fast asleep. But Rolly was nowhere to be seen.

Dame Click caught sight of Mr. Shouter at the next stall. “Ah! I expect Rolly saw him and ran off home,” she thought. “Bad-tempered old man! Telling me he’ll work magic on me like that! Pooh! Bah!”

She lifted up the rug to put in a loaf of bread she had bought—and, my goodness me, how she stared! Where was her fat chicken? Where was the red shawl? And what had become of the silver bowl and the blue shoes? In the pram was a smelly old bone, a ragged red duster, a broken dish and a pair of holey old shoes. Dame Click gaped at them and then she gave a loud cry.

“It’s that horrid old Mr. Shouter! He’s worked bad magic on me as he said he would. He’s changed my chicken into a bone, my shawl into a red rag, my silver bowl into a cracked dish, and my blue shoes into a broken-down pair! Oh, the wicked old man!”

People heard her crying out and came to hear. She pointed to Mr. Shouter and said it all over again. “Where’s Mr. Clop, the policeman? Fetch him at once.”

Mr. Clop came with his notebook. “What’s the matter, what’s the matter?” he said sternly.

“It’s Mr. Shouter,” said Dame Click. “See what he’s done to me! He’s changed my chicken into a bone, my——”

“I certainly didn’t!” said Mr. Shouter in a loud voice.

“And my red shawl into a rag and my——”

“I CERTAINLY DIDN’T!” said Mr. Shouter in a still louder voice.

“Well, if you didn’t, you’ve taken them then, you bad fellow!” said Dame Click, and she began to cry. “Arrest him, Mr. Clop. He said he would work bad magic on me and he has.”

“I know I said that—but I was in a temper and I didn’t really mean it,” said Mr. Shouter, looking worried.

“You’d better come along with me,” said Mr. Clop, and he walked off with Mr. Shouter. Everyone said comforting words to Dame Click. To think she had spent so much money and

then had all her things changed into rubbish! She went home, wheeling the pram. Sunshine was still asleep. When she got home the kitchen door was open and Rolly was sitting at the table, playing with a puzzle—and, dear me, what were all those things on the floor beside him?

Dame Click's eyes nearly fell out of her head. Yes—a fat chicken ready for cooking—a beautiful red shawl—a silver bowl—and a fine pair of small blue shoes! She gave a gulp and sank down into a chair.

“Rolly! Where did those come from?”

“Why, Gran, you gave them to me yourself!” said Rolly in surprise. “But I didn't like to pop them into the pram as you told me to, because old Mr. Shouter was nearby. So I brought them home instead.”

“Oh my, oh my, and I've sent Mr. Shouter off to the police-station with Mr. Clop!” said Dame Click in dismay. “But how did all those awful things come to be in my pram?”

“Awful things? What awful things?” asked Rolly. “Oh those! Well, Gran, my friend came along—Pippy, you know—and he was taking the bone to his dog, the rag was for polishing up his bicycle, the cracked dish was to be mended and he was going to give the old shoes to the beggar at the crossroads. But he wanted to go and play football with the other boys so he popped them into the pram for a few minutes.”

“This is terrible,” said Dame Click. “Who would have thought of such a thing! Take the things to Pippy at once, Rolly. Oh my, oh my, now I must go to the police-station and fetch back Mr. Shouter!”

So off she went, wheeling the pram with Sunshine in it, still fast asleep. When she got to the police-station Mr. Clop was shouting at Mr. Shouter and Mr. Shouter was yelling at Mr. Clop. “I tell you I didn't, I certainly didn't!” yelled Mr. Shouter. “As if I'd do a thing like that! Changing all those nice things into rubbish! I CERTAINLY DIDN'T!”

“Oh, Mr. Clop, it's all a mistake! Oh, Mr. Shouter, do forgive me!” said poor Dame Click, and she did her best to explain, though she was very much afraid that Mr. Shouter would turn her into a blackbeetle.

But he didn't. He began to laugh. Then he patted Dame Click on the shoulder. “Funniest thing I've heard for a long time!” he said. “Ho, ho! So Pippy put all that rubbish there!”

“Hmmm,” said Mr. Clop, annoyed that all the notes he had put down in his book were of no use after all. “Hmm, I've a good mind to arrest you, Dame Click, for Making a Fuss about Nothing!”

Dame Click squealed and rushed out of the police-station as if a hundred tigers were after her. Mr. Shouter laughed and went with her.

“Oh, Mr. Shouter—I'm so sorry,” stammered Dame Click. “Such a lot of foolishness. I suppose you wouldn't come in and have a bit of my chocolate cake, would you—and a sip of my new lemonade? Just to show there's no ill-feeling.”

“I certainly will!” said Mr. Shouter, and went to her cottage with her. As soon as Rolly saw him he got behind the mangle again—but how he stared when he saw his Gran and Mr. Shouter sitting down to eat chocolate cake and drink lemonade. And will you believe it, in half a minute he was on Mr. Shouter's knee, eating chocolate cake, too!

What a storm in a tea-cup! Everything is peaceful now—but just wait till that rascal of a Rolly lets something else go over the wall!

# The Wonderful Torch

George had a torch for his birthday. It was a very nice one, about eight inches long, and when he pushed the knob up and down the light went on and off.

George had a fine time that night in the nursery with Janet, his little sister. They were playing there, and George suddenly switched off the electric light. Darkness came over the room at once.

“Don’t,” said Janet. “I can’t see. Put the light on, George. I don’t like this game.”

George suddenly switched on his torch, and the room was lighted up well. Janet laughed. “Oh—you just wanted to show off your new torch, I suppose! What a brilliant light it has, George!”

The toys sitting round the nursery were most astonished to see the light coming from George’s torch. They had never seen a torch before.

“It’s magic!” whispered the bear to the black toy dog. “It must be!”

“He’s got the moon in his torch,” said the black dog. “That’s what it is! You know how often we have seen the round moon looking in at the window at nights as we play—well, you look at George’s torch. Do you see the round moon at the end of it, shining brightly?”

“Yes—he’s got the moon in his torch!” said the toys to one another. “How did he do it?”

They watched what George did with his torch. The bear knew, because he went to bed with George. George put his torch under his pillow. He put it there so that if he woke up in the middle of the night he would be able to switch it on and see the time.

“He’s put the moon under his pillow!” said the bear to himself. “Fancy that! It must be very precious to him. He may be afraid of it going back to the sky.”

Now two nights later Little-One, the pixie, came climbing in at the nursery window with a large letter in her hand.

“An invitation for you!” she said to the toys, and they ran to take it in excitement. The bear tore the big envelope open.

“An invitation to a party—on full-moon night!” said the bear, and he read it out aloud. “Isn’t that lovely? We can dance with the fairies and the brownies and the pixies.”

“And eat honey and dewdrop buns,” said the black dog.

“And borrow a few pairs of wings and fly about!” said the golliwog, spreading his arms out and flapping them. “Ooooooh!”

“But—wait a minute—there won’t be any moon!” said the bear suddenly. “George has got the moon in his torch.”

Little-One stared in surprise. All the toys nodded. “Yes, it’s true. He’s got it in his new torch, and he keeps it under his pillow at night.”

“Rubbish!” said Little-One. “You’ve made a mistake! The moon is in the sky still. You’ll see it to-morrow night, sure as anything. You can’t see it to-night because it isn’t up yet.”

The toys shook their heads. “It’s in George’s torch, it is, it is,” said the bear. “And you switch the light on and off. I’ve seen George do it. It’s the moon all right.”

“Well—you come to the party, anyhow,” said Little-One, “and I think you’ll find the moon is there!”

The toys didn’t think they would, but all the same they were very excited about the party. “Even if it’s quite, quite dark, it won’t matter because one of us will slip back to George’s bedroom and borrow the moon!” said the golliwog. “Oh, how I’m longing to fly!”

He flapped his arms and ran round the room. Everyone got out of his way. He was always wanting to fly and flapping his arms and jumping about.

The toys went to sleep very early that night so that they would be wide awake the next night. When the party night came they got themselves ready. The golliwog put on a new bow, made out of a bit of ribbon he found at the back of the toy cupboard. The bear brushed his fur well. The black dog cocked up his ears and his tail. He looked smart like that.

All the dolls put on their best things. Even the animals in the Noah’s Ark gave one another a lick to make each other shine. Then they were ready.

“Oooh—it’s dark,” said the black dog, as he climbed out of the window. “I thought it would be,” said the golliwog. “We *told* the pixie that George had got the moon in his torch! I hope they have some lanterns or something. We shan’t be able to see anything!”

It was very dark at the bottom of the garden, where the party was to be held. Big black clouds covered the sky, and once the bear thought he felt a spot of rain on his nose.

“Oh dear—I wish you weren’t black, black dog,” said the golliwog, falling over him for the fifth time. “I can’t see you at all!”

“Hullo!” cried the pixies and the fairies when they heard the toys coming. “This way! We’ve got a lantern till the moon shines out.”

“It won’t shine out,” said the bear gloomily. “We told you George has got it in his torch. Have you only one lantern? Gracious, we shan’t be able to see to eat, or dance, or anything.”

“And I shan’t be able to see where I’m flying,” said the golliwog sadly, as he fixed on a pair of silver wings and flapped them. “Whooooops—here I go!”

He flew up and knocked his head against a branch. “I say!” he cried, “this won’t do! For goodness’ sake let’s go and get the moon! We can borrow George’s torch with the moon in it, and then we can see everything properly.”

“All right,” said the pixies, who really began to believe that the moon *was* in George’s torch. “You go and get the moon.”

So the bear ran back to the house, went to George’s bedroom and slipped his paw under the pillow. Yes—the torch was there! The bear poked George very gently to see if he could wake him and tell him he was borrowing his moon—but George didn’t stir.

The bear carried the torch proudly back to the party. He pushed up the little knob on the outside of the torch—and, hey presto, the light shone out brilliantly! The pixies gasped in surprise.

“Oh, it *must* be the moon! It’s so bright! And now we can see everything!”

The bear set the torch on two toadstools, and the light shone brightly on the merry party. They could see what they were eating. They could see to dance. The golliwog could see to fly. He flew all round the trees and back again. He wasn’t very good at landing, but he didn’t mind the bump he got at all. It was so lovely to fly!

The torch burned brightly. It gave a most beautiful light, and the fairies and pixies were delighted. They kept going and looking at the torch, wondering how in the world George could have got the moon inside it.

“He must know very good magic,” they said. “Very good indeed!”

Well, the torch burned steadily for two hours—and then its light began to fail. It grew dimmer and dimmer. The golliwog ran to it in alarm.

“What’s happening to the moon? It’s going! Its light is hardly there any more!”

The torch’s light went out. There wasn’t even a glimmer left. The fairies and pixies began wailing in dismay, because now the party was spoilt.

But suddenly the wind swept the big clouds away, and the full silvery moon swam into a clear piece of sky. At once the garden was lighted up from top to bottom! Everywhere was brilliant!

“Look, the moon has jumped from the torch to the sky!” cried the golliwog in wonder. “Its light went, and now there it is in the sky again.”

“Oh dear—whatever will George say?” said the teddy-bear in sudden dismay. “He put the moon in his torch—and he kept it safe under his pillow—and I went and borrowed it. Now the moon’s escaped out of George’s torch up to the sky again, and the torch won’t shine any more!”

The bear began to cry loudly. The fairies and pixies came round to comfort him. Soon his fur was soaking wet with his tears.

“Don’t cry so,” said Little-One. “You’ll get a cold if you soak your fur with tears like this. We’ll put a magic light in George’s torch. One that will always stay there and will never escape or wear out.”

“All right,” said the bear, wiping his tears away. “Let me see you do it.”

So the pixies cut a piece of bright moonlight from the ground, put it into a little jug, and poured it into the top of the torch. They screwed the top on—and, dear me, when they slid the little knob up, what a brilliant light shone from the torch!

“There you are,” said Little-One, handing the bear the torch. “It’s fine now—the light from it is as good as ever it was.”

“Better,” said the golliwog. “And do you say it will never wear out? That’s splendid. George *will* be pleased.”

Then the party went on again and the moon shone down brightly all the time. The golliwog flew as high as he could, trying to reach the moon, but he couldn’t. He was sad when the party was over and he had to take off his borrowed wings.

“Come along. It’s almost dawn, and the cock will crow in a minute,” said the bear to the toys. They were all yawning now. “I’ve got to slip back the torch under George’s pillow before he wakes. Good night, Little-One. Thank you for a lovely party.”

They went home and climbed into the toy cupboard, half-asleep. The bear went to put back the torch under George’s pillow. George woke up, and the bear slid under the bed quickly.

“I wonder what time it is,” said George and felt for his torch. He switched it on—and gave a long whistle of surprise. “My! What a brilliant light! This is the best torch I’ve ever had!”

It was just as if he had switched on the moon! The bear giggled. It was fun to hear George talking to himself like that.

George still has his torch—and it is working as well as ever! “It’s a most wonderful torch!” he tells everyone. “I had it two years ago, I use it every night, and yet it hasn’t worn out! I really think it must be magic.”

Well—he isn’t far wrong, is he?

*Answer to puzzle on page [25](#).*

CECKPOA—and, when sorted out and  
re-arranged—PEACOCK!



# The Smugglers' Caves

Bill and Denis were staying at their grandmother's, down by the sea. They were very excited because Granpa had been telling them about the old smugglers' caves round by the big cliff.

"Oh, Granpa! Could we explore them, do you think? Should we find anything there—you know, left by the old smugglers?" asked Bill.

Granpa laughed. "No! You'll find nothing but sand and shells and seaweed," he said. "There have been plenty of people in and out of those caves year after year. If there was anything to be found, it would have been found by now!"

"Still, it would be fun to explore them," said Denis. "We could pretend we were smugglers. Come on, Bill—we'll go this morning!"

Off they went, running down the road to the big, sandy beach, and then round the sand to where the big cliffs stuck out, steep and rocky. In these were the caves.

"Oh, look—there's a whole lot of Boy Scouts on the beach," said Bill. "Golly, I wish I was old enough to be a Scout. They have such fun. I bet they're going to camp somewhere here for a week or two, and bathe, and picnic, and hike all day long! Do you think they'd let us be with them sometimes?" But when the two small boys came near the company of Scouts they didn't get much of a welcome.

"You clear off, you kids," said one of the big boys. "This is our part of the beach, see? Don't you make yourselves nuisances here?"

The small boys went off, disappointed. "They could just have let us *watch* their games," said Bill. "We wouldn't have been a nuisance. We could even have run after their balls for them, if they went too far."

"Oh, never mind—let's go and look for the caves," said Denis. "I'd rather explore them than watch boys who think we're too small to be anything but nuisances."

"Here's a cave," said Bill, and he went up to where a dark hole yawned at the foot of the cliff. "It's a big one. Let's go in."

They went into it. The floor was of soft sand, and seaweed hung down the sides of the walls. The sea went in and out at high tide and filled the little pools at the sides of the cave.

"It's a nice cave, but not very exciting," said Bill. "I don't feel as if smugglers ever came in here, do you, Denis? Anyway, it doesn't lead anywhere. I mean, there are no inner caves or tunnels leading into the cliff."

"Let's find another cave," said Denis. So off they went to the next one. But that was very small, and they could hardly stand upright in it. They went out again into the sunshine.

Then they noticed a stretch of rugged rocks leading up to another cave in the cliff—a cave that really did look exciting. It had quite a small entrance. The boys climbed up the rocks to it and peered inside.

"It's nice and dark," said Bill. "Got your torch, Denis? We'll need it here."

Denis switched on his torch. The boys made their way inside the cave. It was really more like a big tunnel, and it led to an inner cave. Denis shone his torch round. Then he gave a

sudden shout.

“Bill! What’s that over there? Look!”

Bill looked over to the corner into which Denis’s torch shone. Well hidden, there were what looked like sacks and boxes. Gracious! Had they suddenly hit on some old smugglers’ stores after all?

“Make sure those Boy Scouts aren’t anywhere about,” said Denis. “We don’t want them to interfere in this. This is *our* discovery, see?”

Bill went to the outer entrance of the tunnel-like cave. He peered out. No, there were no boys about. But wait a bit—wasn’t the sea a good bit nearer now?

He called to Denis. “I say! I think the tide’s coming in pretty fast. Will it reach these caves, do you think? We don’t want to be caught.”

“Yes. I think it *will* reach them—and then we shall be stuck here for hours,” said Denis. “Blow! Just as we have found treasure, too! I don’t like going off and leaving it here, with all those Scouts about. They’re pretty certain to come nosing round these caves, and then they’ll find it, too.”

“Well, we can’t possibly take all these sacks and things down the beach with us,” said Bill. “Won’t it be all right to leave them here, Denis?”

“No. If *we* can find them, somebody else easily can!” said Denis. “I’m surprised nobody has spotted them before. I know what we’ll do, Bill.”

“What?” said Bill.

“We’ll drag them to that place half-way up the cave-wall,” said Denis, pointing. “Do you see, there’s a kind of big hole there? It may have been a proper hidey-hole once for smuggled things. I think we could drag everything up there and hide it well. We could drape some seaweed over the hole.”

It was difficult to drag everything up to the hole. The boys did not stop to open the sacks or boxes, for they were so afraid of being cut off by the tide. They managed to drag them into the hole at last, and then they hastily arranged big fronds of seaweed over the “treasure” to hide it. When they had finished they were sure no one could possibly see it.

They slid down to the cave floor. They went cautiously to the outer entrance and peered out. They would just have time to run round the edge of the cliff before the sea was swirling all round it!

“There are the Scouts, look—in the next cave but one!” said Bill. “I wonder what they want. They’re yelling to each other rather crossly. Somebody’s done something silly, I should think.”

“Well, come on—let’s go before they yell at *us*!” said Denis. The two small boys ran round the foot of the cliff, wading through a shallow stretch of water in one place. They were only just in time! The tide would soon be right up the cliff—and into some of those caves.

“The Scouts will get caught if they don’t look out,” said Bill.

“Oh, they’re big enough to swim if they get caught by the tide,” said Denis. “Or they might even dare to climb up the cliffs!”

They went home to their dinner. They told Granpa about their exciting find, but he only laughed.

“Go on with you!” he said. “Telling me you’ve found smugglers’ treasure in those caves! Why, I’ve been in and out of them thousands of times when I was a boy. You don’t suppose you could find what I didn’t, do you?”

“Well, but, Granpa,” said Bill, “we really and truly *did* find treasure. At least—we didn’t open the sacks because we didn’t have time—but what else could be in them but old forgotten treasure?” Granpa just laughed again. It was most disappointing of him. The boys decided not to say any more. It spoilt things if grown-ups laughed at them.

After their dinner they slipped out again, hoping that the tide would soon go down and that they could once more go to the cave—and, this time, undo the “treasure” and see what they had got!

They waded round the foot of the cliffs and came to the stretch of rocks that led up to their cave. They were soon hauling the treasure out of its hidey-hole to the floor below. “It’s a jolly good thing we put it up where we did or it would have got soaking wet,” said Bill. “The sea came right into the cave!”

They began to open the sacks—but what a surprise they got! There was no “treasure”! One sack was full of cups and plates and knives and forks! Another one had tins of food in it, and big loaves of bread, and about three dozen buns! One of the boxes had cricket bats, stumps and balls in! What a very extraordinary thing!

“This isn’t smugglers’ treasure!” said Bill in dismay. “But what is it? And why is it here? Who does it belong to?”

“I say—do you think it belongs to the Scouts?” said Denis in rather a small voice. “It’s rather the sort of things they’d bring away to camp with them. I don’t think we’d better undo any more.”

The boys stared at one another in dismay and fright. Had they meddled with the Scout’s belongings? How *could* they have thought they had found smugglers’ treasure when they knew the sea swept in and out of that cave! How silly of them. No wonder Granpa had laughed.

They were disappointed and miserable. “We simply shan’t dare to say a word about this to the Scouts,” said Bill, his voice trembling. “They’d skin us alive!”

“Let’s go before they discover us here with their things,” said Denis. So they crept out of the cave and made their way along the foot of the cliffs again. And they bumped straight into a meeting of the Scouts!

“I tell you I *did* put the things into one of the caves!” a red-faced Scout was saying. “I did! Even if the sea had gone in, surely it wouldn’t have swept *everything* out!”

“Well, not a single thing is there,” said the Scout-leader. “And here we are, come to camp, with our food, crockery, knives and forks, everything gone! We were idiots to dump our things down like that. We should have set up camp and unpacked straight away instead of fooling about.”

“I suppose there’s nothing for it but to go back home,” said another Scout, looking very blue.

Bill and Denis couldn’t help hearing all this. They felt dreadful. It was their fault that the Scouts hadn’t been able to find their things—it would be their fault if they had to give up camping and go back home.

Bill pulled at Denis. He was scared and wanted to get back home. But Denis was made of stronger stuff, and besides, he was older. He suddenly walked straight up to the Scout-leader, his face scarlet, and spoke to him.

“I’m awfully sorry—but we stuck your goods into a hidey-hole half-way up a cave-wall,” he said. “A good thing we did, too, or they would have been soaked by the sea. You will find them in the cave quite safe.”

“You wretched little nuisance!” cried a Scout. “You want a good hiding!”

“No, he doesn’t,” said the leader. “It was a jolly good thing he found our sacks and boxes and put them out of reach of the sea—and it can’t have been an easy thing to walk up to us and confess it all, not knowing what we’d do to him. He’s a good youngster, and I won’t have him yelled at.”

There was a bit of grumbling, but nobody else shouted at Bill and Denis. “You come along and show me which cave the things are in,” said the leader to Denis. “We seem to have forgotten even which cave we used!” Bill and Denis took the Scouts to the cave. They were pleased when they saw all their goods. “Now we can camp all right,” said a tall Scout. “Thank goodness these kids had the sense to drag everything out of reach of the water.”

“We thought it was smugglers’ treasure,” explained Bill, with a red face. But the Scouts didn’t laugh. The leader clapped him on the back.

“You’ll make a good Scout one day,” he said. “You ought to join the Cubs, you know, you and your brother. Would you like to watch us camping? You can come to breakfast to-morrow with us if you like.”

Well, what do you think of that? The two boys beamed all over their faces.

“Oh, thanks awfully!” said Denis. “We promise not to make ourselves nuisances.”

They didn’t. They made themselves so useful that the Scout-leader said he really didn’t know what they would do without them. And one night he even let them sleep in a tent with some of the others.

And now, as you can guess, Bill and Denis are both good Cubs. Are *you* a Cub or a Brownie? I’m sure you will be if you get the chance.

# Take Firm Hold of the Nettle

Ronnie was in disgrace. He had forgotten to take the right book home for his home-work, so at school in the morning he hadn't known his lesson.

Mr. Brown, the master, had been angry with him. "You've got good brains! You must be lazy if you don't know your lesson to-day! Stay in after school and learn it."

So Ronnie had had to stay in after school and that had made him late home for his dinner. His mother had wanted to know why, of course, and he had been afraid to tell her that he had been kept in.

"Oh—I didn't know the time," he said.

"Ronnie, you've got a watch that keeps good time!" scolded his mother. "I told you it was a nice hot dinner to-day and I told you I wanted to catch the two o'clock bus. Now your dinner is spoilt, and I shan't be able to catch the bus. You're selfish and unkind."

Ronnie was miserable as he ate his dinner. Mr. Brown had called him lazy, and he wasn't. His mother had called him unkind and selfish, and he wasn't. People were always accusing him of being things he wasn't.

He thought of the week before. Three of the boys had been going home together, and Ronnie was one of them. Tom had found a parcel in the road, dropped by the postman, and he had actually opened it!

Ronnie hadn't liked to say anything. In the parcel were bars of chocolate! Tom had divided them up and given each of the other two boys the same as himself. Ronnie knew it was dishonest, but he didn't like to say no.

"They might laugh at me!" he thought, "and I do hate being laughed at. I know what I'll do. I'll take these bars home, but I won't eat them. Then I shan't be sharing in Tom's dishonesty."

So he had taken the bars home and hidden them—but, alas, his mother had found them, and soon she had discovered about Tom's find and how he had opened the parcel. She wouldn't believe that Ronnie didn't mean to be dishonest and had just taken them home and not meant to eat them. She went to Tom's mother and told her, and Tom, Ronnie and the other boy had all had a terrible scolding.

"And when we went and owned up to the postman, as Mother made us, he called us all dishonest," thought Ronnie. "And I wasn't. I didn't want to take the chocolate and I never ate one bit. Why do people keep thinking I am what I'm not?"

He went off to school, still miserable. He hadn't washed his hands, and Mr. Brown saw them as soon as he took his place in class.

"Ronnie! Your hands are too dirty to bear looking at! Go and wash them!"

Ronnie went to wash them. He ran the hot water and took up the soap. He squeezed it in his hands—and to his horror it flew straight out of the cloakroom window and disappeared! He stood still and stared after it.

He didn't dare to go and get it, in case Mr. Brown saw him. He thought he'd better say nothing at all. So he washed his hands as best he could, wiped most of the dirt off on the towel

and went back to class. Then another boy was sent to wash his hands, too, and he came back at once to say there was no soap there!

“Of course—that *would* happen!” thought Ronnie, in despair. Mr. Brown turned to him. “What did you do with the soap, Ronnie?” he said.

“There—there wasn’t any there,” said Ronnie.

“Then why didn’t you come and tell me that?” demanded Mr. Brown. “You are a very stupid boy. I don’t expect you to be able to wash your hands if there is no soap. What a silly, stupid boy you’re turning out to be, Ronnie!”

Ronnie went very red. He wasn’t silly, he wasn’t stupid. He knew that. Oh dear, people always kept saying he was what he wasn’t! He would never, never be able to stop them. It was just his bad luck.

He went out into the fields that afternoon after school. He wanted to be by himself. Things seemed to go wrong all the time. Perhaps he was one of the unlucky people of the world!

He sat down and heaved such an enormous sigh that somebody heard it. It was the gardener on the other side of the hedge. He had been sitting in the garden there, smoking his pipe, when he heard Ronnie’s enormous sigh.

He peered through the hedge and saw a very miserable boy. “Hey, there!” called the old fellow. “What’s up with *you*? You look like I do when the frost’s got all my nice little tomato plants! You come along in here and tell me what’s up with you. Your face is enough to turn the milk sour.”

Ronnie squeezed through the hedge. “Well, I should like to tell *somebody*,” he said. “You see, it’s like this—everybody thinks I’m selfish, or lazy, or stupid, or unkind, or dishonest, or something—all things I’m not! It’s just a lot of mistakes. But I don’t know how to make people think differently. I’m afraid I’m born to have bad luck!”

“Rubbish! Nonsense! Fiddlesticks!” said the old gardener, puffing away at his pipe. “Nobody’s born to have bad luck. Now, you tell me your troubles and I’ll show you how to mend them!”

So Ronnie told the old fellow all about forgetting his homework book, and being kept in, and getting home late and preventing his mother from catching the bus, and all about the soap that flew out of his hands, and how Mr. Brown called him stupid, and he even told him about the parcel Tom had found and opened, which had made people call Ronnie dishonest, when he really, really wasn’t! The old man listened and didn’t interrupt at all. When Ronnie had finished he nodded his head two or three times.

“What’s wrong with *you*,” he said, “is that you don’t know the right way to take hold of a nettle!”

Ronnie stared in surprise. What an odd thing to say! The old man nodded at him again. “No—I’m not mad, my boy! I’ve seen plenty like you, afraid to take hold of a nettle the right way. Now I’ll show you what I mean. See that stinging-nettle by you?”

“Yes,” said Ronnie. “If I touch it it will sting me.”

“Ah yes, so it will—but if you know the right way to handle a nettle it won’t sting you?” said the old gardener. “Now you look here—see that leaf, full of stinging barbs that will send poison down into your hand? Well, look—I’ve got hold of it—see? And look you there, it hasn’t stung me at all. Not a bit of it!”

“Why hasn’t it?” asked Ronnie, surprised.

“Because I took hold of it *firmly*,” said the old man. “Nettles are like all annoying, upsetting things—you have to take them firmly and they can’t do you any harm. If you’re

afraid of them, and don't face up to them, they'll sting you good and proper and make you as miserable as can be. No, my boy, you haven't been handling your nettles properly!"

"I don't quite see what you mean," said Ronnie. "I haven't any nettles."

"Oh yes you have," said the old man. "That was a nettle, your forgetting your homework book, and you let it sting you well, time and again! You got stung by your master's sharp words and your mother's anger! Now what you should have done to that nettle was to take hold of it firmly so that it couldn't sting at all!"

"Why—how could I do that?" asked Ronnie.

"Well, when you knew you'd forgotten your book and couldn't do your lesson, you should have gone to your master the very next morning and told him—and you should have said you were sorry, but you'd learn the lesson in Break, if that would do. That nettle wouldn't have stung you then! You wouldn't have been called stupid and lazy, you wouldn't have been kept in, you wouldn't have upset your mother. That was a good old stinging-nettle you touched!

"Oh, I see what you mean!" said Ronnie. "But—how could I have tackled that other stinging-nettle—when Tom opened that parcel and gave me the chocolate?"

"Grasp that nettle firmly, too, and it wouldn't sting you!" said the gardener. "You should have said, 'No, not for me, Tom. I'm not one for that kind of thing, and, what's more, my friends don't do that kind of thing, either!' And do you know what would have happened? Why, I guess young Tom would have packed that parcel up again, all red about the face, and gone to find the postman!"

"I wish I'd done that," said Ronnie. "I was afraid."

"Yes, you touched the nettle so timidly that it stung you for days!" said the old man. "And that soap, now! Well, it's an accident that might happen to anyone, having the soap fly out of their hands! A silly little nettle, that one! What's to prevent you going to your master and saying, 'Sir, I'm sorry, but the soap flew out of my hands and jumped out of the window. May I get it?'"

"I didn't dare to say that," said Ronnie.

"A pity!" said the old man. "Mr. Brown would have had a good laugh and said: 'Hurry and get it, and don't let that soap play tricks again!' I know Mr. Brown, and he likes a boy that grasps a nettle well."

"I think you're very wise," said Ronnie, after a bit. "How did you get to know all this?"

"Well, a gardener soon gets to know the way to treat nettles," said the old man, getting up. "And he should know how to treat the nettles that grow in our lives, too. You take hold of them firmly, wherever they grow, my boy—and, my word, you won't find people calling you names you don't deserve any more!"

Ronnie ran home. He was late, of course, and his mother looked up crossly. "Ronnie—I suppose you were late just to annoy me again! It's too bad of you!"

"A nettle, a nettle!" thought Ronnie. "Take hold of it firmly."

He spoke out loud. "Mother, I'll tell you exactly what happened—and if you like to scold me or punish me afterwards, well, you must, and I'll try and make up to you for being late. You see—I met an old man, and . . ." Ronnie told his mother everything. She listened in surprise. When he had finished she patted him on the shoulder for a moment.

"I wish I'd been able to tell you all that, Ronnie," she said. "I see now I should have, because you didn't know. Yes, grasp your nettles firmly, and nothing is ever quite so bad as it seems. You can get over all kinds of disappointments and difficulties if only you tackle them firmly! I'll help you! You'll do fine, you'll see!"

Well, that was a year ago, and Ronnie certainly is doing fine! He failed in the scholarship exam, but did he mope and grumble about it? Not he! He grasped that nettle firmly and said: “I’m not going to be beaten! I’ll sit for it again!”

He did, and he won it. A nasty, tough nettle, but he knew how to take hold of it!

Then his mother fell ill and there were such big doctor’s bills that Ronnie had to go without the new bicycle he so badly wanted. A very annoying nettle, because his old bike had fallen to bits.

What did he do? Well, he offered to work on Farmer Straw’s land for two hours after school each day, and in a few weeks’ time he had enough money to buy himself a bicycle!

Ronnie treats all his nettles like that. And now nobody calls him names he doesn’t deserve. Instead, Mr. Brown says he is a clever, hard-working and trustable fellow. His friends say he is a born leader, as honest as the day, and quite fearless in sticking up for what he thinks is right. And his mother—well, you’ll have to ask her what *she* thinks, and she’ll tell you a lot. It would make Ronnie blush to hear her! He is great friends with the old gardener now and very grateful to him for his queer advice.

“I do wish you could tell every boy and girl how to take hold of their nettles!” he said to the old gardener. Well, the old fellow can’t do that, so I said *I* would. And I have, haven’t I? Take hold of your nettles the right way and they won’t sting you at all!



# The Mouse and the Rat Robber

Mr. Tickle, the brownie, had a very large house. He had a lot of servants to keep it clean and tidy for him. There was Mrs. Trim the cook, Lucy-Loo the housemaid, Tippy the kitchen-maid, and Miss Needle the little sewing-maid.

Now one day Mrs. Trim the cook went down the garden to get some parsley. It was a nice warm day in the early spring and the birds were beginning to sing. Mrs. Trim sang a little song, too, as she went.

She passed the wood-shed—and suddenly she stopped. She heard a noise in there! What could it be?

Scrape, scrape, scrape, scabble, scabble, scabble, went the noise. Then it stopped. Then it started all over again. Scrape, scrape, scrape . . .

“Oooh! A mouse!” cried Mrs. Trim and gave a squeal. She couldn’t bear mice. She knew they wouldn’t hurt her. She knew a mouse would be far more frightened of her than she was of the mouse, but just because once, when she was a child, she had seen a grown-up scared of a little mouse, she was, too. So she stood there and squealed. “Oooh! A mouse! Oooh! I hope it won’t come out under the door.”

Lucy-Loo came running down the garden when she heard Mrs. Trim squeal. “What’s the matter?” she cried. “Have you hurt yourself?”

“There’s a mouse in the wood-shed!” said Mrs. Trim, and she pointed at the shut door with a trembling finger. “I’m sure there is. Oh, what shall we do, Lucy-Loo?”

Lucy-Loo gave a squeal, too. “A mouse! Oh, quick, let’s go before it runs at us!”

Scrape, scrape, scrape, scabble, scabble, scabble!

“It must be a very big mouse to make all that noise,” said Mrs. Trim, beginning to tremble. “Do you think we ought to tell Mr. Tickle?”

Tippy the kitchen-maid came down the garden to see what all the fuss was about. The others told her.

“There’s a mouse in there! Just fancy that! We’re so scared, Tippy.”

Tippy screamed. She didn’t know why she screamed, but she saw that the others were frightened, so she thought it would be a good thing to scream. Her scream made them jump.

The noise in the wood-shed stopped. “You’ve frightened it, Tippy,” said Mrs. Trim. “Oh, I hope it won’t come running out.”

The noise suddenly began again and everyone jumped. Scrape, scabble, scrape, scabble.

“That’s too big a noise for a mouse to make,” said Tippy. “Much too big. It must be a rat, not a mouse.”

Well, that made everyone squeal even more loudly! A rat! Terrible! “Rats bite, don’t they?” said Mrs. Trim, and she went quite pale. “Oh dear—are we going to have the place running with rats and mice? We shall have to tell Mr. Tickle.”

Miss Needle came down the garden to ask what the matter was.

“It’s a mouse!” said Mrs. Trim.

“No, a rat!” said Tippy, quite enjoying herself now. “Oh, it’s awful, isn’t it! A rat in the wood-shed! I’ll never dare come and get firewood now.”

SCRAPE, SCRABBLE, SCRAPE, CRASH!

All the four women jumped. What a noise! And what was that crash at the end? Something had overturned. They stood and listened, trembling. They heard a hissing noise. Then there came the sound of wooden boxes falling—thud, crash, thud.

“It’s not a mouse or a rat, it’s a burglar!” cried Lucy-Loo.

“There’s a man in there!” squealed Tippy.

“I’m going to faint,” said Mrs. Trim.

“We must fetch Mr. Tickle,” said Miss Needle.

They rushed off down the garden, Tippy giving little squeals all the way. They found Mr. Tickle, the brownie, standing looking very cross indeed in his study.

“Where have you all been?” he said sternly. “The dinner is burnt up on the stove. I’ve been ringing the bell for at least ten minutes.”

“Oh, Mr. Tickle—we thought there was a mouse in the wood-shed!” began Mrs. Trim.

“Don’t be foolish,” said Mr. Tickle. “It won’t hurt you.”

“But then we thought it must be a rat!” said Lucy-Loo, giving a little scream at the end. “Oh, Mr. Tickle, a rat! Ooooooh!”

“Silly girl,” said Mr. Tickle, looking crosser than ever. “It was shut in the wood-shed, wasn’t it? Why didn’t you get the dog and open the door of the shed?”

“Well, we don’t think it’s a rat now,” said Miss Needle. “Mr. Tickle—we think there’s a robber there! There was *such* a noise! Oooh—a robber! How can we sleep in our beds at night?”

“Fiddlesticks, rubbish, stuff and nonsense!” said Mr. Tickle, getting more and more angry. “What do you mean by all this silly fuss? Here’s the dinner burnt, and all of you in a state of trouble! You want shaking. You want spanking. You want——”

“Oh, don’t scold us, Mr. Tickle,” wept Mrs. Trim. “Oh, look—there’s the village policemen—both of them together. I’ll call them in and they can arrest the robber.” Before anyone could stop her, Mrs. Trim had run out into the road and called in the policemen. They looked rather astonished, but when they heard there was a robber to arrest they were quite pleased. “By the noise in the shed there might be *two* robbers,” said Tippy, and she gave another squeal.

“One more squeal from you, Tippy, and you catch the next bus home and stay there,” said Mr. Tickle.

Tippy didn’t squeal again. They all went down the garden, Mr. Tickle leading the way. They came to the woodshed.

“Who’s going to open the door?” said Mrs. Trim, beginning to tremble again. “Oh my—there’s the noise again!”

Sure enough, there was a noise in the wood-shed—a scrapey noise, and then a hiss. Mr. Tickle listened, and then he laughed.

“Ha ha, ho ho, he he! I will now show you the mouse-rat-robber!”

He turned the handle and flung open the door. The two policemen got ready to catch a robber if one appeared.

Then, in the darkness of the shed, everyone saw something crawling round, something that made a scrapey noise with its clawed feet, something that carried a big shell on its back!

“It’s my tortoise,” said Mr. Tickle. “I put him in a box up on the shelf to sleep for the winter—and I suppose he woke up on this mild day and thought he would like a walk. So he gave one of his little hisses and tried to scabble his way out of the box. When he did get out, he knocked a lot of things down—see them on the floor! And he fell down himself and began to crawl all over the place.”

“Oh,” said Mrs. Trim and felt ashamed of herself.

“It’s a pity none of you opened the door and looked to see what was making the noise,” said one of the policemen, quite disgusted.

“Wasting our time like this!” said the other.

The tortoise crawled out into the sunshine. “So you’ve woken up at last!” said Mr. Tickle. “Well, take a walk if you like. Eat some grass for your dinner—you’ll be lucky to get any dinner. Mine is all burnt up.”

Mrs. Trim went red. So did Lucy-Loo. Tippy hid behind Miss Needle.

“We will none of us have any dinner,” said Mr. Tickle, “unless, of course, you like to eat it now it’s burnt. Any more fuss about a mouse-rat-robber that doesn’t exist, and you’ll all pack and go home. I hope you are ashamed of yourselves! To think that not one of you had the pluck to open that door—why, the six-year-old girl next door would have come in to do it for you.” Mr. Tickle walked off.

“I shan’t be silly about mice or rats again,” said Mrs. Trim. “Here we’ve lost a good dinner, got two policemen in for nothing, and nearly lost our jobs. All because we were afraid of a mouse that wasn’t there!”

What would *you* have done? Opened the door and peeped in? Of course you would, and so would I!

# The Magnificent Treacle Pudding

Once a year Pinch and Grab, the goblins, went to stay with their Uncle Bong. Bong was a kind and gentle fellow, always pleased to see Pinch and Grab, and anxious to give them a good time.

But Pinch and Grab were not very nice guests to have. They liked the best of everything for themselves, and if nobody gave it to them they took it!

Pinch sat in Uncle Bong's own armchair each evening. Grab read his uncle's paper and didn't pass it to him till he had finished. Pinch took more than his fair share of the sugar for his porridge in the morning. Grab took so much marmalade that there was hardly any left in the pot for Uncle Bong by the time he was ready for it.

"They're young and they'll learn better," Uncle Bong kept on saying to himself. But they didn't learn better. Each time they visited him they seemed to be worse!

"I think Uncle Bong's a mingy old stingy!" said Pinch to Grab. "He never gives us enough to eat."

"He's a mingy old stingy and a stingy old mingy!" said Grab. "And he's a nasty old meanie."

"And a mean old nasty!" said Pinch. Then they both laughed and felt very clever. But Uncle Bong heard them and was sad. He told Dame Hurry-Round all about his nephews and how sad they made him.

"Well, I tell you this, they wouldn't make *me* sad, they would make me VERY ANGRY!" said Dame Hurry-Round. "You give them ginger cakes and chocolate buns and plum-pie—my word, *I'd* give them slap biscuits, spank pudding and smack tart. That's what *I'd* give them!"

That made Uncle Bong laugh. "Well, I don't think I will be unkind to them," he said. "And I don't want you to be either. Maybe they will learn better ways."

"And maybe they will learn worse!" said Dame Hurry-Round. "Scamps! Rogues! Rascals! They just do what they like with you!"

Now one day Uncle Bong had to go out, but he left a very nice dinner for Pinch and Grab, and he asked Dame Hurry-Round if she would mind just looking in and seeing that the two goblins were having enough to eat.

"I've left them cold meat and pickles and a nice treacle pudding," he said. "It's not an enormous pudding because there are only the two goblins in for dinner to-day—but there should be enough for two big helpings each."

"I'll look round just about dinner-time," said Dame Hurry-Round, "and if I hear those two goblins grumbling . . ."

"Now promise me you won't do anything unkind," begged Uncle Bong. "Do promise me."

"Oh, I won't turn them upside down and spank them with my slipper if that's what you mean," said Dame Hurry-Round. "I'll be quite kind!"

At dinner-time Dame Hurry-Round put on her shawl and bonnet and went to see if Pinch and Grab were getting their meal all right. She heard them talking as she passed the window.

"Only cold meat and pickles! What a lunch!"

“And this tiny little treacle pudding! Only enough for one of us. What a mingy old meanie Uncle Bong is.”

“And a mean old mingy,” said Grab. “I could do with a treacle pudding five times as big as this!”

“Sh!” said Pinch. “There’s Dame Hurry-Round. Be careful what you say. She doesn’t like us.”

“She’s a silly old billy,” began Grab, but he stopped because Dame Hurry-Round was now looking in at the window.

“Did I hear you say that your pudding wasn’t big enough for you?” she said. “Dear, dear! What a shame! Perhaps I can do something about it for you.”

Pinch and Grab looked at her in surprise. “What can you do?” asked Pinch.

“Well, I’ve a spell here, a Get-Big spell,” said Dame Hurry-Round, and she handed them a small box. “Blow the powder out of the box over the pudding and shout ‘Big, bigger, biggest! Big, bigger, biggest’ at the top of your voice. Then that little pudding will grow into the most magnificent treacle pudding you ever saw in your life.”

The goblins’ eyes almost fell out of their heads. What luck! Who would have thought Dame Hurry-Round would be so kind? Grab grabbed the little box. He opened it and blew the powder out all over the pudding. Then both the goblins yelled at the top of their voices.

“Big, bigger, biggest! Big, bigger, biggest!”

And that pudding began to grow. It was most astonishing to see it. It grew as big as a football in a trice. It was too big for its dish and the treacle slopped over on to the table. The goblins watched it in the greatest delight.

“What a feast we’ll have!” cried Grab.

“We can have fifty helpings each!” shouted Pinch. “Look at it now—as wide as the table itself—and, oh my, look at the treacle pouring over the edge on to the floor. Mind your feet, Grab!”

The treacle swirled round Grab’s feet, and he was stuck in it. Then it swirled round Pinch’s ankles and he was stuck, too.

“I say, it’s about big enough now, isn’t it?” said Pinch, trying to wade out of the treacle. “It’s simply magnificent. But really I don’t want it any bigger. It’s making an awful mess.”

“Yes, it is. Uncle Bong won’t much like trying to clear it up, will he?” said Grab. “Look out, Pinch—some of the pudding is breaking off. You’ll be buried in it!”

Pinch just got out of the way in time. He looked rather alarmed.

“I say—let’s have some to eat and then get out of the room,” said Pinch. “Do you know how to stop it growing? I don’t.”

But before they could get out of the room, the pudding had grown as far as the door and the window, and the goblins couldn’t squeeze past it. They were now really frightened.

“I’m covered in treacle!” said Pinch. “Get away, you horrible pudding, you!”

“It’s growing over me!” cried Grab, beginning to fight the pudding. “I’m standing in it! Get back, pudding, get back! Take that—and that—and that!”

The pudding took all the blows and didn’t seem to mind them at all. Pinch and Grab began to scream for help. “Help! Save us! HELP!”

Uncle Bong was coming home at that moment and he heard them. He raced to his cottage. He looked in at the window, just in time to see Pinch and Grab being quite buried by the magnificent treacle pudding!

“What’s happening!” he shouted. “Pinch, Grab, what are you doing?”

“Stop the pudding from growing bigger!” shouted Grab, kicking and hitting for all he was worth, and getting more and more smothered in the treacle.

“What! Is it my treacle pudding?” said Uncle Bong in amazement, and he called out sharply:

“Small, smaller, smallest! Small, smaller, smallest!”

At once the pudding shrank back to its right size, and Pinch and Grab sank into chairs, weeping bitterly. They were in a terrible mess. So was the kitchen.

“Who did this?” said Uncle Bong sternly.

“Dame Hurry-Round,” wept Pinch and Grab. “The horrid old meanie!”

“Why, she promised she wouldn’t be unkind,” said Uncle Bong in surprise. Just then someone touched him on the shoulder. It was Dame Hurry-Round, her eyes twinkling.

“Unkind!” she said, as if she was most astonished “*Unkind*, did you say, Bong? I heard those goblins saying how mean you were to leave them such a miserable dinner—so what did I do but give them a spell to make the pudding bigger. How was I to know they wouldn’t have the sense to make it small again or stop it growing? I was as kind as I could be, and don’t you dare to say anything else.”

She looked so fierce that Uncle Bong didn’t say a word. But her eyes still twinkled at him.

“And as for these mean, miserable little goblins, with their grumbling and fault-finding, if *they* dare to say a word, I’ll not only make that pudding big again, I’ll make it chase them round the village and back! And you’ll please see that they clean up your kitchen for you, Bong. *Do you hear me*, Pinch and Grab?”

They certainly did. They shook like jellies when they heard her stern voice. And what a time they had clearing up that kitchen! There was treacle everywhere. Dame Hurry-Round came to see them that evening, to find out if they had cleaned up the kitchen nicely.

“Yes, you have,” she said, “so you may come round to supper with me. I’ve a nice treat for you. You come, too, Bong dear.”

In great delight the two goblins washed and put on their best suits, wondering what kind of a meal Dame Hurry-Round would have for them. She was a wonderful cook.

But, alas, when they sat down at the table, what should she bring in, hot and steaming, but a big treacle pudding! That was too much for Pinch and Grab! They turned pale and rushed straight out of the room. And they didn’t come back again, either.

“What strange behaviour!” said Dame Hurry-Round, pretending to be most surprised. “Well, well—there’ll be all the more for you and me, Bong. And let’s hope those nephews of yours won’t be quite such mean old greedies in future.”

Well, I don’t know about that—but I do know that neither Pinch nor Grab have ever been able to sit at a table with treacle pudding again.

# He Couldn't Be Trusted

"Rilloby!" called Dame Get-Along. "Will you call at the butcher's for me on your way down to the village and tell him I've got my two brothers coming to supper to-night and will he please send up extra meat?"

"Oh yes, Dame Get-Along, with pleasure!" said Rilloby, and he skipped along with his basket.

But, of course, he didn't remember! Rilloby couldn't be trusted with any message or any job. He either forgot, or he couldn't be bothered, or he did it so badly that he might just as well not have done it at all!

There was the time when a pipe burst in Mister Doodle's bathroom, and he leaned out of the window and yelled to Rilloby: "Rilloby, get the plumber, quick! My pipe's burst, and I've got my thumb over the hole. Fetch him, will you?"

"Of course, of course!" cried Rilloby. But he met Winky, who had a new bicycle and said he would let him have a ride on it. He didn't get to the plumber's till hours later, and by that time the man had gone out. So poor Mister Doodle had to stand all morning in his cold bathroom with his thumb over the hole in the pipe!

"You just can't trust Rilloby," he grumbled. "He always says he'll do this, that and the other, but he doesn't! He's not to be trusted!"

Then there was the time when Rilloby promised his next-door neighbour that he would look after his cat whilst he was away—and he forgot all about it! So when his friend came back the poor cat was as thin as a rake.

"Well—I thought at least you could be trusted to feed my cat!" said his friend Pippy, almost in tears. "Poor, poor Whiskers—I'd never have gone away and left him if I'd thought you wouldn't feed him."

"So sorry!" said Rilloby, and he really did feel very sorry about it. But all the same, when Dame Ricky asked him to feed her hens and give them water while she was in bed with a bad leg he forgot after the first day—and the hens became very thin and didn't lay any more eggs.

"That fellow simply can't be trusted!" said Dame Ricky. "He's always so ready to promise anything—and then he doesn't do it. I'd rather be like old Mister Mean—not promise anything! At least you know where you are with him."

At last everyone got so annoyed with Rilloby that they decided to do something about it. Why should they put up with him when he behaved like that? He deserved a jolly good lesson!

"And we'll give it to him!" said Dame Ricky, who felt very angry about her hens. "Now—let's all think hard and see what we can do to show Rilloby what he's really like."

"I've got an idea!" said Pippy, Rilloby's neighbour. "It's his birthday, soon, isn't it?"

"Yes—in two weeks' time," said Mister Doodle. "What's your idea, Pippy?"

"Well—shall we all get very excited about it and plan a big party for him and lots of presents—and let him know all about it? And then shall we do as he does—not bother—forget—and make him see how horrid it is when something is promised and not done?" said Pippy.

"It seems rather unkind," said Dame Get-Along. "But, on the other hand, it may be kind in the end, if it teaches him how horrid it is to be untrustworthy. A trustable person is such a good friend to have. Rilloby is no good at all. He makes other people suffer so much through his carelessness."

"My poor cat almost died through him," said Pippy. "I think it's time Rilloby had a taste of his own medicine."

Well, that was all settled then. Rilloby was to see what it felt like when people planned things and promised them and then didn't remember or didn't bother!

Rilloby was very pleased indeed when everyone began to talk about his birthday. It sounded to him as if he was going to have a very good time!

"I'll make you a fine cake, Rilloby," said Dame Get-Along. "Let me see now—have I got any sugar roses? Yes, I have. And plenty of candles to put on it, too. Yes, I'll see if I can make you a really grand cake!

"Oh, *thank* you!" said Rilloby, beaming.

"And I'll get my friend Jinky, the conjurer, along," said Mister Doodle. "He's a wonderful fellow for a party. You should see the things he does! Why, at the last party he poured six bottles of lemonade out of a small teapot! Think of that!"

"Oooh—I'd love all that lemonade!" said Rilloby. "There would be enough for everyone!"

"I'll try and make you a musical box," said Pippy, who was very clever at that kind of thing. "One that will play all sorts of dance tunes for you!"

"Oh, thank you!" said Rilloby. "We could dance at my party then. That would be lovely!"

"I'll bake you some biscuits and buns, and make some of my special ice-cream," said Dame Ricky. Rilloby beamed. What a lovely time he was going to have!

Other people promised all kinds of things, too. "I will send you along a new suit to wear at the party," said Mrs. Thimble. "I've a bit of red and gold stuff that would suit you very well, Rilloby."

"A party suit!" cried Rilloby, looking down at his rather dirty old suit. "Just what I want!"

"And if I've time I'll go along to the Long-Tail Bird and ask him for one of his fallen feathers for your hat," said Trotty. "It's nice to have a fine, long feather in a hat."

Well, Rilloby was quite overjoyed to hear of all these wonderful things. He sat down at once and wrote out invitations to his birthday party. He sent the cards to his three brothers, his two sisters, his six aunts, his five uncles, and his seven cousins.

"Do come!" he wrote. "There will be biscuits and buns and a fine, big birthday cake with sugar roses and candles. There will be ice-cream to eat and a new musical box to dance to. We shall have a wonderful conjurer to do tricks for us. I am having a red and gold suit and a feather in my hat!"

Everyone accepted, of course. They thought it sounded a most wonderful party. Rilloby was beside himself with joy. What a lot of good friends he had! Fancy their promising him so many things!

His birthday came. He had plenty of cards, of course. He rubbed his hands in glee when he thought of the afternoon. He wondered when Mrs. Thimble would send him along his party suit. He was longing to try it on.

At half-past three Rilloby felt worried. The party was to begin at four. But Mrs. Thimble hadn't brought his suit and Trotty hadn't been along with the feather to put in his hat.

Rilloby was dressed in his dirty old suit, for he hadn't bothered to wash, brush or mend it because he meant to wear the new one that Mrs. Thimble had promised him. At five to four he



was very worried indeed.

“I shall have no time to change into my new suit when Mrs. Thimble brings it!” he groaned. “Oh dear, oh dear! Here come my first guests!”

They were his sisters and brothers. They looked surprised to see Rilloby so dirty and untidy.

“My party suit hasn’t arrived yet,” he explained. “It will come soon. Ah—here is Mrs. Thimble. I expect she’s got it with her.”

But she hadn’t! When Rilloby asked her about it, she looked quite puzzled. Then she said, “Oh yes—I believe I did promise you one. But I forgot all about it, Rilloby. Anyway, you forgot to deliver a whole lot of parcels for me once, do you remember? So that makes us even, doesn’t it? I forgave you, and you must forgive me!”

Poor Rilloby! He knew then that he would have to wear his dirty old suit, and how ashamed he felt! But there was no help for it. At least his *hat* would look gay when Trotty brought along the feather!

But Trotty didn’t bring it. “Oh, sorry, old man,” he said to Rilloby. “I couldn’t be bothered to go along to the Long-Tail Bird. He lives so far away. So sorry.”

And then Pippy came along—but he brought no beautiful musical box with him! “Did I say I’d make you one? Oh yes, I did!” he said. “Well, I’ve been awfully busy, Rilloby. So sorry. I know you’ll forgive me, because do you remember how you forgot to feed my cat when I was away—so that makes us even, doesn’t it? We’ve both been forgetful!”

Rilloby went red. Then he saw Dame Ricky bustling in. “Ah—she said she’d bring me biscuits, buns and ice-cream!” thought Rilloby and ran to meet her. But her hands were empty!

“I didn’t have time to go and get the flour and sugar from the grocer for the biscuits,” she said. “So sorry, Rilloby. And I’m afraid I forgot all about the ice-cream! Still, you’re so forgetful yourself that you’ll understand that. You remember, don’t you, how you forgot to feed my hens for me? Well, I’m as sorry about forgetting the ice-cream as you were about my hens.”

Then Mister Doodle came—and he hadn’t brought his friend Jinky, the conjurer! “It was rather a bother to find his address,” he told Rilloby. “I do hope you won’t mind my not bringing him. I expect you remember that it was too much trouble for you to fetch the plumber for me once—so you’ll forgive me for not bringing Jinky!”

And then Dame Get-Along arrived—without any birthday cake! Rilloby almost burst into tears.

“I’m *so* sorry, Rilloby!” said Dame Get-Along. “Did I really say I’d make you a cake? I’m getting forgetful in my old age! But there, you’re so forgetful yourself that you won’t mind, I’m sure!”

But Rilloby did mind. He minded dreadfully. It was his birthday, and this was his party—and here he was in a dirty old suit, with no feather in his hat, no buns, biscuits or cake or ice-cream to eat, no conjurer or musical box, nothing at all! And all his brothers and sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins to feed and entertain!

His oldest aunt, Aunt Jerusha, was very angry indeed. “A party without anything to eat! And you in a dirty, torn suit, Rilloby! You want a good whipping, that’s what you want. I’m going home!”

Well, everyone went home, of course, and Rilloby was left alone. He sat in a corner and cried. He sobbed very bitterly indeed. “I see what they did!” he wept. “They did it to punish

me! I forget things so often, I don't bother myself about other people as I should, I'm careless and thoughtless. And now they've shown me what it feels like when people behave as I do."

Tears ran down his cheeks and dripped on to his shoes. "I thought they liked me and they don't. They're all laughing at me, and they're glad they've made me miserable on my birthday!"

"Oh no we aren't," said a voice, and Pippy put his head in at the window. "We're sorry for you. But we knew we'd have to teach you a lesson. Have you learnt it, Rilloby?"

"Of course! I'll never, never forget to-day," sobbed Rilloby.

"Well—come along into my house, then," said Pippy, smiling. "We've got a small birthday cake for you, and some buns and a little ice-cream. And just a few tiny presents! You'll find in my house all the people who taught you this horrid lesson—so if you like to come along and tell them what you've just told me, we'll have a little birthday party after all!"

Rilloby dried his eyes. He cheered up. He went with Pippy to his house and saw Dame Get-Along there and all the rest. And, because he was a sensible fellow after all, he told them that he *had* learnt his lesson and was glad of it. Then they all sat down and had a very nice little party indeed. Rilloby turned over a new leaf after that, as you can guess—but his Aunt Jerusha never spoke to him again!

# Patter's Adventure

In a hole in a bank at the bottom of Lillian's garden lived a mouse family. They were long-tailed field-mice, pretty little things, and as playful as could be.

Every day the mother mouse ran off to get food for the family. She knew exactly where to get it. Lillian kept two doves in a cage, and she fed them each day, sometimes with grain and sometimes with bread.

The mouse was small enough to creep under the big cage where the doves lived and take a piece of bread. Before the doves could peck her she was out again, running down the garden with the bread. Then the little mouse family would have a lovely feast.

Now one day Patter, the youngest of the family, wanted an adventure. He had often heard his mother talk of the wonderful place where bread could always be found, and he wanted to see it for himself. So he followed his mother and saw where she went.

But as she came back she saw Patter. She dropped the bread at once and flew at him. "Patter! You bad, naughty little mouse! How dare you come out alone like this! Don't you know that Bubbles the cat is about?"

Patter had no idea what a cat was. He stared at his mother, and his tiny nose went up and down. He curled his long tail round his little body and looked miserable.

"What's a cat?" he said.

"Oh, the baby! Fancy asking what CAT is!" said his mother. "You'll know soon enough one day if you run about alone when you're no more than a few days old!"

She took Patter back and gave him such a talking-to that he didn't stir out of the nest for days. Then he suddenly felt that he must have an adventure again. And this time, he thought, he would go by himself right up to the doves' cage and find a bit of bread on his own. Then he could eat it all without having to share it with four brothers and sisters.

So off he went, a little tiny thing almost small enough to pop under a thimble!

Now Bubbles the cat had three growing kittens. They were five weeks old and very playful. They rolled about, they climbed out of their basket, and they ran unsteadily over the kitchen floor. They often tried to catch their mother's tail.

"It is time you stopped being babies," said Bubbles one night. "You must learn what it is to hunt for mice. One day you will have to catch food for yourselves, and I must teach you."

"What are mice?" asked Ginger, who was the biggest kitten. Bubbles was astonished.

"What! You don't know what mice are! How ignorant you are! I will catch one and bring it in for you. You shall play with it, catch it for yourselves and eat it. Mice are very tasty."

So out Bubbles went, the same night that Patter was off on his adventure. She knew that mice went to the doves' cage, because she had smelt them. Perhaps there would be a nice lively mouse to-night. She would catch him and take him to her kittens!

Patter was running down the garden path to the cage. What a dear little mouse, with his woffly nose and long, thin tail and fine whiskers! The owl didn't see him or she would have pounced on him at once. The rat wasn't about that night or he would have had him for his dinner.

But Bubbles the cat was waiting by the cage. Patter didn't know that. He came to the cage and sniffed. He could smell CAT, but he didn't know what it was, so he wasn't afraid. He could smell bread, too, and that made his nose twitch more than ever.

Bubbles smelt him and sat there without moving even a paw. Patter ran nearer. He was just about to squeeze under the cage when he felt a strong paw pounce on him. He gave a loud squeak. "Eeeeeee!"

He wriggled, but he couldn't get away. The paw held him, and he felt sharp claws sticking into him as soon as he moved. He was terribly afraid. Was this CAT?

The paw moved and scraped him away from the cage. Then hot breath came over him and something sniffed him all over. Then, oh tails and whiskers, the mouth opened and Patter went inside! He was in the cat's mouth, surrounded by sharp teeth.

He squealed again. He was not hurt, because Bubbles hadn't scratched or bitten him. No—she wanted to take him, whole and unhurt, to her three kittens to play with. They could chase him, pounce on him, throw him into the air, and then eat him for their supper. She would teach them what Mouse was.

She padded to the kitchen window, still holding Patter in her hot mouth. His tail hung out from between her teeth. He squealed and squealed. Bubbles leapt up to the window-sill and dropped down into the kitchen. She purred, and her three kittens ran to her.

She dropped Patter on the floor, and he stared round at the wondering kittens. "There," said Bubbles. "That is a mouse. Sniff him well. All mice smell the same. Then chase him and see if you can catch him."

The kittens stared doubtfully at the mouse. Then one put out a paw to him. Patter leapt away and ran into a corner. The kitten ran after him.

Somebody was sitting in the kitchen rocking-chair. It was being rocked to and fro, to and fro. Suddenly the rocking stopped, and a voice called out in horror: "My goodness! There's a mouse running round the kitchen! My goodness!"

Up got the person in the rocking-chair and rushed out of the kitchen. She went to find Lillian.

"Can you come, quickly?" she panted. "You keep pet mice, don't you, so you're not afraid of them. There's a mouse in the kitchen! Bubbles brought it in for her kittens, but it's alive and running round. I can't bear it!"

Lillian went into the kitchen. She put Bubbles outside and shut the door. The kittens were still staring at the mouse, not feeling very sure about it. Patter was not at all sure about the kittens either. He felt that he would like to play with them—but they were so big!

Lillian saw him. "Oh, what a darling little field-mouse!" she said. "Go away, kittens, don't hurt it." She bent down to get it, but Patter, seeing such an enormous person suddenly bending over him, darted under a small table. Lillian moved the table and put out her hand to catch Patter. He jumped away and ran right into the three kittens. Ginger put out a paw and tried to claw him. He didn't like that. He ran back under the table again.

And there Lillian caught him gently in her hand. She closed her fingers round him so that only his little woffly nose showed, and his tail hung out at the back.

"You're sweet!" she said. "I'll show you to Mummy. You're too little to be out in the night by yourself. Whatever shall I do with you?"

She took the mouse to her mother. "Look," she said, "a baby field-mouse. Isn't he sweet? What shall I do with him? He'll be caught by Bubbles again, or an owl, if I set him free in the darkness outside."

“Well, dear, put him with your own pet mice,” said her mother. “One of them died to-day, didn’t he? Well, let this little thing take his place. He’ll be quite happy with the others and much safer than running about by himself.”

“Will he really?” said Lillian. “I never thought of that! I’ll put him into my mouse-cage now.”

The mouse-cage was outside on the verandah. It was too smelly to be in the house. There were three mice there, a black, a brown, and a black-and-white. The little all-white one, Pippa, had died that morning. In the cage was a ladder for the mice to climb up and down, a dish of water and plenty of food. At the top of the cage was a shut-in place, full of straw, which was the bedroom of the mice, very warm and cosy.

Lillian lifted off the glass top, and slipped Patter inside. He was frightened now. He didn’t like his adventure any more. He wanted to get back home to his mother and her nest. But he knew he would never, never find the way. Lillian shone a torch into the cage and watched him.

He ran up the ladder and down. What an exciting place he had come to. But he couldn’t get out of it. He sniffed here and he sniffed there—but there was no way out at all.

He could smell other mice. Where were they? He ran up a twig that was set there to lead to the bedroom and saw a round hole with straw sticking out. In a trice he was in the hole.

A ball of mice was curled up in a corner. Patter nosed his way to it and it dissolved into three surprised little pet mice. They all sniffed at Patter.

“He’s just a baby,” said Frisky.

“Better make room for him,” said Whisky.

“Come along then,” said Nipper, and into the ball of mice crept Patter, happy and pleased. He cuddled in, wrapped his tail round everybody, stuck his nose into his paws and went to sleep.

His mother was upset when he didn’t come back. “The cat’s got him,” she said.

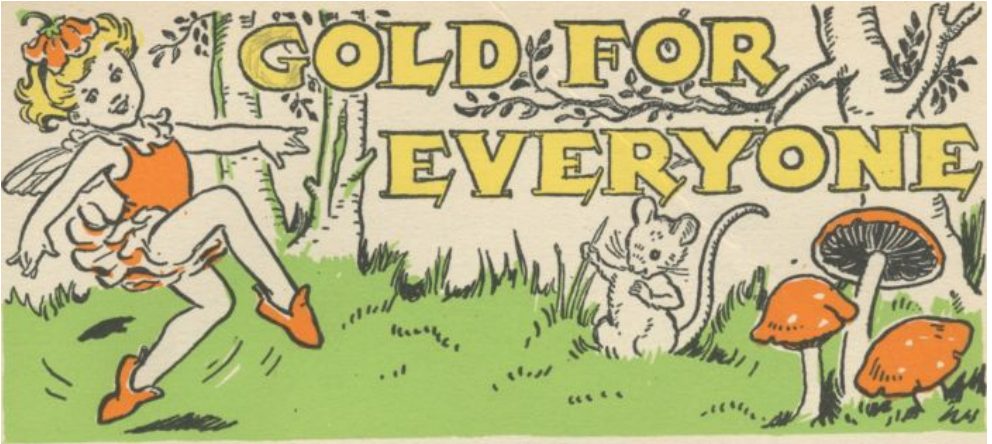
Bubbles felt sure her three kittens had eaten him. “Did he taste nice?” she asked.

The three kittens felt certain that the mouse had escaped down a hole somewhere, but they didn’t dare to tell their mother that. They knew they should have caught him—but they had been just a tiny bit afraid of the jumpity mouse. So they said nothing at all, but Ginger went and sat by a hole in the wall for a very long time.

Patter is still living with Frisky, Whisky and Nipper, and is as happy as the day is long. His nose is still woffly, his tail is longer than ever, and his whiskers are finer. Would you like to see him? He is a real live mouse and this is a real, true story. He lives in a mouse-cage on my verandah, and we feed him every day.

“Eee!” he says and runs up his little wooden ladder to greet us. “Eeee!” Wouldn’t you love a pet mouse like that?

# Gold For Everyone



Once upon a time, in the month of June, a small elf danced through the woods on her way to the fields. She sang as she went, a queer, happy little song, in a voice like the twitter of swallows:

“Gold! Gold!  
That shines like the sun,  
Gold for me  
And for everyone!”

Now just as she came to the edge of the wood near the stile that led into the fields she heard a noise. She stopped and listened.

“Urrrrr! Urrrrr-urrrr!”

“It’s somebody snoring!” said the elf and tiptoed round the bush to see who it was. And there, lying hunched up against a silver birch tree, was an old, wrinkled man. Clutched in one hand was a small bag that even in his sleep he held tightly.

“Why, I do believe it’s old Gold-Fingers, the wizard!” said the elf in surprise, half-frightened at the sight of the famous old man lying there.

“Urrrrr, urrrr-urrrr!” snored the wizard. He was so very sound asleep that the elf thought she could quite safely look at him very closely. So this was the richest man in all the kingdom! This was Gold-Fingers, who was so clever and so cunning that it was said he could get gold out of a stone. He had a castle whose cellars were stacked with sacks of gold and with chests of gleaming jewels.

The elf knelt down before him and looked at him earnestly. What an ugly fellow! What a lot of wrinkles he had! What an unkind mouth, with lips so thin that they could hardly be seen.

“He may be rich and clever, but he’s not at all nice,” said the elf to herself. “And how unhappy he looks when he is asleep. I wonder why. He is so rich that surely he can buy all the happiness in the world!”

The old wizard had hardly any hair on his head. He had so many hues and wrinkles on his face that it was quite impossible to count them. The elf tried to, but she gave it up when she got to forty-nine.

She got tired of looking at such an ugly, miserable fellow. She stood up and began to dance lightly again, forgetting all about the wizard. She sang her little song:

“Gold! Gold!  
That shines like the sun,  
Gold for me  
And for everyone!”

The word “gold” awoke the wizard at once. He opened his eyes under their enormous shaggy eyebrows, clutched his bag closely to him, and stared at the dancing elf.

She was so very pretty and light. Her voice was gay and happy, and her wings lifted her a little now and again. But the wizard didn’t see her prettiness. He only heard her song about gold. He sat upright.

“Hey!” he said. “Where’s this gold you are singing about?”

The elf stopped dancing and looked at him. “Haven’t you got enough gold without bothering about mine?” she said.

“You tell me where it is,” said the wizard.

“Well, you tell me something first,” said the elf, and she went close to the wizard. “How did you get all these ugly wrinkles?”

“I’ve had a hard life,” said Gold-Fingers. “It’s not easy to get rich, you know. You have to work and work and work.”

“Oh,” said the elf. She touched his bald head, with its few hairs sticking up here and there. “Where has your hair gone to?” she said. “Hardly anyone in Fairyland has a bald head. It looks shocking to me.”



The elf tiptoed round the bush.



The elf knelt down before him and looked at him earnestly.

The wizard frowned. “Worry takes hair away!” he said. “I’ve had a lot of worry in my life. Getting rich is a worrying thing, you know.”

“Is it?” said the elf, who never had more than sixpence in her pocket and hadn’t any idea at all how to get rich. “Now tell me, wizard—why is your mouth so hard and unkind, and why are your lips so thin? I can hardly see them!”

“You have to learn to be hard if you are going to be as rich as I am,” said the wizard. “Soft people are foolish! The clever ones are never too kind or generous. A little hardness stiffens people up. If they don’t pay me their rent, out they go! If they don’t pay me their bills, into prison they’re thrown! That soon teaches them to be sensible.”

“I suppose you must have done many hard, unkind things to make your face like that,” said the elf. “What do you use your gold for, wizard? To buy happiness?”

The wizard frowned, and his shaggy brows came right over his piercing eyes. “I have tried to buy happiness,” he said. “I’ve tried to buy love, too, and friends.”

“Well, you don’t *look* happy!” said the elf. “You look a bag of misery!”

“It’s queer,” said the wizard, “but it seems that the things I’d like, now that I’m old, aren’t to be bought with gold. I can’t seem to buy even a small bit of love with it.”



“There you are!” said the elf, waving her tiny hand at the gleaming flowers.

“I’ve got plenty of love,” said the elf. “My mother loves me and my brothers and sisters. My old aunt loves me and so do all my friends. But I don’t pay them gold for it, of course. I



haven't any."

"Well, why did you sing that song about gold for you and everyone?" asked the wizard impatiently. "Didn't you mean it?"

"Of course I meant it," said the elf, and she stood up and began to dance again. "It's marvellous gold—gold that shines and glows, gold that stretches for miles, gold that I shall store away for ever and ever."

The wizard's eyes gleamed. He got up and took hold of the elf roughly. "Now you just show me where this gold is!" he cried. "If it belongs to everyone, it's mine, too. I shall store it away, like you."

The elf cried out, but the wizard would not take his cruel fingers from her small arm. "Well, come with me," she said. "I'll show you. It's the most beautiful gold in the world."

She climbed over the stile, ran across a lane, and then made her way through a gap in a hawthorn hedge there. Beyond lay a great field of buttercups, all blossoming in a glory of yellow gold.

"There you are!" said the elf, waving her tiny hand at the gleaming flowers. "There's my gold—and yours if you want it—and everyone's. Did you ever see such a wonderful sight in your life? But oh, wizard, don't take it away; leave it here for everyone to see and love!"

The wizard stared at the buttercups, that stretched away in a great golden carpet. His face grew hard.

"So this is your gold!" he cried, and he kicked at the buttercups. "What a stupid joke! You naughty little storyteller—you said you had gold that you were going to store away for ever!"

"And so I am!" cried the elf, stamping her foot on the grass. "I shall store it away in my memory, tuck the picture of this buttercup field into my mind, and remember it for ever and ever! Look at it, look at it, Gold-Fingers—surely you love it, too, and want to store it away?"

"Bah!" said the wizard and trampled down the nearest buttercups. "You're mad! What are buttercups? Just weeds. And you make all this song and dance about them. You don't know what gold is. I do!"

And without another glance at the gleaming, golden field the wizard turned away, muttering and grumbling, hugging his small bag of gold to himself. The elf flung herself down on the grass and, with tears in her eyes, began to straighten the bruised stalks of the buttercups. The wizard heard her sobbing and turned round.

"Little stupid!" he said. "Crying over buttercups!"

"I'm crying for *you*!" said the elf. "I'm crying because you're such a foolish, unhappy man you can't even see beauty when it's under your eyes! You're the richest man in the kingdom and you haven't a mite of happiness; you own sacks of gold and not a bit of love. I'm crying for *you*!"

The wizard couldn't understand that. He walked away, his great eyebrows pulled down over his eyes. The elf soon forgot him, and stood up. She began her little dance again, singing in her high, twittering voice:

"Gold! Gold!  
That shines like the sun,  
Gold for me  
And for everyone!"

It's beautiful gold, isn't it? The fields are carpeted with it in the summer. Let's go and see it, and store it away in our minds for ever and ever!

# The Monkey and the Pop Gun

At the very back of the toy-cupboard, hidden behind a lot of rubbish, was the old pop-gun.

Alan had had it years ago and had forgotten all about it. It was the toy monkey who found it one day, when he was looking for a bead that the golden-haired doll had lost from her necklace.

He pulled it out and looked at it. It was made of wood, painted red and yellow. The monkey saw that a piece of string ran from the gun to a fat cork. He was surprised. What was the cork for?

He was a clever monkey, and he soon found out. He fitted the cork into the end of the gun and then pulled the trigger.

POP! the cork shot out at once, right to the end of its string, and made quite a loud noise. The monkey jumped and dropped the gun.

“What was that?” asked the teddy-bear, peering into the toy cupboard. “Did I hear something go pop?”

“You did,” said the monkey. “I shot off a gun.”

“Oooh. How brave of you!” said the bear, who was afraid of guns.

“Where’s the gun?”

“There,” said the monkey. He picked it up carefully and looked at it again. The cork had flown out of the end of the gun. But it was still on its string. The monkey grinned a little grin to himself. He would give the bear a fright. He was always poking his nose into things.

“I’ll show you what happens,” he said to the bear. “Look—I put the cork in at the end of the gun—there—and then I point it at you—and I press the trigger—and . . .” POP! The cork sprang out and hit the poor teddy-bear right in the middle of his plump tummy. He was terribly surprised. He sat down suddenly and panted.

“You’ve shot me. You’ve killed me!” he said. “You’re a very-wicked monkey. Ooooh! What a pain I’ve got!”

The monkey laughed. This was a fine joke. He would go about shooting people with the cork. Pooh, what a fuss the bear had made!



“Bah!” said the wizard and trampled down the nearest buttercups.

He fitted the cork in again. The bear thought he meant to shoot him once more, and he scrambled to his feet and went head-first into the brick box to hide. The monkey shut down the lid on him and fastened the catch. “Ha! You’re a prisoner!” he told the bear.

Monkey went out of the toy cupboard, his gun over his shoulder. He saw the golliwog up on the table, leaning over the bowl of goldfish there, watching them swim. Up he went, too, and pointed his gun at the golliwog. He pulled the trigger.

POP! The cork shot out, hit the golliwog, and sent him head-over-heels into the goldfish bowl! He swam about, gasping and choking, and the goldfish were most astonished. Monkey slid down the tablecloth and went and hid himself in a corner to laugh.

“Whatever have you been doing, Golly?” said the toys in surprise, when the golliwog at last came down from the table, soaking wet and looking very scared.

“Something shot me!” he said. “Just here, look! And I fell into the goldfish bowl. I’ve drunk half their water, I should think. Let me sit in the sun and dry.”

“I’ll build you a castle of bricks, and you can climb up them right to the sunny window-ledge,” said the sailor doll, who was very clever at building. He went to the brick-box and was surprised to find the bear shivering inside.

“Gracious! How did you lock yourself in?” said the sailor doll.

“I’ve been shot,” said the bear, climbing out.

“Where?” said the sailor doll. “I thought I heard one or two bangs. Where are you wounded?”

“Here,” said the bear, pressing his tummy. That made him growl. “Urrrrrr!” he went.

“Well, your growl isn’t wounded,” said the sailor doll. “Here, help me with these bricks. The golliwog has been shot, too, and he tumbled into the goldfish bowl. He wants to sit on the window-sill and dry himself. I’m going to build a pile of bricks so that he can climb up and sit there.”

“Is that monkey about with his gun?” said the bear, looking round. But he was nowhere to be seen. So the bear helped the sailor doll, and together they built a pile of bricks on the floor. The monkey watched them from his corner. He fitted the cork into his gun again.

“Is it safe to go up?” said the golliwog to the sailor doll. “It doesn’t look very safe to me.”

“’Course it’s safe,” said the sailor doll. “I’ve built heaps of these castles before. I’ll go up myself, if you like, to show you it’s safe.”

He went up carefully—and when he was almost at the top the monkey shot off his cork. POP! The cork hit the middle of the pile of bricks—and the whole pile fell over with a tremendous clatter! Down went the sailor doll, too, and rolled over and over.

He sat up, rubbing his head. “What happened?” he said, scared. “Oh, goodness, how I’ve bumped my head!”

“It’s that monkey again,” said the bear angrily. “He shot down our pile of bricks. It’s too bad of him, really it is.”

But the golliwog, the bear and the sailor doll did not dare to go to the monkey and punish him. It was dangerous to fight somebody with a gun.

The cat came over to see what was happening. Monkey didn’t like her. She had smacked him with her paw once or twice. So he hid behind the curtain and popped the cork into the end of the gun again.

He poked the gun out from the curtain and took careful aim. POP!

The cork hit the cat on the nose, and she jumped high in the air with fright. She came down again and glared at the golly, the bear and the sailor doll.

“Who smacked me on the nose?” she said fiercely. “Is this a joke? If I hadn’t got nine lives, as all cats have, I’d be killed!”

The bear was just going to tell her about the monkey and his gun, when the monkey shot at the cat again. POP!

This time the cork hit the cat in the back and she rolled over in fright. In a moment she was on her feet again and glared at the others.

“I’ve only got seven lives left now!” she said. “What’s happening? Which of you is shooting at me?”

POP! Off went the cork again and hit the cat on the tip of her tail. She yelled and put her tail in her mouth to suck it.

“Three lives gone,” she said, her mouth full of tail. “Oh! Oh! Three lives gone! I shall soon be a dead cat.”

“It’s the monkey,” said the bear, getting behind the doll’s house in case the monkey shot him again. “He’s got a gun. He keeps shooting us all. He shot the bricks down and made the sailor doll fall over and hurt his head.”

“Well, surely we’d better take the gun away from him!” cried the cat crossly. “How silly to let him go round shooting us all!”

POP! Off went the hat of the golden-haired doll. The cork took it away nicely, and the doll jumped in fright.

“Well, you go and get the gun away from the monkey,” said the bear, peeping out. He shot back again as the cork just missed the tip of his nose. “Go on, cat. You go and get it.”

But somehow the cat didn’t think it was such a good idea after all if *she* was the one to go and get the gun. So all the toys hid themselves away and tried not to be shot. But the monkey had a fine time, potting at anything and anyone he saw. At last he felt tired. He sat down and looked out of the corners of his eyes at the other toys.

“It’s no good you thinking you can get my gun away when I’m asleep, because you can’t. I shall sit on it!” he said. So he did, and then went fast asleep. The toys looked at him.

“If we try to get the gun we shall wake him up,” said the bear gloomily.

The little clockwork mouse ran out from the corner where he had been hiding. “I believe I know what to do!” he said in a whisper.

“What?” whispered back the toys.

“Well, look—he has left the cork out of the gun,” whispered the mouse. “Do you see it? It is tied on to the gun by string. Well, you know, I’m awfully good at nibbling, and I believe I could nibble the knots undone. Shall I try?”

“What good would that be?” said the bear.

“Haven’t you any brains?” said the mouse rudely. “If the gun hasn’t got its cork on, how can he shoot it at us?”

“Oh, I see. Yes, it’s a splendid idea,” said the bear, and everyone agreed. So the mouse ran quietly up to the cork and began to nibble away the knot that tied the string to the cork. Soon he had it undone. The string fell away—and the mouse carried off the cork in delight.

“As soon as we get the gun we’ll tie the cork on again and shoot it at the monkey to pay him out for shooting at us,” said the bear. “That’s the only thing that will teach him a lesson.” They woke up the monkey by squeezing a sponge of cold water all over him.

“Ow!” said the monkey. “Ooooh! It’s raining. Where did I put my umbrella?”

Then he saw the toys laughing and he jumped up in a rage. “I’ll shoot you all, pop-bang!” he cried, and picked up his gun. He pressed the trigger—but nothing happened. There was no

cork there!

“Oh!” cried the monkey in a rage. “Somebody has taken my cork! I can’t shoot!”

“No, you can’t,” said the bear. “And we’re going to wait till we get that gun—because we’ve got the cork, Monkey! Then we shall do a bit of shooting. And do you know what we are going to hunt? Monkeys!”

The monkey felt afraid. He knew he had been very naughty. He didn’t know what to do. The gun was no use to him now that it had no cork. But yet he didn’t dare to put it down because if he did the others would get it, tie on the cork and shoot him. Poor Monkey!

So he had to carry the gun about with him always. It was rather heavy and he didn’t like it. He couldn’t play games properly because he always had the gun. He had to sleep on it, too, in case the others got it. It was a very tiresome nuisance to him, and he soon wished he had never in his life seen that gun.

Well, he still carries it about—but he needn’t! Shall I tell you why?

The clockwork mouse hid the cork down a mouse-hole—and a real little mouse came and took it away. He nibbled it to bits to make a cork nest, so there isn’t a cork any more.

But poor old Monkey doesn’t know that. He *is* sorry he was so naughty now!

# Two Ways of Travelling

My first is in piglet but isn't in sow,  
My second's in bull but isn't in cow,  
My third is in leopard and jaguar too,  
My fourth is in animals but not in Zoo.  
My fifth is in monkey but not in baboon,  
My whole I am sure you will guess very soon,  
It's something that flies every day without fail,  
No legs and no head—but with wings and a tail!

What am I?

*Answer on page [110](#)*

# A Hole in Her Stocking

Mollie was ten years old, so she was a big girl. She was supposed to make her own bed, to dust her own room, to mend her clothes and to darn her stockings.

But Mollie was lazy. She often pulled her bed together instead of making it properly. She sometimes flicked the duster over her room instead of dusting in every corner. She often used safety-pins to pin her frock together when a button was off, and if a hole in her stocking didn't show she wouldn't darn it!

Mollie lived with her aunt and her three cousins in a country village. Her father and mother were away at work, and she had quite a nice time with her cousins. There was Oliver, the boy, and Jane and Fanny, the two girls. Mollie and the two girls slept together in a big bedroom that had three little beds in it.

Christmas-time was coming, and the children wondered what presents they would get. What fun to wake up on Christmas morning and see their stockings full! How lovely to see what was in them, right down to the toes!

When Christmas Eve came they could *not* go to sleep. Mollie's aunt saw them into bed and told them to hang up their longest stockings.

"And we'll hope they will be full in the morning!" she said.

Mollie looked in her stocking drawer. She pulled out a long, black stocking. It had a big hole in the toe, but she hadn't bothered to mend it, because it didn't show when she wore her shoe on her foot. She took out the stocking and hung it at the head of the bed, twisting it round the knob.

"My stocking's ready!" she said.

"So are ours!" said the others. They all got into bed and tried to go to sleep. But they talked and laughed such a lot that it was quite impossible to sleep. Mollie's aunt came in at last and spoke quite sternly. "If I hear one more word I shall take down your stockings and put them back into the drawer!"

After that there wasn't even a whisper. It would have been too dreadful to have no stocking on Christmas morning!

Now that night all the stockings were filled. Shall I tell you what went into Mollie's stocking? Well, first of all, a bright two-shilling piece. It fell down the stocking—right to the toe—and, alas, because there was a hole there, it dropped out of the toe on to the carpet and rolled under the bed! The next thing put in was a dear little red ball—and that dropped out of the big hole and rolled away to a corner of the room!

Then a stick of barley-sugar, wrapped in bright paper, slipped into the stocking—and out of the toe! Next came a blue pencil and a little square rubber. Both of them dropped down to the toe—and out of the hole. They fell to the floor and bounced away.

Then a little red apple was put in—and that almost *did* stay in the stocking, for it was nearly as big as the hole. But it hung for a moment over the hole and then dropped with a soft bounce on to the floor, where it rolled off under the chest-of-drawers.

Then came a tiny doll, dressed like a sailor, and he fell out of the hole almost as soon as he was put in the stocking! Last of all there was a bar of chocolate, and that fell out, too. So by the time that the other children's stockings were filled to the top poor Mollie's was quite empty!

In the morning Jane awoke first. She gave a squeal at the sight of her bulging stocking and sat up at once. Fanny awoke and squealed, too.

"Mollie! Wake up! It's Christmas morning!" cried Fanny. "Our stockings are full. Oh, I've got *such* a dear little doll!"

"And I've got a duck to float in the bath!" said Jane. There was a yell from the other room.

"Hey, you girls! Come and look what I've got! I've got a clown who turns head-over-heels!"

This sounded so exciting that Jane and Fanny picked up their stockings and rushed into Oliver's room to see his clown.

Mollie sat up, excited. She looked at the stocking at the head of her bed. It didn't look very fat. She put out her hand to feel it. It didn't *feel* fat, either! She pulled it towards her. She put her hand in—right the way down—and there was nothing, nothing, nothing in it at all!

The little girl's heart sank. Why was there nothing in it? What had happened? Was there a present on her bed, perhaps? No, there was nothing there either. There was no present from anyone.

"They don't like me," she thought, and the tears came into her eyes. "They don't think I'm a nice little girl. No one has given me anything!"

She dressed quickly and slipped downstairs. She hid behind the big curtains at the sitting-room window.

"Where's Mollie?" asked Jane, in a surprised voice, when everyone was sitting at breakfast. "I haven't seen her since we went into Oliver's room this morning."

"There she is—behind the curtain!" said Oliver suddenly. "She's crying! Mollie, what's the matter?"

"There was n-n-n-nothing in my st-st-stockings!" wept Mollie. "I hadn't any presents at all. Nobody loves me!"

"But, darling, of course we all love you!" said her aunt in surprise. "You've made a mistake, Mollie—your stocking is full! I expect you took the wrong stocking! Go upstairs and get it. Bring it down here and you'll see how full it is!"

Mollie went upstairs. She took the empty stocking and sadly brought it down to show everyone. Oliver put his hand right down to the toe—and his fingers came waggling out of the end!

He gave a shout of laughter. "Mollie! You chose a stocking with a big, big hole in it, you silly! You chose one you put away without darning, naughty girl! All your presents must have dropped out! They will be on the floor!"

Everyone rushed upstairs to look—and, sure enough, there was the two-shilling piece on the floor under the bed—and there was the ball—and the barley-sugar—and the doll—and the chocolate—and everything. All on the floor. Mollie didn't know whether to laugh or to cry.

"Oh dear!" she said. "Oh dear! How silly I am! And, oh, I do feel ashamed of that big hole I didn't darn! Oh, Auntie, I'm so sorry. I know I should mend the holes in my stockings—and haven't I been well punished for forgetting!"

"Never mind, dear," said her aunt. "Everything is all right now. You've got a fine lot of presents and Christmas is going to be lovely!"



So it was—and I expect you know what one of Mollie's New Year Resolutions was, don't you? Yes—to be sure and darn every hole in her stockings.

# The Bear on Wheels

There was once a big blue bear on wheels. He was a toy bear, and so strong that he could carry small children quite easily on his back.

He belonged to Tom, and when children came to tea with him Tom let them straddle their legs across his bear and then he pulled them over the nursery floor.

There was a ring in the bear's neck, and when it was pulled the bear growled. "Urrrrrrrrrr!" he said, in a nice, gruff voice.

Now Tom was not good to his toys. He left his soldiers on the floor and trod on them so that half of them had arms or legs missing. He pulled the tail off his toy monkey and then lost it, so that it couldn't be sewn on again. He threw his ball up on the roof and it rolled into the gutter and was lost.

When he grew too big to ride the bear he pretended to stalk him and kill him. The bear didn't like that. Tom would hide behind a chair and suddenly shoot an arrow at him and shout: "You're hit, you're dead!"

Then he would push the bear right over and make him hit his head on the floor with a crash. Once he even tied the bear's legs up in knotted string, turned him upside down, and built a pretend fire to roast him. The bear felt quite sick, hanging upside down for so long.

Then Tom broke the bear's growl. He pulled so hard on the ring in his neck that it came right off, and the bear's growl died away inside him. "URRRRRrrrrr . . ." Then it was gone. His growl was broken. He couldn't make a noise any more.

Another day Tom had him out in the garden to play with. He left him by a bush when he went to plant his seeds. He watered them—and then he watered the bear! Soon the bear was dripping wet, and his fur was all horrid. Worse still, his head was so wet that the water dripped down into his big glass eyes, and one of them came loose. It dropped off into the grass and was lost.

"Now I've only got one eye!" thought the bear and tried to growl. But he couldn't. He was very miserable. Suppose Tom watered him again and his other eye came loose. He wouldn't be able to see at all then.

"Tom's horrid," thought the bear. "I used to love him when he was little, but now he's big he's got rough and rude and unkind. He's broken my growl. He's spoilt my fur. He's made me lose an eye. I'm so wet that I know I shall get a cold."

When Tom went in to bed that night he forgot all about the bear. He left him standing beside the bush. The sun went down and the moon came up. A chilly wind began to blow. The bear shivered, because he was still very wet. He felt a sneeze coming, but he tried not to let it come in case he shook his other eye loose.

"I shall run away!" he thought suddenly. "Why should I stay with somebody like Tom? He doesn't love me, and certainly I don't love him. Yes, I shall run away. I can go quite fast on my wheels."

So he ran away. His wheels turned round and away he went, down the garden path, making a clattering noise. He ran out of the gate, almost bumping into the posts, for he could

not see very well with only one eye.

Down the street he went. He met old Mrs. Toddle, and she looked down in surprise. “What a queer dog!” she said. “What *has* he got on his feet? Surely he isn’t roller-skating. I never knew a dog with roller-skates before.” On went the bear. He came to the cross-roads and stopped, because a policeman was holding up the traffic in the moonlight, his white armlets showing clearly.

He ran across as soon as the policeman had a clear road. He bumped into the man’s legs and the policeman looked down in surprise.

“Hey, you—what are you?” he cried. “You’re not a dog or cat—surely you’re not a baby bear! Hey, hey!”

But the bear paid no attention to any heying. On he went, down a lane and under a stile and across a field. He came to a very muddy place. His wheels stuck fast and wouldn’t turn round any more. Oh my, oh my, now what was he to do! He tried his hardest to get out. But wheels cannot be lifted up like feet, and the poor bear was quite stuck in the mud. He couldn’t even growl for help!

So there he stood, shivering and miserable, all by himself. An owl saw him and flew down to see what it was. He hooted in the bear’s ear and made him jump. “Hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo!”

The bear thought the owl was asking him *who* he was, but he was too afraid to tell the owl. Then a spider ran up and began to make a web between his front legs. It tickled him dreadfully and he didn’t like it.

Then a small field-mouse saw him and was astonished. He ran up one of the bear’s back legs and began to sniff his way down the bear’s back, wondering if there would be a good place to make a nest in the thick fur. That tickled the bear, too.

The mouse ran over the bear’s head and down his muzzle. He sniffed at the bear’s fine whiskers. That was too much for the bear. He knew he would have to sneeze, no matter if his one eye fell out or not. He just couldn’t help it if his whiskers were tickled. So, to the mouse’s dismay, the bear sneezed a great, big sneeze, “Whooooooooooshoo!”

The mouse fell off and raced for his hole. The spider fell into the mud. And the bear’s other eye fell, too. Now he couldn’t see a thing. He felt very miserable indeed and began to sniff just like you do when you are unhappy.

“Sniff, sniff, sniff! I’m so miserable. Sniff-sniff-sniff!”

Now in a hollow tree not far off lived a brownie. He was called Snippy, and he was a kind, warm-hearted little thing. He was just having his supper when he heard the curious sniffing going on not far away.

He heard the sneeze, too. “Whooooooooooshoo!”

He went out to see. He stepped warily because he was afraid of the goblins who lived in the wood. They loved to jump out at him and chase him. He knew that if ever they caught him they would do something horrid to him, like tying him up to a tree and throwing things at him.

There didn’t seem to be any goblins about. He stood and listened outside the hollow tree. “Sniff, sniff, sniff!” he heard. It was the bear over in the mud. Snippy made his way cautiously to the bear and stood a little way away from him, wondering what in the world the blue creature was. The bear did not see him because both his eyes had fallen out.

“I say!” said Snippy at last. “I say—what are you?”

“A bear,” said the bear, turning his head towards Snippy. “I’ve run away from Tom’s nursery. I can’t see you because my eyes came loose and now they’ve fallen out. I’m wet and lost and stuck in the mud and miserable.”

“You poor thing!” said Snippy. “You won’t bite me or anything if I come near you, will you? Can you growl? You might frighten me if you do.”

“No, my growl is broken,” said the bear. “I’m a poor, miserable bear—no eyes, no growl, and stuck in the mud!”

“I’ll help you out!” said Snippy, and he went close to the bear. He saw how the wheels were stuck in the mud and he began to pull hard. How he tugged and how he pulled!

“I can’t move your wheels an inch!” panted the brownie, who was elderly and not very strong. “You’re stuck too fast. I simply can’t make you move.”

“Then I shall be stuck in the mud for the rest of my life,” said the bear mournfully. “Oh my, oh my!”

The brownie looked closely at the bear’s wheels. “You know, you’ve got perfectly good *feet*,” he said. “Why don’t you use them instead of going on wheels?”

“I can’t,” said the bear. “They are fastened to the wheels.”

“I can easily unfasten them,” said the brownie. “That is, if you don’t mind going without your wheels, bear.”

“I’d love to—if only I can walk!” said the bear. “But I never have walked. I might get my four feet all tangled up together!”

“You’ll soon learn,” said the brownie. “Now wait a minute—here goes! There’s one foot free—and another—and the last one. Now, bear, you are not fastened to your wheels any more, you are only just balanced on the rods that go between them. Can you give a big jump out of the mud and land on your feet?”

“I can’t see where to jump,” said the bear. “Brownie, look in the mud and see if you can spy my eye. It fell out when I sneezed.”

“Here it is,” said the brownie. “I’ll wipe it. Now, I’ll just press it back into place for the present. I can stick it in properly later. There! Can you see?”

“A bit,” said the bear, delighted. “Yes, I see where to jump. Here we go!”

He leapt off his wheels and landed safely on a dry path. His eye kept in, so he could still see. “I do hope I shan’t sneeze again,” he said anxiously. “Oh, my gracious, what’s that?”

“Oh dear—it’s the goblins from the wood!” said Snippy anxiously. “They’ve seen me. They’re my enemies, you know, and they’re always trying to chase me. Quick, I must get back home.”

The goblins rushed at Snippy, screeching with glee. “Get him, get him! Here he is at last!”

The bear saw them with his one eye. He didn’t like them. He bared his teeth—and, dear me, he growled! “Urrrrrrrr-rrr-rrr!”

The goblins stopped at once. They stared at the brown bear in alarm. He growled again, delighted to have his lovely grunting, growling voice back again. “Urrrrrrr!”

Then he ran at the goblins, and they fled. They fell over one another in the muddy patch, they howled, they screamed. Off they went, pell-mell, and didn’t stop until they were safely out of reach of that dreadful bear.

The bear’s one eye dropped out again and he stood still at once. He called to the brownie. “My eye’s gone again, Brownie. Come and find it, please.”

The brownie found it. “You’re a marvel!” he said gratefully to the bear. “I’ve never seen those goblins so frightened before! I *did* enjoy seeing them run. Come back with me now—I won’t put your eye in again in case you lose it. I’ll take hold of one of your ears and lead you gently.”

The bear was soon in the hollow tree. The brownie made some glue and stuck the bear's eye in very firmly. Then he hunted in his button-box to see if he had another glass eye. He hadn't, but he had a big glass bead that the bear said would do just as well.

"I'll stick it in," said Snippy. "It's blue and your other eye is brown, but it won't show very much. And, dear me, did you notice that your growl came back? I got quite a fright when I heard it!"

"Oh—I can see beautifully with the beady-eye," said the bear, looking all round. "Better than ever. My word, I've got two eyes and my growl back again. I'm lucky. And I've got feet to walk with instead of those horrid wheels. Do I walk all right, Brownie?"

"Yes, quite well, but a bit wobbly now and again," said Snippy. "Now let me dry you. However did you get so wet? Do you feel as if you're going to have a cold?"

"A bit," said the bear. "That bad boy, Tom, watered me to-day, that's how I got wet. I say, what a cosy place you've got here, Snippy."

"Yes, but I'm a bit lonely," said Snippy. "And I'm afraid I'll have to move, because those tiresome goblins are always after me."

"What—leave this dear little hollow-tree home?" cried the bear. "Oh, no, don't do that. Snippy, you've been so very kind to me that I'll chase away those goblins whenever they dare to come near you. I'll give them the fright of their life!"

"Thank you!" cried Snippy. "Then I shan't have to move. Oh, Bear—do you think you could live with me in my hollow tree? Would there be room?"

"Plenty!" said the bear joyfully. "I don't need a bed or a chair, you know. Yes, I'll live with you. We'll be friends, and I'll always chase away those goblins when they come."

"You could take me on your back when I go out shopping," said Snippy, in delight. "My goodness me—what will everyone say when they see me going to market riding on a blue bear!"

The bear was tired. He cuddled down in a corner, but Snippy made him get up and lie on a soft rug. Then he snored softly with a little growly snore. "Urr-ur Urr-ur." He and Snippy soon became firm friends. The bear chased the goblins away twice and then they were so afraid that they moved away from the wood and never came back again.

One day the bear went to fetch Snippy, who had gone to tea across the fields with his aunt. And who should the bear meet coming through the wood but Tom! Tom saw the bear and stared at him.

"Hey! You're my bear! I'd know you anywhere! Did you run away? Come here at once. You must go back to the nursery!"

Tom ran at the bear—and, dear me, the bear ran at Tom. He growled fiercely. "Urrrrrrrr-rr-rr!" He snapped at Tom and the boy went back in alarm. "You're *not* my bear. You're alive! How dare you growl at me, you nasty horrid little thing!"

"Urrrrrrrrrr-urr-urr!" said the bear and ran after Tom. Tom turned and ran for his life. He could run faster than the bear, so he was soon out of sight. Then the bear sat down and laughed. "Ho, ho! I was once afraid of Tom. And now he's afraid of *me*. Ho, ho, ho, ho!"

He still lives with Snippy in the hollow tree not far from the edge of the wood. And if you are ever passing that way, and hear a strange noise that sounds like "Urrrr-rr-rr", you'll know what it is. It's the bear talking to Snippy!

# Billy's Butterfly

It was February, and the winter was going fast. All the children were glad, because it was much nicer to come to school with the sun warm on their heads than with snow or sleet whirling round.

Miss Jones was giving a nature lesson. At the end she said: "Now, I do really want you to use your eyes and ears this spring term. There is such a lot to see out of doors. Please look about this week, and on Friday bring me whatever interesting things you have found."

"We shan't find any flowers, surely, Miss Jones?" said Billy.

"Oh yes you will, if you look," said Miss Jones. "You'll find groundsel, anyhow, and maybe a blossom or two of golden gorse out on the common. And if you listen you will hear the chaffinch beginning to sing his spring song and the tits calling loudly."

Billy wasn't very good at nature. He hadn't learnt to use his eyes and ears well. Birds might be singing madly all round Billy, but he didn't hear them. He might walk over half a dozen different flowers, but he wouldn't see them.

But Billy liked Miss Jones very much, and he really did long to please her. He wanted to get good marks in nature. That would please his mother, too. So he made up his mind that he really would go for walks after afternoon school and look about for something interesting.

But that afternoon his mother wanted him to stay indoors because his aunt was coming after tea. Then, next afternoon, he had such a lot of homework to do that he knew he wouldn't finish it until bedtime. So there would be no time for a walk.

"Never mind," said Billy to himself. "To-morrow is only Thursday. I'll go to-morrow. It's fine and sunny to-day, so maybe some flowers will be out to-morrow."

But, alas, when to-morrow came his mother had a job for him to do. "Billy," she said, "the bicycle shed is so full of odds and ends that I can't get my bicycle out quickly when I want to go shopping. Will you tidy it up for me after tea, dear?"

"Oh, Mother, I did want to go for a walk really," said Billy. "But, never mind, I'll do the shed quickly, and then perhaps there will be time."

"Thank you, dear," said his mother. So when Billy had had his tea that day he ran out to the little bicycle shed. It was a dark little place, with only one small, rather dirty window. And what a mess it was in!

"Oh dear, no wonder poor Mother can't get her bicycle out quickly," thought Billy, as he began to tidy the shed, piling up pots and boxes, and folding up sacks in a pile. "My goodness, this job will take me ages!"

It did take him ages! It was dark before he had finished, and then it was no good going for a walk, because he wouldn't be able to see anything at all! Billy was disappointed. Now he wouldn't be able to take anything to Miss Jones, and she would be cross, and he wouldn't get any marks.

"Still, it's no good being cross about it," thought Billy, as he picked up a broom to sweep the cobwebs away from a corner of the shed. His mother had given him a candle in a

candlestick to light up the shed whilst he finished it. He swept down a cobweb, and then, to his surprise, something fluttered down from the corner and came to rest on his hand.

“What is it?” said Billy, half-scared. He held up his hand to the light of the candle—and, to his enormous surprise, he saw that a beautiful butterfly was resting on his hand, its brilliant wings opening and shutting very gently. Billy stared in astonishment.

“A butterfly! At this time of year! However did that happen? It must have been in that cobwebby corner. Gracious, what a surprise!”

The butterfly stayed on Billy’s hand. The little boy began to feel excited. “My goodness me—what will Miss Jones say when she sees this? It’s better than any flower, and better than any bird-song! Anyone can find flowers and hear the birds—but who else will find a butterfly at this time of year?”

Billy called his mother loudly. “Mother! Mother! Come here quickly and bring a small cardboard box!” His mother hurried out in surprise, carrying a little box. Billy showed her the butterfly.

“Oh, how lovely!” said his mother. “Are you going to take it to show Miss Jones, Billy? Keep quite still while I get it into the box.”

Soon the butterfly was in the box, and there it slept safely all night. In the morning Billy took it proudly to school. He didn’t say a word about his find to anyone until Miss Jones took the nature class.

Hilda had heard the chaffinch calling “Pink, pink”, and George had seen two sparrows with black bibs under their chins.

“Good boy,” said Miss Jones. “The little cock sparrows always grow bibs of black feathers under their chins in the New Year.”

Joan had brought groundsel with many little yellow brush-like flowers. Lily had brought chickweed with dozens of tiny white starry flowers.

“I’ve got some early snowdrops,” said Ronnie proudly. “Out of my own garden, Miss Jones!”

“Lovely!” said Miss Jones. She gave the children marks for their finds. At last it was Billy’s turn.

“And what have you to show us or tell us, Billy?” asked Miss Jones.

“I’ve got this to show you!” said Billy, and he took out his cardboard box from his desk. He opened it—and out flew the gorgeous butterfly, fluttering round the room. All the children shouted in surprise and delight.

“Oh, oh! A butterfly! In winter-time! Oh, Billy, how lucky you are! Where did you get it?”

“Well,” said Billy, “I meant to go for a walk each afternoon this week and see if I couldn’t find some flowers. But Thursday came and I hadn’t. I was going to go for a walk after tea on Thursday when Mother asked me to tidy up our bicycle shed. Well, I couldn’t say no, could I? So I did what she asked me to—and when I was sweeping a cobweb down from the wall this butterfly fluttered on to my hand!”

“It’s a peacock butterfly,” said Miss Jones. “A real beauty. Billy, some butterflies, like the peacocks and the red admirals, sleep all the winter through—and this butterfly of yours must have chosen your shed to sleep in. They like dark corners for their winter sleep.”

“I was lucky, wasn’t I?” said Billy.

“Well, you were kind to your mother and did a job she asked you to do,” said Miss Jones, “and good luck came to you through your own kindness. I shall give you top marks, Billy—top marks for doing a good job, and top marks for finding a butterfly. Well done!”

Billy *was* pleased. I wonder if you've got any sleeping butterflies in the dark corners of *your* shed, too?



*Answer to puzzle on page [91](#)—PLANE.*

# A Little Match Trick

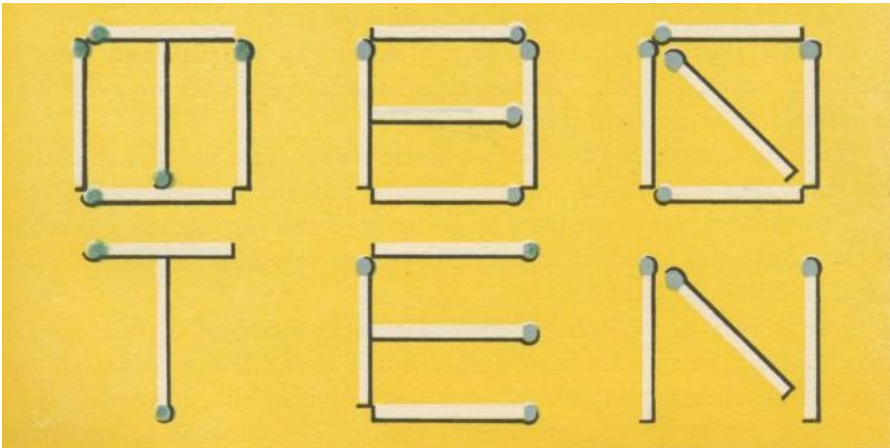
Here is a nice little trick to play on your friends. All you need is fifteen matches.

Now, arrange them just as I have done—in three squares, with one match across each square in a different position. Now say to your friends—“See, here are fifteen matches. I want you to take away six of them, and leave ten.”

“Don’t be silly,” someone will say. “If we take away six, there will only be nine left. It’s impossible!”

But it isn’t impossible. Take away the two side matches and the bottom one of the first square. Then take away the right-hand side one of the second square. And last of all take away the top and bottom matches of the third square.

Now see what you have: TEN! Clever, isn’t it?



# The Surprising Buns

Every Saturday Mother Bustle baked some big curranty buns for her brother, Policeman Plod-Along. He came to tea with her each Saturday afternoon, and curranty buns were his favourite tea-time dish.

He liked them freshly baked, so Mother Bustle used to bake them just before he came, and she put them out on her kitchen window-sill to cool whilst she went upstairs to put on a pretty frock.

Somebody else liked Mother Bustle's curranty buns, too. That was fat little Grumple Goblin, who lived in the cottage next door. He always knew when Mother Bustle was baking buns because they smelt so good. Then he would look out of his window and watch to see if the old dame put them out to cool. How delicious they looked!

Mother Bustle made them sugary and sticky on top, and she put plenty of currants inside. Grumple had tasted them once or twice, and he wished he could taste them again.

Then he discovered that Mother Bustle always went upstairs to change her dress after she had put out the buns to cool on the window-sill; and as her bedroom was at the front of the cottage and the kitchen was at the back, what could be easier than to take one or two buns off the sill when Mother Bustle was upstairs!

It was very easy. Each Saturday Grumple managed to take one or two buns off the sill. At first Mother Bustle didn't notice that any were gone. But when Grumple took four one Saturday she frowned.

"Now surely I made more buns than this!" she said and counted them. "Yes—there are four gone! Oh dear, oh dear, surely nobody is so mean as to steal a few of my curranty buns from me!"

Well, the next Saturday four more buns went and Mother Bustle couldn't imagine who could be stealing them. She was sure it wasn't Mr. Hoo-Ha, who lived on her right. And it couldn't be the Grumple Goblin, surely, because he was always so polite and well-mannered. He always lifted his hat to her, shook hands politely, and asked how she was. No, no—it couldn't be the Grumple Goblin!

Well, then, who could it be? It must be some bad imp who had seen her buns on the sill and came each Saturday to take them. Mother Bustle wondered what to do about it.

Then she smiled a little smile to herself. "I know," she said, "I'll make my buns as usual—but I'll put some magic glue on the top of them instead of that sugary stickiness! What a shock for the thief!"

So the next Saturday she baked a batch of buns and on some of them she spread some strong magic glue. She put those out on the window-sill. The others she put to cool in the larder. Then she went upstairs as usual to change her dress.

Grumple saw the buns on the sill. Not so many as usual! He wouldn't dare to take more than two. He crept along quietly, keeping behind the bushes. He put his hands up to take two of the buns. Ah—that felt a big one—and that one, too!

Off he went to his cottage with them, and put them down on a plate. But wait—he couldn't put them down! They stuck to his hands! He couldn't get them off.

"Gracious goodness, what's happened!" said Grumple in alarm. "That silly old woman has put too much sugar on them! They're as sticky as glue!" It was no use. He couldn't get the buns off his hands. In the end he had to go out and ask Billy the goat to eat the buns away from his hands. Billy was quite pleased to do this. But even when the buns had gone the sticky stuff was still there.

Grumple couldn't pick up anything without it sticking to him. He was really in despair. He looked at his sticky hands and suddenly felt sure that there was some kind of magic in the stickiness. He must get rid of it at once. He couldn't go on, day after day, with hands as sticky as this!

He thought he would go and see his sister, the Artful Goblin. She would be sure to know a spell to take the stickiness away. She would probably want him to do something difficult for her in return, but Grumple couldn't help that; and, anyway, he could always break his promise—a little thing like that wouldn't bother Grumple. So off he went to his sister's.

And who should be coming along to go to tea with Mother Bustle but Policeman Plod-Along, thinking joyfully of strong tea and curranty buns! He saw the Grumple Goblin and smiled at him. Mother Bustle had often told him of the polite, well-mannered goblin. He held out his hand to Grumple.

"Good afternoon!" he said. "I'm so pleased to see you. How do you do!"

Grumple shook hands without thinking—and then to his horror he found that he couldn't pull away his hand! The stickiness on it made it stick fast to Policeman Plod-Along's hand!

"Hey! What's this! Hey, leave my hand alone!" cried the policeman, annoyed. "Leave go! Don't be silly, Grumple."

"I'm not silly. I just can't help it," said Grumple, pulling hard. "Oh, it hurts! I'm stuck to you and you're stuck to me!"

"Well, you'll have to come along to Mother Bustle's to see if she can unstick us," said Plod-Along, and he and Grumple walked hand in hand to Mother Bustle's. Grumple didn't want to go in at all, but he had to. Where Plod-Along went he had to go, too!

Mother Bustle was surprised to see the two coming in hand in hand. "Well, well—are you such close friends?" she cried. "How do you do, Grumple?"

But Grumple couldn't let go Plod-Along's hand to shake hands with Mother Bustle! Plod-Along explained to his sister.

"You see, there's some sticky magic on his hand," he said. "Can't make it out! Can you do anything about it?"

Mother Bustle's sharp eyes went to Grumple's red face. "Oho! OHO!" she cried. "I think I know where that sticky magic came from. Yes, I think I know. For shame, Grumple! Did you take my buns?"

"Buns? What buns?" said Grumple, pretending he knew nothing.

"Oh, well—if you didn't take them it can't be my sticky-magic," said Mother Bustle. "I shan't be able to take it away then."

Grumple looked in desperation at Mother Bustle's grim face. He couldn't be fastened like this to Plod-Along all his life! No, he really couldn't!

"Well—I did take your buns," he said. "But I'll pay you for them. So just you set me free, you horrid old woman! Then I can get my purse out!"

“WHAT’S THIS?” roared Plod-Along suddenly. “You’ve been taking my sister’s buns? Stealing them! So you’re a thief, are you? Come along to the police-station with me at once!”

Well, Grumple simply had to go, of course, because he couldn’t take his hand away from Plod-Along’s! Mother Bustle went with them, and as soon as Grumple was safely in prison she poured some magic water over his hands and away went the stickiness at once! His hand fell away from the policeman’s, and Plod-Along went outside the door and locked him in.

“Let him spend a night there,” said Mother Bustle. “Just to teach him a lesson, the wicked little creature! So polite and well-mannered—and so bad-hearted underneath. I am sure it is he who has been taking Dame Click’s eggs and Mother Lucy’s washing off her line!”

Grumple spent a lonely night locked up. In the morning he was allowed to go home, looking scared and miserable. When he got there Mother Bustle popped her head over the wall.

“Well, Grumple, let this be a lesson to you! And remember this—if I ever think you’re taking things that don’t belong to you again you’ll find your hands as sticky as you did yesterday! So, just you be careful!”

Mother Bustle still puts her curranty buns out on her window-sill to cool every Saturday—but since that time she hasn’t missed a single bun. Grumple doesn’t dare to go near them!

# Simple Simon Goes to Camp

Have you heard the story about Simple Simon going to camp? You haven't? Well, I must tell it you.

Now Simple Simon had never been away from home—but one day his school-teacher asked him if he would like to go to camp with the other boys.

"It would do you good, Simon," he said. "You're too dreamy and forgetful. You ask your mother if she'll let you come along with us and camp out on Breezy Hill."

Simon ran home to ask his mother. He was terribly excited. All the other boys had been to camp, but not Simon.

His mother said yes, he could go, and Simon was mad with delight. "I'll be so helpful," he said. "I'll do everything I'm told. I'll learn how to put up a tent and take one down. I'll do the washing-up. I'll—I'll—I'll do anything!"

Well, Simon went to camp with the other boys. He had his kit-bag on his back, full of the things he would need. It was heavy, but he didn't mind. The other boys grinned when they saw Simple Simon coming with them.

"Hallo, Simple Simon," they said. "Have you met your pieman yet?"

That was an old joke, and Simon smiled. He was so excited that he didn't mind anything. He went with the others to Breezy Hill. It was a good name for it, because the wind blew there all the time.

Simon learnt how to put up a tent—but he didn't learn it very well, because it always fell down on top of him as soon as he got inside. He learnt how to wash dirty cups and plates in the clear little stream, but after he had fallen in twice he wasn't allowed to do that any more.

Then he was told to go and fetch the milk, and a big jug was put into his hand. So off went Simon—but after a bit, when he got into the next field, he stood and thought.

"I didn't ask where I was to get the milk from," he said to himself. "How stupid! The boys will all laugh at me if I go back and ask. I wonder where Jimmy got the milk from yesterday?"

"Moo-oo-oooo!" said a nearby cow and looked so hard at Simon that he felt sure she was answering him.

"Oh, of course—milk comes from cows," said Simon. "I must milk a cow. Hi, you cow—come over here a minute, will you?"

He waved his jug at the cow, but she turned her head away and went on chewing. She was lying down, and she didn't mean to get up for Simon.

"Now look here, cow," said Simon, going up to her. "You know what this milk jug's for, don't you? Don't pretend to me that you don't know what milk is! Just get up and fill this jug for me. Do you want to keep the boys waiting for their breakfast?"

The cow didn't mind about that at all. She whisked her tail round and hit Simon on the legs.

"Don't," said Simon. "Aren't you going to get up, cow? I'll help you."

He gave her a push, but she lay there like an elephant, quite unpushable. Simon glared at her for a minute and then heard someone calling over the hedge.

“Simon! Bring the milk quickly, we’re waiting!”

Simon ran to the hedge. “The cow won’t give me any. She’s most obstinate.”

“Idiot! You get the milk at the farm!” said the boy over the hedge. “Don’t tell me you’ve been arguing with the cow! Here, give me the jug, and I’ll go!”

He squeezed through the hedge, snatched the jug from poor Simon and set off to the farm. And how Simon was teased when the other boys knew he had asked the cow to fill the milk jug!

“Well, we shan’t ask you to do any more jobs,” they said. “Not another single one, Simon! You never use your brains, you’re too slow for words.” Poor Simon. He was very much upset. It was quite true he didn’t think hard enough. His mother was always telling him so.

Nobody asked him to help after that. Even when he offered to be wasn’t allowed to. It wasn’t any fun to go camping and not share in the work. Poor Simon felt very unhappy.

“Please let me help,” he begged Jimmy, when he saw him preparing the dinner for the boys. “Can’t I peel potatoes?”

“No. Last time you did that you left half the peel on,” said Jimmy. “Go away. I’m making a stew, and I want it to be good.”

“What are you putting into it?” asked Simon.

“Carrots—onions—parsnips—turnips,” said Jimmy. “Blow—I’ve not got the turnips.”

“Let *me* get them for you!” said Simon at once.

“You don’t know a turnip from a banana!” said Jimmy scornfully.

“I do, I do,” said Simon. “They grow in the field over there, don’t they?”

“Yes,” said Jimmy, “and the farmer said we might pull what we wanted. Well—you go and bring me some, Simon. And don’t you dare to come back with onions or carrots—it’s *turnips* I want, see?”

Simon set off. He came back after a moment, thinking hard. “How many do you want?” he asked. “Twenty?”

“No, silly! Three will do nicely,” said Jimmy, beginning to peel potatoes. “Now do go.”

Simon went—but he was back again in half a minute. “You didn’t tell me what size,” he said. “Do you want big ones or small ones?”

“Big ones,” said Jimmy, getting annoyed.

“How big?” asked Simon.

“Oh—just about as big as your head,” said Jimmy. “Now GO, Simon, or you’ll not get the turnips till teatime.”

Simon really went. He climbed over the stile and got into the turnip field. He looked at the turnips. They were there in their hundreds, the root part well in the ground, and the green leaves sticking up in tufts.

“I wonder how big my head is,” said Simon to himself, and he felt it to see. “How can I possibly tell if those turnips are as big as my head? I can’t *see* my head, and I really don’t know how big it is.”

He didn’t like to go back and ask what size his head was. He felt that Jimmy would be very cross if he did. And yet how cross he would be if he brought back turnips too big or too small! It was a puzzle to know what to do.

“I must use my brains,” said Simple Simon to himself. “I must think hard. There must be some way of knowing which turnips are as big as my head. Now—what shall I do?”

He thought very hard indeed. Then he smiled, because he had thought of a way to solve his puzzle.

“My hat fits my head,” he said, and he took it off. “Now—if only I can find three turnips that fit my hat well I shall know they are the same size as my head.” He pulled up a turnip. He turned it upside down and fitted his hat over it. Then he threw the turnip away.

“You’re too small, turnip,” he said. “My hat doesn’t fit you. I’ll get another.” He pulled up another turnip, an enormous one, and fitted his hat over it. But it wouldn’t go on!

“You’re too large, turnip,” he said, and threw it away. “You’re bigger than my head. *You* won’t do!”

He tried another, but that was too big, too. Then he found one that exactly fitted his hat. How pleased he was!

“Good turnip,” he said, and he patted it. “Very good turnip! You’re the same size as my head, because my hat fits you!”

He pulled up another and another and another. But none of them fitted the hat, so he threw them away. After a long time he found two more that his hat fitted nicely. He put the three turnips under his arm, and his hat on his head, and set off back to the camp.

Jimmy was beginning to think Simon was never coming. “Gracious, what a time you’ve been!” he said, and Simon was disappointed that Jimmy didn’t notice that the turnips were exactly the same size as his head.

Simon felt pleased with himself as he sat round the camp dinner with the others. “I fetched the turnips,” he told everyone. “I really did help, and I didn’t do anything silly, because I used my brains.”

Now, about a minute after that a big man came striding up to the camp. It was Mr. Straw, the farmer. He looked *most* annoyed.

“Afternoon, sir,” he said to Simon’s school-teacher, who was camping with the boys. “I want to know who’s been pulling up half my turnips and left them lying in the field.”

“Good gracious—it can’t be any of *my* boys,” said the master, surprised. “They’re all very well behaved.”

“Sorry, sir—but it must be one of your boys,” said the farmer. “And what I want to know is, who is it?”

“I tell you it can’t be one of my boys,” said the master. “They wouldn’t do a thing like that—pull up turnips and let them go to waste.”

Then he suddenly caught sight of Simon, who had gone as red as a beetroot. “Simon, *you* haven’t done such a naughty thing, have you?” he said sternly.

“Oh, sir, Jimmy sent me to get three turnips the size of my head,” wailed Simon. “And I didn’t know what size my head was, so I took off my hat and chose three turnips that fitted into it, and threw the rest away.”

There was a silence, and then what a roar of laughter! It was too funny to think of Simon solemnly trying his hat on one turnip after another. Even the farmer smiled.

“Well, I suppose he meant no harm, but it was a brainless thing to do,” he said; and that upset Simon very much, because he really had thought he was using his brains out in the turnip field. “I’ll have to ask you to let the boy come along and pick up all the turnips, sir, and bring them to my shed.”

So that was how poor Simon spent the whole of his afternoon—picking up turnips and taking them half a mile away to the shed.

And now Jimmy thinks he will send him to pull new carrots as big as his fingers—and everyone is wondering if dear old Simon will take his gloves along to see which carrots fit into the fingers. Do you think he will?



# The Cuckoo in the Clock



One night two tiny robbers crept into the nursery. It was dark, except for a ray of moonlight that came slanting in through the window.

It was quiet in the nursery, too. No one was awake. The children had gone to bed in their room next door. The cat was in the kitchen, asleep in her basket. The dog was in his kennel, dreaming of bones.

The toys were all asleep, too. The teddy-bear was leaning against the golliwog, dreaming of buns. The curly-haired doll was in her cot, all tucked up. The baby doll was in her cot, too, her eyes fast shut. She always shut them as soon as she was laid down. She couldn't open them till she sat up. So she always fell asleep as soon as she lay down.

The skittles lay in their box, and the humming-top lay on its side. The fairy doll slept in her cardboard box, her silver crown a little bit crooked. The pink toy cat, with her bright blue bow, was curled up at the back of the toy cupboard, tired out.

The two tiny robbers stood in the middle of the floor and listened. They were Snap and Grab, two goblins with sacks. They stole what they could wherever they went.

"Everyone's asleep," whispered Snap.

"We can take plenty of things here," whispered back Grab. "Look—see that golliwog? He's got a fine brooch on. Unpin it and put it into your sack!"

The brooch went into the sack. Then the two bad little robbers saw the fairy doll fast asleep in her box. "Look at her silver crown," whispered Snap. "I'll take that. Won't she get a shock to-morrow morning when she finds it is gone!"



The teddy-bear was leaning against the golliwog dreaming of buns.

The crown went into his sack. Then they found the little work-basket belonging to Pam, and they took the thimble and the scissors out of it. Nobody heard them. Nobody saw them.

But wait a minute—what was that noise? Was somebody awake after all? Yes! The cuckoo in the cuckoo clock was awake in his tiny room at the top of the clock. It was three o'clock in the morning, and he had to open his door, spring out, flap his wings and cry “Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo!”

So out he came, and how he made Snap and Grab jump! They dropped their sacks and clutched one another.

“What’s that?” whispered Snap.

“It’s all right—it’s only the cuckoo clock,” said Grab. “What a shock it gave me!”

The cuckoo got a shock, too, when he saw the two bad little robbers standing in the moonlight, in the middle of the nursery. Who were they? What were they doing there in the middle of the night?

He knew in the morning. “Oh, where’s my lovely silver crown?” wailed the fairy doll.

“And where’s my brooch?” wailed the golly.

“And what’s happened to the thimble and the scissors? They aren’t in Pam’s work-basket,” said the curly-haired doll. “They’ve been taken, too.”

The cuckoo came out and cuckooed eight o’clock. He cuckooed so very loudly that the toys looked up at him.

“Cuckoo! Did you see anyone here last night?” shouted the teddy-bear. But the cuckoo had gone back into his little room and shut his door. He wanted to tell all he knew, but he could only shout “Cuckoo”, and when he had done he had to go back to his room. It was most annoying for him when he had so much he would have liked to say.

The next night the robbers came slipping in again. They took the toy cat’s blue ribbon. They took the tail off the poor little clockwork mouse. They took his key as well. They even took the curtains out of the dolls’ house. Snap said they would just about fit the windows in their own tiny house under the hedge. And again the cuckoo was the only one who saw them. This time he didn’t make them jump when he came out at three o’clock and cuckooed. They just laughed at him.

“Silly bird! Thinks he’s a real cuckoo, cuckooing like that! He lives in the clock and isn’t any use at all except to shout ‘Cuckoo’ at the right time.”

The cuckoo felt hurt to be spoken of like that. He wished he could fly out of the clock and peck the sharp noses of the bad little goblins. But he couldn’t. He had to go back into his tiny room and slam the door. He peeped out of the crack and watched all that the goblins were doing.

“Shocking!” thought the cuckoo. “They come here every night to steal—and the toys are so fast asleep they don’t hear them. Why, very soon these goblins will have taken all the toys’ little treasures!”



“Look at her silver crown,” whispered Snap. “I’ll take that.”



“Cuckoo! Did you see anyone here last night?”

Next day the toys were very unhappy and puzzled. What was happening to everything? Where was the toy cat’s ribbon? And where, oh where, could the clockwork mouse’s tail have gone? What a mean thing to do, to steal the tail of a little mouse. And his key, too. Now he couldn’t run about any more because his key was gone, and he couldn’t be wound up.

The golliwog climbed right up to the cuckoo clock when nobody was in the nursery and opened his little door. The cuckoo was quite startled to see the golly’s black face peeping in.

“Cuckoo. Do, for goodness’ sake, tell me who is taking our things,” begged the golliwog. “You must know who it is, because you are the only person awake at night.”

“Cuckoo,” answered the cuckoo, trying to say all sorts of things.

“Where have our things gone?” said the golly.

“Cuckoo,” said the cuckoo.

“Oh, do answer properly,” begged the golly.

“Cuckoo,” said the poor cuckoo, and flapped his wooden wings sadly. Then, as it was three o’clock in the afternoon, he had to go outside his door and shout “cuckoo” three times. He almost knocked the golliwog down as he went.

“Rude, stupid little thing,” said Golly crossly. That made the cuckoo feel very sad.

That night the goblins came again. The cuckoo saw them through the crack of his door—and he made up his mind to do a very daring thing—if he only could. He would come out at three o’clock as usual—but

instead of cuckooing three times only and going back he would go on cuckooing as loudly as he possibly could, and not go back till he had awakened all the toys.

“If I only can!” he thought.

So when three o’clock came, in the middle of the night, out he went as usual. “Cuckoo!” he began. “Cuckoo! CUCKOO!” But he didn’t stop at three o’clock. Oh, no—he went on and on and on. “Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo! Cuckoo! . . .” You should have heard him. Snap and Grab, the goblins, looked up in surprise.

“Must be a hundred o’clock tonight,” said Snap. “Come on. Let’s see if we can find something more to take.”

The cuckoo went on shouting. The golliwog woke up in surprise. The curly-haired doll sat up. The skittles jumped out of their box. The teddy-bear rubbed his eyes.

“Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo . . .”

“What’s gone wrong with the cuckoo?” said the golliwog. And then he suddenly caught sight of Snap and Grab. In a trice he was over by them, and caught hold of them by the scruff of their necks. The bear ran to help. The skittles rushed up, too. In a twinkling the two goblins were shut up in the doll’s house.

“Now we know who the robbers are,” said the golliwog. “What shall we do with them?”

“Send one off to bring back all the stolen things,” said the bear. “Keep the other here till he comes back.”



They took the toy cat’s blue ribbon.



Caught hold of them by the scruff of their necks.



She saw the tiny key of the doll's house.

So Grab was sent off to bring back everything that was stolen, and Snap was locked up safely. Grab soon came back with the things. The toys took them. Then they gave the two goblins such a spanking that they howled loudly. The cuckoo came out again and cuckooed madly.

“Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo . . .”

This time he awoke Pam and she came out of her bed into the nursery to see what had happened to the cuckoo in the clock. In a trice the toys pushed the goblins into the dolls' house and shut and locked the front door. Then they scuttled back to the cupboard.

“Whatever's going on?” said Pam. She saw the tiny key of the dolls' house dropped on the floor and picked it up. “Well, really, what *is* happening?”

But there was no one to tell her. The toys didn't say a word. Snap and Grab were too scared to move inside the dolls' house. The cuckoo hurried back into the clock. Pam stared round a little and then went back to bed herself.

But she took the key of the dolls' house with her, so Snap and Grab couldn't be set free. They had to stay there all night long—locked in the dolls' house.

And what *do* you think Pam will say in the morning when she unlocks the door of the dolls' house and sees those two wicked little goblins, Snap and Grab? I do wish I could be there, don't you?

# He was Sorry for Himself

“I’ve got a sore throat again,” said Jeremy. He sat up in bed and swallowed. “Yes, I have. Oh dear, what a shame. I do feel sorry for myself. I’m a most unlucky boy.”

He lay down again, and when his mother came in to tell him to get up and go to school he looked very miserable.

“I don’t feel well,” he said. “I’ve got a sore throat, Mother.”

“Let’s have a look,” said his mother. He opened his mouth and she looked carefully at his throat.

“It’s not very bad, Jeremy,” she said. “Hardly a sore throat at all. But you had better not go to school. You can get up, and after breakfast you can go and play out in the sunshine. Your bicycle wants cleaning. You could make it nice and bright.”

Jeremy didn’t think Mother was making enough fuss of him. “I don’t want to get up,” he said. “I feel bad. I’m sure I’m going to be ill.”

“No, you’re not,” said his mother impatiently. “You’re just feeling sorry for yourself. Don’t be silly now, Jeremy. I know you get a lot of colds and you have had a good deal of illness—but you let it get on top of you, and as soon as you begin to feel sorry for yourself you’re no good at all! What about *you* getting on top of things for a change!”

“I can’t,” said Jeremy, looking very miserable. “I’m not strong enough.”

“Oh, Jeremy!” said his mother, in despair. “I could be so proud of you, if only you would do your best instead of your worst! You have good brains and you could be top of your class. You’re a lucky boy, because you have a nice home and a bicycle and an electric train and heaps of books. And, you know, if you really made up your mind you could soon forget your coughs and colds instead of lying here feeling so sorry for yourself.”

She went out of the room. Jeremy lay frowning in bed. Mother ought to be much sorer for him! He was a most unlucky boy, *he* thought. He wasn’t well and strong like the others were. He felt very sorry for himself indeed.

He did get up, because he had an idea that his mother would suddenly get cross with him. It was a beautiful day, so after breakfast he went out. “But it’s not fair to make me work at cleaning my bicycle when I don’t feel well,” he said, and he tried to make his throat worse by coughing. Perhaps Mother would hear him and be sorry.

“Don’t cough like that!” called Mother. “There’s no need to, and you’ll only make your throat worse. And do cheer up, Jeremy. Your face is as long as a fiddle.” Jeremy felt cross then. He got on his bicycle. “I shall go for a long ride and not come back for ages,” he thought. “Then Mother will wonder what has happened to me and she’ll feel very sorry for me when I come back tired out.”

He rode off. He pedalled down the road and up the hill. He free-wheeled down the other side and then took a little lane he had never been down before. He would see where it led to.

It was a very long lane, and it wound in and out, in and out. Then it suddenly went into a long tunnel made of trees meeting overhead!

After a bit Jeremy got off his bicycle and sat down on the bank at one side. He was tired. He swallowed to see how his throat was. Dear, dear, it didn't feel any better at all! And he did believe his head was beginning to ache. He felt terribly sorry for himself and gave an enormous sigh.

"Good gracious! What a wind you made then, sighing like that!" said a voice suddenly, and Jeremy jumped. A small, round man, not as big as Jeremy, dressed in red, was on the bank beside him.

Jeremy stared at him. What could this queer little man be?

"I'm a Reddy," said the little man. "You've heard of Brownies, I expect? Well, I'm a cousin of theirs, a Reddy. I live in that big tree just behind you, and I saw you when I came out of my front door."

This was all very surprising. Jeremy wondered if he could possibly be in a dream. He looked behind him at the big tree. He couldn't see any door at all. Ivy grew over the trunk and quite hid the bark just there.

"The ivy hides my door," said the Reddy. "Won't you come in and sit down for a bit? I suppose you're tired, as you sighed like that."

"Yes," said Jeremy, and sighed again. "And my throat is sore, and I do believe I've got a headache coming. I really ought to be in bed. But my mother sent me out."

"Poor, poor boy," said the Reddy. "Well, do come in. I've got one or two friends coming for a glass of lemonade. You might like one—unless your throat is too sore for you to swallow?"

"Oh, it's all right for swallowing lemonade," said Jeremy.

The little man lifted up a little curtain of ivy, and there behind it was the neatest front door you ever saw. The Reddy fitted a key into the lock and swung it open. Jeremy went inside. There was a perfectly round room there. It was strange inside the tree, because it looked much bigger there than it had looked outside. A bench ran all round, and on it were sitting two other Reddies, one with a bright red beard that he wore round his neck just like a scarf.

"Hallo, who's this?" said a Reddy.

"A poor little boy who's tired, and who's got a sore throat, and thinks he's going to have a headache," said the first Reddy. "And his mother's sent him out instead of keeping him in bed."

The Reddy with the beard looked hard at Jeremy. "I know this boy," he said. "I live at the bottom of his garden. He's the boy I've often told you about—the one who's always so sorry for himself."

"Oh—is *that* the boy?" said the other Reddies and they stared at Jeremy. The bearded Reddy nodded.

"Yes. He loves being sorry for himself. Don't you, Jeremy? Really, he's an awfully lucky boy. He's got a nice home, and a lovely mother and a fine father, and a big garden to play in, and a bicycle and all kinds of toys. But if he were an *unlucky* boy, he could be really and truly very, *very* sorry for himself, couldn't he?"

"Yes. That would be nice for him," said the first Reddy. "If he loves being sorry for himself he'd better have some bad luck."

Jeremy began to feel rather alarmed. He drank some of the very sweet lemonade that the first Reddy had poured out for him.

"I don't think . . ." began Jeremy. But the Reddies went on talking as if he wasn't there.

“You know,” said the bearded one, undoing his beard and then tying it more tightly round his neck again, “you know I can’t quite make out why he’s so terribly sorry for himself always. Certainly he’s had a fair amount of illness—but then lots of children have. He makes himself much worse by giving in to it and feeling so sorry. That shows how much he enjoys feeling upset about himself.”

“Yes, it does,” said the others, and they drank their lemonade, looking rather solemn. “Can’t we help him a bit—give him more things to feel sorry about? He’d enjoy that. Think how he’d grumble and moan if we took his mother away for a bit, for instance, and made him hurt his leg badly, and had his bicycle stolen. He *would* feel sorry for himself then!”

Jeremy felt more alarmed than ever. He put down his glass. “Look here,” he said, “I don’t like you to talk like this. I can’t help always having something wrong with me, can I? I don’t make my colds come!”

“That’s true,” said the bearded Reddy. “But you make things much worse by being so sorry for yourself instead of squaring your shoulders and saying: ‘What! Something wrong with me! I’ll soon deal with *that!*’ You act like a little coward instead of a brave boy with brains and plenty of things to be thankful for!”

“You’re horrid!” said Jeremy, and he dashed out of the door. He slammed it hard. “I won’t stay there a minute more!” he thought. “I’ll ride straight home and tell Mother!”

But his bicycle was gone! It simply wasn’t there. Jeremy hunted up and down the lane for it, but it was gone.

“It’s been stolen!” he wailed. “Oh, those hateful Reddies. *They’ve* done this! Oh, what an unlucky boy I am!”

A little voice called out mockingly from the hedge: “Are you enjoying feeling sorry for yourself, Jeremy? You’ll soon feel sorrier still!”

Jeremy stamped his foot. “You be quiet!” he shouted.

There was the sound of a laugh and then of a door being slammed. Jeremy stamped his foot again. He felt like crying. But he wasn’t going to! Those Reddies would be pleased if they saw him crying and being sorry for himself.

“I’m going to walk all the way home and *enjoy* it,” he shouted, and off he went down the lane. He walked and he walked. It took him a long, long time to get home, and he really did feel tired when he got there.

And, oh dear, when he went in at the garden door Sarah, the maid, called out bad news to him.

“Is that you, Jeremy? Your mother has heard that your father has had an accident and she’s had to go to see to him.”

“Oh,” said Jeremy, his heart sinking into his boots. That was those Reddies again—trying to make him feel more and more sorry for himself. Well, he wouldn’t! He’d feel sorry for his mother and father instead.

“Your poor mother left in such a hurry,” said Sarah, coming in with his dinner. “She was in the middle of turning out that cupboard there—and she meant to have gone and tidied out the garage to save your father doing it in the week-end. She left you a message and said if your throat was any worse you’d better go to bed.”

“I’m *not* going to bed,” said Jeremy, and he squared his shoulders and spoke in a loud voice. “I’m going to finish turning out that cupboard for Mother—and I’m going to tidy the garage, too. I know exactly what to do because Mother told me what she had planned to do there.”



“But you look tired, Jeremy,” said Sarah.

“So I am,” said Jeremy, “because my bicycle has been stolen and I had to walk back. But you needn’t think I’m sorry for myself. I’m just thinking of Mother and Daddy, and I want to do something for them.”

Jeremy felt very guilty, because he couldn’t help thinking that all this bad luck had happened just because the Reddies wanted him to feel even sorer for himself than before. But he wasn’t going to think of himself at all. He’d show them! He’d think of Mother and Daddy and work hard all day to make up to them for this bad luck.

He did. He forgot his sore throat, and it went. He didn’t have a headache after all. His legs ached, but he didn’t bother about that. He turned out the cupboard. He tidied the garage most beautifully. He cleaned his mother’s bicycle, and he swept the kitchen yard for Sarah.

“I never knew what a nice boy you could be!” said Sarah. “I always thought you were a poor little thing that couldn’t pull yourself together at all and just waited for bad things to happen to you. My, Jeremy, you look different to-day—sort of determined and strong.”

“And so I am!” said Jeremy, and he set the brush down with a bang. “And if anybody in this house ever dares to say I’m the sort of boy that’s always sorry for himself I’ll tell them what I think of them!”

He stalked away into the hall, leaving Sarah staring after him in surprise. Well, well—she’d thought that Jeremy would come whining home and go to bed and burst into tears when he heard her news. But here he was, behaving like a hero!

A taxi drew up at the door. Jeremy rushed to the front, his heart beating. Was his father badly hurt? Would his mother be terribly upset?

His mother got out first and then turned to help his father out. He was limping, but he didn’t look at all ill. “Hallo, Jeremy!” he called.

“I hope you didn’t think I’d been run over or anything! I just fell down the office stairs and sprained my ankle—but I’ll be all right in a few days!”

Jeremy felt faint with thankfulness. So it wasn’t the dreadful bad luck he had been fearing after all. It was hardly bad at all!

“How are you, Jeremy dear?” asked his mother anxiously.

“Fine!” said Jeremy, and he squared his shoulders and looked sturdy and tall. “Nothing wrong with me at all! I’ve been working hard for you all day!”

His mother was delighted. His father was pleased, too. He put his arm round Jeremy and spoke to him in a warm, friendly voice.

“You know, son,” he said, “when I slipped and fell to-day, I thought, ‘My goodness, suppose I was killed! I can’t trust Jeremy to look after his mother, because he’s always so sorry for himself.’ And I was worried. But now I see I’ve got a proper little son and I’m glad.”

“Yes,” said Jeremy, stoutly, “you can count on me now, Daddy.”

And did he mean what he said? Yes, of course he did!

# It Really Served Him Right

“I wish,” said the black cat loudly, “I do wish that that golliwog would go to some other toy cupboard to live.”

The black cat was a toy cat. She wasn’t much bigger than a small kitten, but she was as grown-up as a cat in her ways.

The golliwog glared at the toy cat. “And *I* wish,” he said, “that silly black cats with blue eyes would go and jump out of the window. *Blue* eyes! Whoever heard of blue eyes for a cat? Cats have green ones.”

“Now, now,” said the teddy-bear. “Don’t start squabbling again, you two. You really ought to behave better, Golly, because you are much older than the toy cat.”

The golliwog scowled. He was a good-looking fellow for a golly, as black as ink, with a shock of hair. He was dressed very well, too, in blue velvet trousers and a red coat. On his coat were three glass buttons, as green as grass. The golliwog was very proud of them.

“Look!” he said to the cat, pointing to his gleaming glass buttons. “Why haven’t you got eyes as green as my buttons? Fancy having *blue* eyes!”

“Be quiet, Golly. She can’t help it,” said the big doll. “I’ve got blue eyes, too.”

“It’s nice in a doll,” said the golly. “And look at that cat’s tail, too—all the hairs have come off at the end!”

“Well, she couldn’t help the puppy chewing her tail,” said the bear.

“Don’t be so spiteful and bad-tempered, Golly.”

That was the worst of Golly. He *was* so spiteful. If anyone did anything he didn’t like he said spiteful things, and did them, too, if he could. When the bear grumbled at him one day, he hid behind the curtain with a big pin. And as soon as the bear came along, Golly pinned him to the curtain so that he couldn’t get away. That was the sort of thing he did.

So nobody liked him much, and they all thought him vain and silly. The black cat disliked him very much. If she could, she always turned her back on him, and he didn’t like that.

“Stuck-up creature!” he grumbled. “With her silly blue ribbon and great, staring blue eyes.”

One day the toy cat found a piece of chocolate dropped on the floor. She was very pleased. She bit it into many small pieces and gave a bit to all her friends. But she didn’t give even a lick to the golly.

“Mean thing!” he said, when he saw everyone munching chocolate. “All right; you just wait. I’ll pay you out some day, yes, I will!”

Now the next week the black cat felt worried. She couldn’t see properly out of one of her blue eyes. She told the bear about it and he had a look at the eye.

“Goodness! It’s coming loose!” he said. “I hope Mary notices it, cat, or it may drop off and be lost. You’d be funny with only one eye.”

Mary was the little girl in whose nursery they all lived. The toy cat kept staring at her, hoping she would notice her loose eye. But she didn’t.

She had just got a new book. It was called *The Adventurous Four*, and Mary somehow couldn't stop reading it. You know how it is when you have an exciting book. You just want to go on and on reading.

So the toy cat's eye got looser and looser. At last it was hanging by only one thread, and still Mary hadn't noticed it. She was nearly at the end of her book, though, and the cat hoped maybe her eye would hold on till Mary had finished reading. Then she would be sure to notice her toy cat's eye.

But that night, after Mary had gone to bed, the cat's eye dropped right off! She had been sitting quite still, afraid she might jerk it off—and then she had forgotten to keep still and had run across the room to speak to the bear.

She felt her eye falling out. It fell on the floor with a little thud—and then it rolled away under the couch. The cat gave a cry.

“Oh, my eye's gone! It's under the couch. Quick, get it, somebody!”

The toys all lay down and peeped under the couch. All except the golliwog. *He* wasn't going to bother himself! But suddenly he saw, quite near his foot, something that shone blue. He stared at it. Gracious, it was the toy cat's eye! It must have rolled under the couch and out at the other side and have come right over to where the golly sat looking at a picture book.

He looked at the other toys. They were all lying on the floor, poking about under the couch. The toy cat was watching, crying tears out of her one eye.

Quick as lightning the golliwog put his foot over the blue glass eye. He kicked it into a corner. Then he got up, went to the corner and, without anybody noticing, put the eye into his pocket. He was pleased.

“Now I've got the cat's eye! Good! She won't get it again, that's certain. I'll pay her out now for all the things she said to me!”

He went over to the toys and pretended to look for the eye with them. But all the time he could feel it in his pocket. He wanted to laugh.

“Perhaps I'd better hide it safely somewhere,” he thought suddenly. “If any of the toys found out that I had the eye I should get into dreadful trouble. They might turn me out of the nursery. Now where can I put it?”

Well, you will never guess where he hid it! It really was a very clever place. He went into the dolls' house. There was nobody there, for all the dolls were helping the cat to look for her dropped eye.

He went into the kitchen. He lifted up the lid of the tiny kettle set on the toy stove—and he dropped the eye in there. It just went in nicely. Then he put the lid on it and ran out quietly. Nobody would ever, ever find the eye now, because the dolls' house dolls never used that kettle. They had a smaller one they liked better.

The toy cat was very miserable indeed. She cried bitterly. The toys tried to comfort her. Only the golly didn't say anything nice. He was glad.

“How mean and unkind you are, Golly,” said everyone. But he didn't care a bit.

The next day Mary finished her book and had time to look at her toys again. And, of course, she noticed at once that the toy cat had only one eye. She was very upset.

“You look *dreadful!*” she said. “You must have dropped it. I'll look around for it.” But she couldn't find it, of course, because it was in the kettle.

“Now whatever shall I do with you?” said Mary to the miserable toy cat. “You can't go about with one eye, that's certain. And I haven't a blue button that would do for you. What *can* I do.”

She looked at all the other toys, and she suddenly saw the golliwog, dressed so smartly in his velvet coat and trousers, with the three gleaming green buttons on his coat.

“Oh! Of *course*. I know what to do,” cried Mary; and she picked up the surprised golliwog. “You can have *two* new eyes, toy cat—proper green ones, this time! I’ll take off your old blue one, and put on two of these beautiful green ones. You will look simply lovely!”

Well, what do you think of that? Snip, snip, went Mary’s scissors; and, to the golliwog’s horror, the two top buttons of his coat fell off.

Then Mary took off the one blue eye of the toy cat and put on the two green ones instead. You can’t imagine how handsome the cat looked with two gleaming green eyes instead of blue ones. She stared round at the toys in delight.

“It’s a pity the end of your tail is chewed, toy cat,” said Mary. “It rather spoils your beauty. Oh, *I* know how I can put that right, too. Golly, I shall snip a bit off your thick mop of hair and stick it on the end of the cat’s tail.”

And she did. It looked very fine there, but the golliwog felt cross and unhappy. He had lost his beautiful green buttons and a big bit of his fine mop of hair. And that awful toy cat had got them instead. She was looking at him with his own buttons for eyes. The golly could hardly stop himself from crying with rage.

Now the toys might have been sorry for the golly, and tried to comfort him, if something else hadn’t happened just then. Mary suddenly decided to give a party for the toy cat to celebrate her beautiful new eyes. And she took the kettle off the toy stove to fill with water so that she might boil it for tea.

And inside she found the blue eye of the toy cat. She picked it out in the very greatest astonishment. She looked at it, and so did all the toys.

“*Who* put that there?” said Mary. Nobody said anything. But something queer happened to the golliwog’s black face. It couldn’t go red, because it was black. But it turned a deep purple. Everyone stared at him in surprise, and then they knew who had hidden the blue eye.

“So *you* hid it,” said Mary. “You naughty, spiteful toy. I suppose you think I’m going to take off the toy cat’s green eyes and give them back to you as buttons now that we have two blue eyes for her again. But I’m not. She can keep her green eyes now. She looks very handsome with them. As for you, it was a *very good punishment* to lose your lovely buttons and some of your hair. And, what is more, you shan’t come to the party.”

“Oh, let him come,” said the toy cat, so happy now because she had such beautiful green eyes that she simply couldn’t be unkind to anyone. “Let him come. I’ll forgive him. Give him a chance to be nice.”

So he came. But he was very quiet, and sad, and well-behaved. The toys all think he may be better now. But he does feel queer when he sees the toy cat staring at him through the buttons he once wore on his own velvet coat.

# Hidden Flowers

Here is a Hidden Flowers Puzzle. Do you know how to do it? In each sentence there is hidden the name of a flower you know. I will mark the flower in the first one, so that you will see how I hide the names.

1. Although Ida is younger than I am, she is much taller.  
(Can you see the name 'Daisy'?)
2. Jane and Eric love riding on the beach donkeys.
3. That fierce dog has terrified baby.
4. Tell the gardener to dig, or set seeds, or weed today.
5. You must work hard, Jane; money is not earned by laziness.
6. I should like to farm some nice land in England or Scotland.
7. Let us take the dog round Selsey Bill.
8. Haven't you washed the pots and pans yet, you lazy girl?
9. Windfall apples now drop off the trees.
10. Now all flowers are seen at their best.

Answers on page [160](#).

# The Old Red Cushion

Eileen's mother had been ill, but she was much better now. She was allowed to leave her room and go and sit downstairs in an armchair.

Eileen was pleased. It was lovely to see Mother down again, even if she did look rather pale and thin. The little girl fussed round her mother anxiously.

"Mother, which footstool do you want—or would you rather put your feet high up on a chair? Which pillow will you have? Or would you rather have a cushion?"

"I'll have that big cushion," said Mother. Eileen fetched it and tried to pack it gently behind her mother's back.

"It's rather a hard cushion," she said. "You want a down cushion, Mother—they're so very, very soft. Like the one Granny has. It's a pity Granny lives so far away or I could go and fetch it for you. I'm sure she would lend it to you."

"Oh, this one will do all right," said Mother, but Eileen could see that it wasn't very comfortable.

"Perhaps Daddy could buy you a nice soft cushion, just for your back, Mother," she said. But her mother shook her head.

"No, dear—and don't ask him, whatever you do. He has had such a lot of expense with me ill for so long. He can't afford a luxury like a new down cushion! I can easily make do with this one."

Eileen put a rug over her mother's knees and put her book beside her. Her mother thought what a kind, loving child she had. She smiled at her and Eileen smiled back.

"I do wish I could buy Mother a really soft cushion," thought Eileen, as she watched her mother trying to make herself comfortable with the big cushion behind her. "I know her back hurts her. I wonder how much money I've got in my money-box. I'll go and see."

She had two shillings, a sixpence, and three pennies, but that was all. Two and ninepence. Would that buy a cushion of any sort? Eileen felt certain that it wouldn't.

Still, she went to the little village shop to find out. Mrs. Bryan, the shop-woman, shook her head. "No, my dear," she said, "I've no cushions at that price. You'll never get a down cushion for so little. They cost a great deal of money. The cheapest cushion I've got is ten shillings—and that's not a soft one, either!"

Eileen went out of the shop sadly. It wasn't any good at all trying to get a nice new soft cushion. She went down the little winding street and came to the village sweet shop.

"I'll buy a few peppermint drops and take them to old Mrs. Johns," she thought suddenly. "I always used to go and see her each week, but I haven't been once since I've been looking after Mother. She does so love peppermint drops. I'll spend tuppence on them."

She bought the peppermint drops and set off to the tiny two-roomed cottage in which old Mrs. Johns lived all by herself. She was a very poor old woman, but she managed to keep her cottage spick and span, and always had a vase of flowers on her table.

Eileen knocked at the door. "Come in!" cried Mrs. Johns' rather quavery voice. Eileen pushed open the door and went in. There was old Mrs. Johns, sitting knitting in her rocking-

chair, rocking herself to and fro all the time.

“Well, if it isn’t little Miss Eileen!” said the old lady. “That means your mother’s a bit better, *I* know! Ah, I’ve wished I could send her something whilst she’s been ill—but I haven’t had a penny to spare, not one!”

Eileen knew how poor Mrs. Johns was. Once, when she broke her teapot, she had to make her tea in a jug for three weeks, because she hadn’t enough money to buy a new one. In the end Eileen gave her a little pot from her biggest doll’s tea-set and Mrs. Johns said it made the best tea she had ever had.

“I’ve brought you some peppermints,” said Eileen and put them in the old lady’s lap.

“That’s kind of you,” said Mrs. Johns and opened the bag with trembling hands. “My, what nice ones! And how’s your mother now? You tell me all about it.”

Eileen told her. She told her about the cushion, too. “I’ve been trying to buy one for her, to put behind her poor back,” she said. “But I’ve only got two and ninepence—no, two and sevenpence now—so I can’t. Daddy can’t buy one either, because there are so many bills to pay since Mother’s been ill.”

“Ah, it’s a hard world!” said Mrs. Johns. “Do you know I’ve got to move out of here, Miss Eileen? Yes, I have! My landlord’s going to raise the rent, and I can’t pay any more. So out I shall have to get!”

“Oh, Mrs. Johns—but you love this little cottage so much!” said Eileen. “Wherever will you go?”

“I’ll have to go to my niece, Sarah,” said Mrs. Johns gloomily. Eileen knew how she would hate that. Sarah was impatient and bad-tempered and would make life miserable for the old lady.

“Well, there now, don’t let’s think of such miseries!” said Mrs. Johns, beginning to knit again. “Let’s each have a peppermint drop and talk of nicer things!” As they talked, Mrs. Johns was thinking of what Eileen had said about the cushion. Her eyes went to the old sofa on which the little girl was sitting. There was an old red cushion there, very worn and shabby. But it was made of down!

“I’ve just thought of something!” said Mrs. Johns, beaming. “See that old red cushion behind you, Miss Eileen? Well, the inside of it is down! My old mother, she used to keep ducks, and she stuffed two pillows and a cushion with down. It’s as soft as can be, that cushion. You take it for your mother.”

“Oh—but I couldn’t take your cushion!” said Eileen. “And I told you I’ve only got two and sevenpence.”

“Well, now, I’ll tell you what to do with that money!” said Mrs. Johns. “You spend it on some stuff to make a pretty new cover! You can easily get some at the village shop. You can rip away that old red cover—it’s shabby and faded and the edging is ragged. Then you can make a new cover and slip it on and sew it up!”

“Oh!” said Eileen, delighted. “Yes, I could. Oh, Mrs. Johns—it’s a lovely idea! But you shouldn’t really give me your down cushion, I know you shouldn’t.”

“Oh, and who spent their money on buying me peppermint drops, I should like to know?” said Mrs. Johns. “And who gave me the best tea-pot out of her doll’s tea-set? And who . . .?”

Eileen laughed. “Those were only little things,” she said.

“And so is this only a little thing,” said Mrs. Johns. “You let me do a bit of kindness, too—it’s not often I can, a poor old woman like me! Now you take that old red cushion home with you and on the way buy a nice bit of stuff to cover it with. Then you can rip off the old cover

and put on the new one—and your mother will have a nice soft cushion for her poor back to-morrow!”

“*Thank* you,” said Eileen, and took up the old cushion. “I must go now. I’ll come and tell you whether I have made the cushion look nice or not in a day or two! And I do hope you won’t have to turn out of your dear little cottage!”

“Ah well, I’m praying it won’t be so,” said the old woman. “It’s nice to have your own little place when you’re old.”

On the way home Eileen bought some pretty red and blue stuff to make a new cushion cover. She felt very pleased. Kind old Mrs. Johns! Now Mother could have a really soft cushion.

At home that night Eileen set to work. She undid the old cover and slipped it off. Underneath was another cover, older still! It was a dirty green. Eileen took that off, too.

“Oh dear—there’s yet another one!” she said in dismay. “People have just put new covers on over the old ones—what a funny idea!”

As she was taking off the third old cover, something crackled underneath. Eileen felt it. It seemed like paper of some sort. How queer!

She took off the third cover—and there, sewn into a kind of pocket on the fourth cover, was a thin bundle of papers! The little girl pulled them out.

They were pound notes! Eileen stared at them in the greatest surprise. “Pound notes! Heaps of them! Whoever put them there?” she said in surprise. “Gracious, I wonder if Mrs. Johns knows about these! I wonder if it’s too late to go and tell her.”

Eileen was so excited that she slipped out of the house straight away and ran down to the village. Mrs. Johns was most surprised to see her.

“Mrs. Johns! Look what I’ve found inside your old red cushion!” cried Eileen. “First there was the red cover, then there was a green one and then a third one—and sewn in a kind of pocket on the fourth cover were these pound notes!”

“Pound notes—heaps of them!” said old Mrs. Johns. “So that’s what happened to my old mother’s savings! She always did say she’d hidden them away safely—but nobody knew where. And when she died, very suddenly, we could never find them.”

“So they belong *you*! Oh, Mrs. Johns, now you won’t have to leave your little cottage, will you?” cried Eileen. “You will have plenty of money to pay more rent.”

“So I shall, so I shall,” said the old woman, and a tear ran down her cheek. “To think of such a thing! Oh, Miss Eileen, it was the kind thought you had for your mother that’s brought all this good luck!”

“No, no—it was *your* kindness in giving me your down cushion!” cried Eileen. “Oh, I’m so glad for you, Mrs. Johns.”

“Now you take two pounds of this,” said Mrs. Johns. “You buy a fine present for your mother—and one for yourself!”

“Oh no!” said Eileen. “That’s a lot of money!”

“I feel rich now,” said Mrs. Johns. “I can repay my friends for the kindnesses they’ve so often shown me. And it’s a wonderful feeling to return a bit of kindness, Miss Eileen. You take the money now, straight away, and give me a bit of pleasure to-night, thinking of the fine presents you’ll buy!”

But Eileen would only take one pound note, to spend on her mother. She would spend it on fruit and books. She sped home to tell her mother all about it.



She finished covering the cushion. It was so soft—exactly what her mother wanted behind her back!

“It’s really lovely, dear,” said Mother, leaning back on it. “Just right. Thank you so much for covering it for me so beautifully! And now I must write a little note to thank Mrs. Johns for her kindness to me! I really can’t let her give you a pound to spend on me, poor old lady!”

But Eileen did spend it on her mother, and how she enjoyed it! She bought her grapes one day and a peach the next, and a new book the next, and a magazine the next. How nice it was to feel really extravagant like that!

Mrs. Johns didn’t have to move, of course. She had plenty of money now to pay more rent. Eileen went to see her the next week, and there, sitting on the sofa, was the biggest doll she had ever seen!

“Oh, what a beauty!” she said. “Is it for one of your great-nieces, Mrs. Johns?”

“It’s for a little girl I know,” said Mrs. Johns. “I’ve called the doll Eileen, after the little girl! It can shut and open its eyes, and all its clothes take off, right down to its vest. And look at its real eyelashes and its tiny fingernails! You’ll be her mother, Eileen, so see you look after her well!”

What do you think of that? Eileen could hardly believe it. She picked up the doll and nursed her. “I don’t deserve you,” she said. “I really don’t!”

But Mrs. Johns said she did—and I agree with her, don’t you?

# The Wrong Bus



Colin and Sue had gone to visit their Aunt Phyllis. She had given them a lovely time and then sent them off to catch their bus.

“You know which corner to wait at, don’t you?” she said. “The one by the big oak tree at the end of the winding lane. It always stops there.”

The children set off to catch the bus. Aunt Phyllis lived down in the country, and they loved the little winding lanes, the tall hedges, and the buttercup fields that lay all around.

“Is this the right lane we’ve turned down?” asked Sue suddenly. “I don’t seem to remember that stile over there.”

“Well, there’s a big oak-tree, look, at the end of it,” said Colin. “It must be all right. Let’s stand here and wait.”

There was a wooden seat at the end of the lane. On it several people were sitting. The children stared at them, rather surprised, for they looked a little peculiar.

There was an old man wearing a red hat with a long yellow feather in it. There were two old women, one with a brightly coloured parrot on her shoulder, and the other carrying a black cat with eyes as green as unripe apples. There was a young woman with a baby. The baby was the prettiest little thing the children had ever seen. But it had rather queer ears that stuck out at each side of its little blue bonnet. They were pointed and rather long. The little thing was holding a rattle that rang a dear little tune.

The bus came along just then. The people got up to get in. It was a very gay-looking bus, with red wheels, blue sides and a yellow top.

Colin and Sue did not wait till the people who wanted to get out had stepped on to the road. They pushed their way on to the bus in front of everyone, elbowing the old man aside as they did so.

“What bad manners!” said the old man. But Colin and Sue didn’t care. They had got on to the bus, and that was all that mattered to them.

They sat down. The bus was rather full. There was no room for one of the old women, and she stood in the gangway, holding on to a rail.

“Hey, boy! You get up and give this old woman your seat!” said the old man. “Don’t you know your manners? Isn’t your heart kind enough to pity an old dame who’s been marketing and is tired out?”

“I shall pay for my seat, and I expect to sit in it,” said Colin rudely. He always saw to it that he had the best of whatever was going. *He* wasn’t going to get up and give anyone his seat, not he!

Someone got out just then and the old lady sank down into the seat with a sigh. Another woman got in, carrying a small child. She stood in the gangway. The old woman poked Sue in the back. “Get up and offer your seat!” she said. “You can’t sit there and see somebody standing, carrying a heavy child.”



The children set off to catch the bus.

“Why don’t *you* get up?” said Sue cheekily.

“What terrible children!” said the old woman. Her black cat suddenly put out its paw and scratched Sue’s hand. She gave a scream and hit the cat hard. It scratched her again at once.

“Even my cat thinks you’re a bad child,” said the old woman. “Sooty never scratches anyone unless they are horrid!”

The baby in front of Colin dropped its rattle. Colin saw it drop, but he didn’t pick it up. He just sat there looking in front of him.

“Pick up my baby’s rattle, please,” said the young woman to Colin. “I can’t very well bend down with baby on my knee.”



Colin took no notice. *He* wasn't going to pick up a baby's rattle.

Colin took no notice. *He* wasn't going to pick up a baby's rattle!

"What an unpleasant boy!" said the old man and picked up the rattle himself.

As he bent down something fell out of his pocket. He didn't notice it. But Colin did. It was a small leather purse! Colin put his foot on it at once, and then, pretending to drop his handkerchief, he bent down and picked up the purse. He was just putting it into his pocket when the old woman's parrot called out loudly:

"He's a thief, he's a thief, he's a thief!"

Everyone began to look at everyone else. Who was a thief? The old man saw Colin's face turning red. He put his hand into his pocket and found that his purse was gone!

"Have you got my purse?" he cried. "Yes, you have, you bad boy! You must have picked it up. Give it to me back at once."

Colin looked sulkily. "I haven't got your purse," he said.

"He's telling stories, he's telling stories," said the annoying parrot and squawked loudly.

The conductor came up. He slipped his hand into Colin's pocket and took out the purse. Everyone gasped in horror.

"These children are not only bad-mannered, they are dishonest and untruthful and unkind," said the old man, shocked.

"Their mother and father must be simply *terrible!*" said the old woman with the cat.

"Yes. They must have taught their children all the wrong things," said the old man, shaking his head. "Very, very sad. They look quite nice children—but they're not, they're not!"

"I think we had better take them to the Wise Woman," said the old woman with the parrot. "She might be able to take away their bad father and mother and give them new ones who would teach them kindness and good manners and honesty. Parents are no use unless they do that."

"My mother is very good and sweet!" cried Sue. "Don't you dare to say anything against her!"

"And my father's a very busy doctor, who helps a lot of people, so don't you dare to say he's bad!" shouted Colin, feeling suddenly afraid. These people in the bus were queer. Had he and Sue taken the wrong bus?

“We can’t believe you,” said the old man. “If you had good parents, who taught you the right things, you would behave well, you would have good manners, you would be kind. But you are really horrid children.”

“And we have always noticed that horrid children usually have horrid parents,” said the old woman with the parrot. The parrot nodded its head violently.

“How could you be a thief if your parents were honest?” said the old man. “You must have copied them! How could you be untruthful if they were truthful? Children always copy their father and mother. We know exactly what the fathers and mothers are like when we see their children.”

“I tell you my father is kind and honest and everyone loves him! said Colin, scared.

“And my mother has the best manners of anyone I know!” wept Sue. “She has, she has!”

“Can’t believe it!” said the old man. “It’s quite impossible. Your mother must be just like you. I expect she would push her way on to a bus out of her turn, and get a seat before anyone else, and let old men and women stand, and she would steal someone’s purse, and——”



He bent down to pick up the purse.



“I see badness and unkindness in them,” she said.

“Oh, oh, how unkind you are to say such things!” sobbed Sue, thinking of her kind, gentle mother. “Mummy isn’t like that, she isn’t! She’s always kind.”

“We’d better go to the Wise Woman and look up the names of these children’s parents and see if by any chance what they say is true,” said the old man. “Conductor, will you stop the bus at the Wise Woman’s cottage, please?”

Half a minute later the bell rang and the bus stopped. Out got everyone, even the cat. They made their way to a queer little tumbledown cottage nearby, pushing the two scared children in front of them.

“We took the wrong bus!” whispered Colin to Sue. “Goodness knows who these people are, or where we’ve come to!”

The Wise Woman was a wonderful person. She was old, but she had a very young face. She was dressed in a long robe of purest blue, like the summer sky outside. There was something queer about this dress, for it shifted and shone like mist.

The old man explained what they had come for. The Wise Woman turned her eyes on to the two children. “I see badness and unkindness in them,” she said in a voice that sounded like the murmuring of waves. “Their hearts are hard. Yes, I think we must change their parents and give them better ones. No child can grow up right if it has bad parents, who spoil it or make it unkind and untrustworthy.”

She took up a long silver staff and began to point it first at Sue and then at Colin. “What are you doing?” cried Colin in alarm. “We don’t want new parents. We love ours. They are good and kind!”

“Perhaps I had better make sure that these children’s parents *are* bad,” said the Wise Woman, and she took up a round mirror. She looked deeply into it. Colin tried to peep into it, too, but, instead of his own face, all he could see was a swirling mist.

The Wise Woman was silent for a few minutes. Everyone waited patiently. Sue began to tremble. How dreadful if their bad behaviour lost them their father and mother. She didn’t want new ones.

“Now this is a strange thing,” said the Wise Woman, putting down the mirror. “These children have told the truth about their father and mother. They are kind, good parents, but they are too gentle and too trustful. They believe that their children are honest and sweet and kind—and because the children are deceitful, and only behave badly when they are away from home, their parents have no idea what bad manners and hard hearts they really have!”

“Bad children come from bad parents,” said the old man obstinately. “We’ve always known that. Look at a child, watch the way he behaves—and you know what kind of a mother he’s got!”

“That’s right,” said the old woman with the parrot. “When I see a child with no manners, I say: ‘His mother doesn’t know any either, so he hasn’t been taught!’ Wise Woman, change these children’s parents. They must be bad, whatever your mirror says.”

Sue began to sob loudly. Colin went very pale. “Please,” he said, “give us another chance. I know that a bad father and mother do make bad children—but this time it’s we who are in the wrong. We wouldn’t learn. We’ve got good parents, really we have—but we’ve let them down. We behave as if we’ve got bad ones.”

“But we won’t again,” said Sue, wiping her eyes. “We never thought that people judged our parents by the way *we* behaved. If I’d known you were thinking that our father and mother were so bad, I’d have behaved better. But I will now, if you’ll give us a chance.”

“I always give people chances,” said the Wise Woman, looking at the children with her deep, clear eyes. “You, too, shall have your chance. Catch the next bus home—the right one this time. You caught the wrong bus before—but if you’ve learnt a lesson from me and all these people, it will not matter. Now go!”

The children fled away at once. They saw a bus rumbling down the street. It stopped nearby and they jumped on it. They looked round. Yes—the people looked quite ordinary this

time. There were no black cats, no talkative parrots, no babies with pointed ears. At the next stop an old lady got in. At once Colin stood up and offered her his seat. She sat down gratefully.

“What a nice-mannered child!” she said to her neighbour. “He’s got a good mother, no doubt about that!”

What a strange adventure, wasn’t it? I wonder what people think *your* father and mother are like when they watch how you behave? Think for a minute and you’ll know!



The children fled away at once.



Colin stood up and offered her his seat.

1. Daisy.
2. Clover.
3. Aster.
4. Gorse.
5. Anemone.
6. Celandine.
7. Groundsel.
8. Pansy.
9. Snowdrop.
10. Wallflower.



# The Talking Doll

Uncle George brought the wonderful doll home with him from somewhere far away. “Guess what I’ve got for you!” he said to Doreen. “Just guess!”

As soon as he put the long box on the table Doreen guessed. “A doll! Oh, Uncle George, is it a big doll?”

“Right first time,” said Uncle George. “It’s the most beautiful doll you’ve ever seen, Doreen. And she looks so real you would almost think she was alive. She stands, and she walks just like you do!”

He took off the lid—and there, lying down in the tissue paper, was the most wonderful doll Doreen had ever seen in her life. She was a big doll, with dark brown curly hair, blue eyes with real eyelashes that curled down and then up, just like Doreen’s, and a pretty smiling mouth that showed white teeth.

“Uncle! It’s the loveliest doll I ever saw!” cried Doreen and she gave Uncle George a hug. “Oh, isn’t she beautiful! I shall keep her all to myself and never, never let anyone even hold her!”

“Oh, you mustn’t be a selfish little girl,” said Uncle George at once. “You must share her with your friends. They will all love her too. You share her, Doreen!”

“I couldn’t!” said Doreen, taking out the lovely doll and cuddling her. “She’s mine, all mine. I shall call her Princess Marigold because she looks just like a princess doll.”

Princess Marigold was certainly the finest doll that anyone in that town had seen. She was not only beautiful, but she was clever. She stood steadily on her two feet just like you—and if you turned a key three or four times in her back she began to walk across the room, putting one foot in front of the other in such a life-like way that everyone cried out in surprise to see her.

She could open and shut her eyes, too, and she could look at you in such a real manner that sometimes people thought she must be alive. Doreen was delighted with her and very proud indeed.

She gave Princess Marigold her best dolls’ cot, and she washed all the sheets and blankets so that the new doll could have a nice clean bed. She dressed and undressed her, and brushed her pretty hair twice a day. Nobody could have looked after a doll better than Doreen did.

At first Princess Marigold was very pleased to be living with Doreen. “What a good, kind little girl!” she thought, as she cuddled down into the cot that night and shut her lovely blue eyes. “I am lucky to live here.”

But after a while she changed her mind. Doreen was good and kind to her doll because she was so proud of her and wanted to show her off to all her friends . . . but she wasn’t very good or kind to anyone else. She was rude to her mother, she was disobedient, she was rough with the girls and boys who came to tea with her. In fact, she was one of those unpleasant children that all of us have met at some time or another.

Princess Marigold was shocked at her behaviour when Allan, Pam and Winnie came to tea to see the new doll. As soon as her mother had gone out of the room Doreen began to show off

and be silly.

She pulled Allan's tie undone. She undid the back of Pam's dress and wouldn't do it up again. She pulled off Winnie's slide and hid it. All the time she giggled and chattered, showing off in such a stupid manner that Allan began to think about going home. "I shall go home if you act like that, Doreen," he said. "Don't be so silly."

"Yes, she's silly," chimed in a voice. "She's often silly! She's the silliest girl I ever saw. You go home, Allan."

Doreen spun round in a rage and looked at the three children. "Who said that? Who said I'm silly?"

"I don't know," said Allan, puzzled. "I didn't."

"Nor did I," said Pam, and Winnie shook her head, too. Nobody knew that it was the doll, Princess Marigold, who had spoken.

"I shall tell my mother of you!" cried Doreen, stamping her feet.

"Tell-tale!" called the voice again. "Sneak. Tell-tale!"

"You're not to call me names!" shouted Doreen, and she went to the toy-cupboard door, sat down beside the toys there, and began to pull them out. "I shan't speak to you! I shan't play with you! I shan't show you my new doll."

"Baby! Spoilt baby!" said the voice, and Pam, Allan and Winnie looked at one another, puzzled. Which of them was saying all this?

They heard the sound of little footsteps and turned. It was Princess Marigold, walking over to them. The three children gave a cry of delight.

"Oh, what a lovely doll! Oh, how clever she is! Look at her walking!"

Doreen swung round in a rage. "Who set her walking? Don't you dare to touch my new doll!"

But by this time Princess Marigold was right over by the children and they were all kneeling down, petting her. She blinked her eyes at them as if she was quite real.

"She seems almost alive!" said Winnie. "Oh, come on to my knee, Princess Marigold!"

But before she could take the doll on her knee Doreen pulled her roughly away—and the doll fell to the ground.

"She's always rough!" complained the doll. "What she wants is a good spanking!"

"How dare you say things like that to me, Pam—or was it you, Winnie?" cried Doreen. "I'll smack you!"

And she gave both the startled girls a slap each. Winnie began to howl—and in came Doreen's mother at once. "What's the matter? What are you doing?"

"She took my doll," wailed Doreen, who always got her complaint in first. "She's a bad girl, Winnie is!"

"No. *You're* the bad girl!" said the doll. "You're telling stories, too. You're very, very bad!"

Doreen's mother didn't know it was the doll talking. She thought it was one of the children. "Oh, Doreen," she said, "surely you haven't been rough with the others? You know that they are your guests!"

"You're not to take their part, Mother, you're not to!" cried Doreen, and she lost her temper. "You're horrid, too. I don't like you!"

"Isn't she really disgusting?" said the doll in a loud voice. "I never saw such behaviour in my life. Why doesn't somebody whip her?"

Doreen's mother looked very uncomfortable. She thought that Allan, Pam or Winnie was saying all this. Oh dear—had Doreen got into one of her rough moods again? "Now, now," she said, "we won't say horrid things, any of us. We'll go down to tea. The doll can come, too."

So Princess Marigold went with the children, though she did hope she wouldn't have to sit next to Doreen. She rather liked Allan. She thought he was a nice boy.

Marigold was put between Doreen and Allan. Tea began. It was a nice tea, and there were chocolate buns, which were Doreen's favourites.

Doreen was greedy. She helped herself to all she wanted, but she didn't bother about looking to see if the plates of her guests were empty or if she could pass them anything.

"Look after your guests, dear," her mother said.

"Oh, Mother, don't fuss so," said Doreen rudely. "They can look after themselves!"

"Fancy talking to her mother like that," said Marigold in a loud voice that made everyone jump. Nobody guessed it could possibly be the doll. They all wondered which of them had spoken.

"And isn't she greedy?" said the doll. "And such bad manners, too! Never offers anyone anything. I expect she will gobble up more chocolate buns than anyone!"

Doreen burst into tears. "Mother! Why do you let people talk like that about me! I won't have Allan, Pam or Winnie to tea with me again. I won't!"

She got down from her chair, dragging the tablecloth with her as she did so and upsetting the cups of milk. "There she goes again!" said the doll. "Rude and careless and clumsy! Spoilt child!"

"Who said that?" cried Doreen in a rage. The children shook their heads.

"I didn't," said Allan. And Pam and Winnie said the same. Then Allan said something queer.

"I believe it's your new doll," he said. "I'm sure it is! After all, if she is clever enough to open and shut her eyes, and stand up, and walk, she may be clever enough to talk too. I'm sure it's Princess Marigold."

"Oh no, dear, it can't be!" said Doreen's mother, smiling. "Dolls could never say things like that. Sit down again and behave yourself, Doreen."

"I shan't," said Doreen, and she snatched up the doll and ran out of the room. "And it *isn't* my doll talking! It was Allan, I'm sure! He just said that so that he wouldn't be blamed for saying horrid things about me! I won't play with any of you."

She ran upstairs and sat down in a chair, tears of anger in her eyes. She put the doll on the floor beside her.

"Well, you ought to be ashamed of your behaviour!" said the doll in a severe voice, and looked up at Doreen out of her big blue eyes.

There was nobody in the room except Doreen and the doll. Nobody at all. So Doreen knew for certain that it *must* be the doll talking! She glared down at her.

"So it *is* you who can talk like that! That's a marvellous thing for a doll to be able to do—but just hold your tongue unless you have nice things to say to me!"

"I shall go on saying exactly what I think," said Marigold. "It's time somebody did. You're a spoilt, selfish child, and nobody tells you so. So I shall go on telling you so till you stop behaving so badly!"

Doreen looked down at the doll. What a very, very peculiar thing! Fancy having a doll who could really talk! Doreen felt cross with Marigold for saying such things to her—but she

couldn't help feeling pleased to have such a very clever doll! How she would boast about her at school! But she must certainly stop her from being so horrid to her.

"You can talk all you like," she said to Marigold, "but I warn you—if you say one single horrid thing about me I'll spank you and put you to bed!"

"I don't stay with children like you," said the doll scornfully. "I can walk. I shall walk away."

"You're a very, very bad doll," said Doreen angrily. "I've a good mind to undress you, put your nightdress on, spank you and put you into your cot!"

"Don't you dare!" said Marigold, and she stamped her little foot. Then Doreen snatched up the doll and began to undress her.

"All right!" she said. "You just see what I do with bad, naughty dolls!"

The doll struggled hard. Doreen tore her pretty frock as she took it off. She took off the petticoats and vest, and pulled her night-gown over Marigold's head. Then she set her roughly on the floor.

"I'll get your hair-brush," she said. "And first I'll brush your hair with it and then I'll spank you."

But Marigold was not going to stay a moment longer. She got up, and began to run towards the door. And there she met Allan, Pam and Winnie just coming in!

"Stop her, stop her!" shouted Doreen.

"No, let me through!" cried Marigold. "I won't live with such a horrid girl. I'll find somebody else! Let me through!"

The children stood aside, and she ran down the passage and came to the stairs. She slipped and fell. She rolled down the stairs from top to bottom, then picked herself up and ran out of the garden door.

"I know where the gate is!" she panted. "If only I can get there before Doreen."

She did, because Allan tried to stop Doreen, and by the time the angry little girl got downstairs, the doll was nowhere to be seen.

"Where did she go? Has anyone seen her? Stop her, stop her!" cried Doreen. But nobody had seen Marigold slipping out of the gate, and Doreen had to go crying back to the nursery.

"She's run away," she sobbed. "In her nightdress, too. And oh, she was so beautiful and so clever! I can't *think* why she should run away from me!"

Well, Allan, Pam and Winnie could think of the reason quite easily, but they were too polite to say it. They thought they had better say goodbye and go home. And on the way home they laughed.

"Fancy a *doll* telling Doreen what she thought of her!" said Allan. "And running away, too. I only wish she'd come to *my* home!"

She didn't go to Allan's home, or Pam's or Winnie's. I suppose she was afraid of meeting Doreen again if she did. But she must have gone to somebody's, and I'd *love* to know whose!

# Bicycle Magic

“If I could only get hold of Slippery-One I’d soon pop him into prison,” said Mr. Grim, the policeman.

“That’s just it,” said Wiggles, the pixie. “He always seems to get away with things! He’s too clever. If he steals anything he pretends it was given to him—or he took it by mistake—or he’s so clever that nobody *knows* he’s stolen it, though we all think he has!”

“We want a bit of magic to deal with him!” said Derry, the goblin. “If you’re dealing with clever people you’ve got to be clever yourself.”

“Well,” said Wiggles to Derry, “*we’re* clever, aren’t we? We ought to be able to get the better of Slippery-One. We’d better try!” So they went off together and thought very hard. And then Wiggles had an idea.

“Suppose Slippery-One came along and saw me with a very fine bicycle, what do you think he would do?” he said to Derry.

“Borrow it,” said Derry at once. “Borrow it and never give it back! But you haven’t got a fine new bicycle, Wiggles.”

“No. But I could have if you’d let me do a little magic,” said Wiggles.

“What do you mean?” asked Derry.

“Well,” said Wiggles, “I know how to turn people into bicycles, Derry—but only if they’ll *let me*. I suppose you wouldn’t let me turn *you* into one, would you? Just for an hour or two, till we’ve caught Slippery-One properly. I promise to turn you back into yourself after that.”

Derry looked rather doubtful. “Are you sure you *could* turn me back into myself?” he asked. “I don’t want to live in the shed for the rest of my life and be ridden by you all day long.”

“Oh, Derry, as if I’d do such a thing as that!” said Wiggles. “You know I wouldn’t. I’m your best friend, aren’t I?”

“Yes, you are,” said Derry. “Well, I’ll trust you, then. But what’s your idea?”

“Listen,” said Wiggles, getting excited. “I’ll turn you into a shining new bicycle—and I’ll ride you down the road where Slippery-One lives—and I’ll get off and lean you against the fence by his house and do up my shoe-lace or something. . . .”

“And Slippery-One is sure to come out and borrow the bicycle—borrow *me*, because I’ll be the bicycle!” said Derry. “And I’ll go straight off to the police-station with him! We’ll warn Mr. Grim to expect us. Oh my, what fun!”

Well, the next thing was for Wiggles to change Derry into a new bicycle. He knew the spell, and, if Derry was willing, it would work all right. And, sure enough, it did! Derry suddenly changed into a very fine new bicycle, with a gleaming pair of wheels, a shining bell, and a pair of rubber pedals that could make the bicycle go very fast indeed.

“Oh, Derry, you look beautiful!” said Wiggles and he got on to the saddle. The bell rang. That was the only way Derry had of talking now! Whenever he wanted to get Wiggles’s attention Derry rang his own bell! R-r-r-r-r-ring!

Wiggles rode off. He came into the road where Slippery-One lived, and then, just by the brownie's house, he got off the bicycle and leaned it against the fence.

He bent down as if he was doing up his shoe. Slippery-One spotted the shining new bicycle at once and his eyes gleamed. He came out of his front door.

"Hallo, Wiggles," he said. "That's a wonderful new bike you've got."

"Isn't it!" said Wiggles. "Have a look at it. Brand new to-day!" Slippery-One longed to have a bicycle just like that. "Can I ring the bell?" he said, and he rang it. "Oh—what a lovely bell!"

Then he touched the lamp. "Will it light?" he asked. "Can I put it on? Oh, what a fine light it gives!"

Then he saw the pump. "I say, what a fine black pump! Do let me just pump up one of the tyres to see how well the pump works."

"Certainly, certainly!" said Wiggles, so Slippery-One pumped up the back tyre.

Then he ran his hand over the saddle. "What a nice saddle! Could I just sit on it for a moment?"

"Of course!" said Wiggles, so Slippery-One sat on the saddle, balancing himself by holding with one hand to the fence. He worked the pedals round and round with his feet.

"What nice pedals!" he said. "I say, Wiggles—let me just ride to the end of the road and back for a treat, will you?"

"Yes, yes, certainly," said Wiggles and winked to himself. Wasn't that just what he knew Slippery-One would say? And didn't he know that the brownie was planning to ride off with the bicycle, hide it somewhere, and then come back with a long story about someone stealing it from him? Ho, ho—he knew Slippery-One all right! The brownie set off on the bicycle. He rode to the corner—but he didn't turn round and come back. No, he went straight on! He knew a place on the common where he could hide that bicycle. But the bicycle wouldn't go there. To Slippery-One's great surprise it began to ring its bell violently and to go very fast indeed! It turned a corner Slippery-One didn't want to turn. It went a way he didn't want it to go. It was a most extraordinary and most annoying bicycle.

Slippery-One felt frightened. But he couldn't get off because the bicycle was going much too fast, and it took no notice of the brakes at all! Slippery-One felt very scared indeed.

"Where are you going?" he yelled to the bicycle. And the bell rang in answer, "R-r-r-ring!" But Slippery-One didn't know what it meant.

The bicycle rode straight to the police-station—and oh, my goodness, it rode straight up the steps, bump-bump-bump, and into the big room where Mr. Grim and two other policemen were waiting! It stopped suddenly and Slippery-One fell off.

"Thank you, Derry," said Mr. Grim and clapped his hand on Slippery-One's shoulder. The brownie stared round in surprise. Derry? Where was Derry? "R-r-r-ring!" said the bicycle bell, and then suddenly Wiggles ran into the police-station and gave the brown saddle a hearty smack.

"Bilderoonapookyliptikinna!" he cried, which is the magic word used for turning bicycles back into people.

"Bilderoonapookyliptikinna!"

And at once Derry changed from a bicycle back to himself again. You should have seen Slippery-One's astonished face.

"So that was why you wouldn't go the way I wanted you to!" he said at last. Derry grinned.

“That was why!” he said. “My word, you’re heavy, Slippery-One. I shouldn’t like to carry you for long! Your weight squashed my tyres almost flat!”

“Say goodbye to him,” boomed Mr. Grim. “You won’t be seeing him for quite a while. Come along with me, Slippery-One. Your slippery days are over.”

And that was the last the village saw of him for a very long time. As for Derry, he was made quite a hero, but when people begged him to turn into a bicycle and let them ride him he shook his head.

“No, thank you!” he said. “I might get a puncture—and then when I turned back into myself again I’d have a hole in one of my feet! No thank you!”

# The Toys go on Strike!

“*Will* you stand up!” cried Betty to Amanda, her doll. “You’re a very bad, disobedient girl! You just *won’t* stand up!”

It wasn’t surprising that Amanda wouldn’t stand up, because she couldn’t. She was a sit-down doll, and she sat down beautifully. But she couldn’t bend her legs straight to stand up.

Betty slapped her hard, then threw her into a corner. Amanda fell on her face, and a little bit was chipped out of her pretty nose.

“My train is just as annoying as your doll,” said Tom. “These carriages have got so locked together that I can’t see how to undo them. Bother them!”

He tugged and pulled so roughly that he broke the little hooks that joined the carriages together. Then, when he tried to set his train properly on the rails, the carriages couldn’t be joined at all, because the hooks and loops were broken.

Tom kicked his train and it fell over on its side. Then he stamped on one of the rails. He was in a very bad temper. He looked about for something else to do. He saw his box of bricks and kicked that round the room, too, so that the bricks flew here, there and everywhere!

“Let’s go out!” said Tom. “I hate these silly toys! They really seem to *try* and be stupid!”

“Well, let’s hope they will behave themselves this afternoon, when John and Pamela come to tea,” said Betty. “I’ve a good mind to put Amanda at the back of the cupboard and not let her come to tea at all. Pretending that she can’t stand up!”

The children went out of the room, and soon the toys heard them playing in the garden. Amanda the doll began to cry, because she knew her nose had been chipped.

The golliwog spoke up. “Toys! I know we are not supposed to come alive until it’s dark—but really, we simply *must* do something about these horrid children! Amanda, stop crying. I’ll mend your nose for you.”

The golliwog fetched a little tube of glue and found the broken chip of china on the floor. He fixed it on Amanda’s nose with a spot of glue.

“There!” he said. “You look all right again. Stop crying, or your tears will unstick the glue. Smile! That’s better.”

The old teddy-bear spoke loudly and gloomily. “What a pity we belong to children like these! Look at my neck. Betty cut some of my fur off the other day.”

“Well, what about *me!*” said the pink cat. “Tom pulled my tail off. There it is, on the floor of the cupboard. I feel cold at the back without my tail and I’m sure I look dreadful!”

“Look at us—all over the floor again, sure to be kicked about and trodden on,” said a brick, crossly. “I’ve got a bit broken off me already. It’s a shame. We bricks used to build lovely houses and castles. But nowadays we are only flung about the room and trodden on!”

“Half my hair has gone,” said the curly-haired doll, Janet. “It used to be so pretty.”

She opened and shut her eyes. She was a very clever doll, for she could not only open and shut her eyes, she could walk, and she could say “Mama” to Betty when a string was pulled at her neck.

“Let’s go on strike!” said the golliwog suddenly. The toys stared at him.



“What does that mean?” asked the bear. “It sounds as if you wanted us to be matches and strike. I don’t want to burst into flames, thank you.”

The golliwog laughed. “No, it doesn’t mean that. When workmen go on strike it means that they stop work and won’t do any more till their troubles are put right. It isn’t a very noble thing to do—but we might try it with Betty and Tom, just to see if it makes any difference in their behaviour.”

“Well—but how can we go on strike?” asked Amanda, puzzled. “We don’t do any work.”

“We won’t play with the children any more!” said the golliwog. “See? If they build up the bricks, then the bricks must fall down. If they send the engine round the rails, then it must fall off and refuse to run. If they try to make you shut and open your eyes, Janet, you must shut them and refuse to open them. Clockwork clown, if they wind you up, you mustn’t go head-over-heels at all.”

“It sounds rather a good idea,” said the little clock-work mouse. “If they wind me up, I shall run into a hole and not come out!”

“Splendid!” said the golliwog. “Now, hush! Here come the children back again!”

Mother came in with the children. She made them tidy up the nursery at once. “Bricks and toys all over the place!” she said. “How badly you treat your lovely toys! I’m ashamed of you!”

Betty and Tom sulked. They put their toys away and then went to wash for dinner. “We’ll show Pamela how Janet opens and shuts her eyes, and walks and talks,” said Betty to Tom. “She hasn’t a doll as clever as that!”

“And I’ll show John how fast my train goes on its railway lines,” said Tom. “He’s only got an ordinary train, a wooden one that doesn’t wind up.”

“And we’ll build a very high castle with our bricks,” said Betty. “And we’ll wind up the clown and make him go head-over-heels a hundred times.”

The toys listened. Aha! Betty and Tom could make all the plans they liked. If the toys didn’t want to play, they wouldn’t.

Pamela and John came at three o’clock. They were two very nice children, with good manners. They were thrilled to see all the toys in the nursery, for they hadn’t nearly such nice ones in their own home.

“I’ll show you how fast my train goes,” said Tom, and he wound up the engine. He fastened as many trucks on as he could, except the ones he had broken that morning. He set a tunnel over the lines. He put the signal near, ready to work the signal arm up and down. “Now you watch!” he said. “My train will go roaring round the track, under the tunnel and past the signal. You just watch. It’s marvellous!”

But it wasn’t a bit marvellous. First the lines broke here and there and Tom had to put them together again. Then the signal fell over on to the line. Then the tunnel got too near the rails and there wasn’t enough room for the train to pass, so it upset the tunnel and stopped.

When everything was put right, the engine ran right off the lines and fell over, its wheels turning fast in the air.

“It doesn’t seem a very good railway set you’ve got,” said John. “Everything keeps going wrong. I think I prefer my own wooden train at home. You should see the loads it can carry!”

“Pooh!” said Tom rudely and wound up his engine again. But it ran straight off the rails into his ankle and spilt all its trucks round him! It just would *not* go! It was on strike!

Then Betty showed Janet, the clever doll, to Pamela. “She opens and shuts her eyes, and walks and talks,” she said. “Now look.”

Janet shut her eyes—but she wouldn't open them! Betty shook her hard, but it wasn't a bit of good! Janet was on strike and wouldn't open her pretty blue eyes. She wouldn't walk either. And instead of saying "Ma-ma" when the string at her neck was pulled she said "Ha-ha!" just as if she was laughing at Betty.

"Stupid doll!" said Betty and threw her down. "I hate her!"

"Don't be so rough with her," said Pamela, picking up Janet and rocking her gently. "She's a darling."

Janet opened her eyes at once and looked up at Pam. Pamela was delighted. "There! She's opened her eyes for *me*!"

Betty snatched the doll from her. Janet at once shut her eyes and refused to open them.

"She's on strike!" said Pamela with a laugh. "She doesn't like you, so she won't do anything for you!"

"Don't be silly," said Betty, but secretly she felt very puzzled. Why wouldn't Janet open her eyes for her and yet open them at once for Pam?

The children began to build with their bricks. Betty and Tom had half and Pam and John had half as well. But no matter how carefully Betty tried to balance her bricks on one another, they fell off with a thud. Neither she nor Tom could build even a wall!

But the bricks behaved very well for Pam and John, and the two built a very fine castle indeed, with tall towers at each end!

"The bricks will build for us, but not for you," said John with a laugh. "You said you hated your doll just now, Betty—well, it almost looks as if your toys hate you!" Nothing went right that afternoon for Betty and Tom. The clockwork mouse was wound up to run across the floor, but instead of that he ran into a real mouse-hole and wouldn't come out! And the clockwork clown wouldn't turn head-over-heels, even when he was fully wound up. He just wouldn't. He stood there on his head, but that was all. He wouldn't go over and over.

But as soon as Pam picked him up and set him down on the floor he performed beautifully. "He likes me," said Pam. "But he doesn't like you, Tom. Wind him up again and see if he will somersault for you."

But no, he wouldn't. Tom went red and felt very angry. John wouldn't let him slap the clown or throw him down. "No, don't be rough and unkind," he said. "Nearly all your lovely toys are chipped or spoilt or broken in some way. No wonder they won't do anything for you!"

Even their ball bounced away out of the window when Tom took it up! Nothing would play with them at all. It really was very queer.

"We'll have to go now," said Pam, when the visit was over. "Thank you for having us. And do be nice to your toys in future. I'm sure they're all on strike. I should be very much ashamed if *my* toys wouldn't play with me!"

Tom stared at Betty when they were alone in the nursery again. "Queer, isn't it, Betty?" he said. "It really does seem as if our toys are on strike."

"We shouldn't have been so horrid and impatient with them!" said Betty, almost in tears. "Let's be nicer. It was awful when our toys wouldn't do anything for us—but all kinds of things for Pam and John!"

"All right. We'll be nicer and see if the toys stop striking!" said Tom. "But I'm sure they won't!"

The clockwork mouse suddenly ran out of the hole and raced across the floor to Tom. The clown began turning head-over-heels at once. Janet opened her eyes, looked at Betty and said

“Ma-ma” quite clearly!

“Look at that!” said Tom. “I believe the toys must have heard what we said. And look—my engine is making a whirring noise. I believe it wants to show me that it *can* go round the rails without rushing off them!”

He put it on the rails and it rushed round and round most beautifully without once falling off. “There you are!” said Tom. “It’s quite all right now. The toys aren’t on strike any more. And I hope they never will be again.”

Well, they won’t if Betty and Tom keep their word. Have *your* toys ever been on strike? I hope not!

# Funny Little Dancing Doll

Once I went out to tea with a little girl who played the piano well. On the top of her piano I saw some queer little dolls.

“What are they there for?” asked my little friend.

“To dance when I play!” she said, and she sat down and played a merry tune. And, will you believe it, all the dolls danced!

She told me how to make them, and now I will tell you.

Get a fair-sized bottle cork and cut it to the shape in picture 1, or ask Mother to cut it for you. Stick in two matches with sharpened ends to make arms. Get two stout bristles from a clothes-brush or dog-brush and push them into holes at the bottom of the cork as shown in pictures 2 and 3. You can prepare these holes with a pin.

Now give your doll a face, and stick tissue paper round her for a dress. Make her a little paper hat and a paper sash. Now stand her on the piano and play a merry tune. How she will dance for you!

# “I was Here First!”

“Take my white ducks to the pond on the green,” said Mr. Flip to Bong, his servant.

“Take my goat to graze up on the common,” said Mrs. Flap to Bing, her servant.

So Bing set out from his end of the village of Woosh with the goat, and Bong set out from his end of the village with a row of white waddling ducks.

Now to get to the pond and to the common each had to climb over a stile. They met at the stile at exactly the same moment.

Bong threw out his chest and put his leg on the step to climb over before Bing.

Bing at once put his nose in the air and stepped on the stile to get over before Bong.

“I was here first,” said Bong, glaring.

“Indeed you were not!” said Bing.

“You always were one to push yourself first, no matter where you are!” said Bong.

“And there isn’t a person in Woosh who hasn’t had your elbows poked into him in a crowd!” said Bing.

“You’re a very rude person,” said Bong. “I’ve a good mind to report you to Mr. Plod, the policeman.”

“Well, go and report me now, and I’ll be able to get over the stile!” answered back Bing smartly.

“You think yourself very clever, don’t you?” said Bong angrily. “Let me pass!”

“I’m going to climb over first!” said Bing, and he actually put his leg over the stile. Bong put his, too. Then they had to sit on the top of the stile, because neither could get over whilst the other was there. They glared at one another again.

“I shall box your ears,” said Bong at last.

“Try it,” said Bing fiercely.

“I’ll give you such a punch that you’ll fall off and screech for help.”

They sat there, sulking hard. Neither of them quite dared to hit the other. “If I sit here all day I shan’t let you climb over before I do!” said Bong. “So put that in your pipe and smoke it.”

“I don’t smoke,” said Bing, “and if I did I wouldn’t bother to put anything in my pipe that *you* said! It’s well-known that you are the stupidest fellow in the village.”

“Ho! Well, whose grandmother can’t read?” yelled Bong.

“Yours!” said Bing at once. “And whose father once tried to build a house and put the roof on first? Ho, ho, that was a joke!”

“What dreadful untruths you make up,” said Bong. “You’re not worth talking to.”

“And you’re not worth listening to!” said Bing. Then, because they couldn’t think of anything to say for a minute they both sat in silence, their noses in the air. They had forgotten all about their ducks and goat. The ducks wandered off through a gap in the hedge and found the village pond. They got in and began to swim happily.

The goat made its way through the gap, too, and found a nice patch of grass up on the common. It was soon eating contentedly.

Presently along came old Mr. Stamp-About. He was a bad-tempered old fellow, as everyone knew. He was surprised to see the two servants sitting on the stile, side by side. “Hey, you!” he said. “What are you doing, wasting your time like that? Come on down and let me get over.”

Neither Bing nor Bong moved. Each was afraid that if he did the other would hop over at once. So they sat and stared at Mr. Stamp-About.

He stamped in anger. “Are you deaf and dumb? Get down off the stile and let me over!”

“Er—you get down first, Bing,” said Bong.

“No. You get down,” said Bing.

“After you!” said Bong, pretending to be polite.

“What’s all this!” cried Mr. Stamp-About and he stamped again. “Get down off that stile at once! Sitting there like that, preventing people from passing. I never heard of such a thing!”

“Well—you see,” began Bong, “it’s like this. I got here first, and——”

“What do I care which of you got here first?” cried Mr. Stamp-About and his face turned red with rage. “Take that, Bong—and you take that, Bing! *Now* will you let me pass!”

He boxed Bong’s ears so hard that Bong fell off the stile. Then he slapped Bing’s face and Bing fell off the stile, too. They both hit their heads hard on the ground and yelled loudly. Mr. Stamp-About climbed over the stile, treading heavily on both Bing and Bong, and disappeared over the field.

“I’m hurt!” wept Bong. “Look at this awful bruise.”

“And I’m sure I’ve broken my leg,” said Bing and tried to stand up. He limped a few steps. Then he suddenly stopped and looked all round.

“Where’s the goat?” he said, looking scared.

“And where are the ducks?” said Bong, his eyes nearly popping out of his head.

“They’re gone!” said Bing. “What will Mrs. Flap say when I get back and tell her I’ve lost the goat?”

“And what will Mr. Flip *do* when I tell him I’ve lost his ducks?” groaned Bong. “Oh my—why were we so silly?”

They both went groaning back to their master and mistress. “What, my ducks lost!” cried Mr. Flip. “Well, you go and look all over the country-side and find them, Bong—and not a bite do you get till you bring them home!”

“My goat gone! Well, you go and hunt everywhere for it!” cried Mrs. Flap to Bing. “Not a meal do you get till you bring it home behind you!”

Bing and Bong set off, sore and hungry. They hunted here and they hunted there. They walked for miles looking for the ducks and calling for the goat. And at last, in the evening, Bong found the ducks swimming gaily on the village pond not a minute’s walk from the stile. And Bing found the goat on the common not a minute’s walk from the stile, too!

Bong collected the ducks. Bing called the goat. They began to make their way home—and they met at the stile again.

“After you, Bing!” said Bong, in a most polite voice.

“No, no—I’ve learnt my lesson this time!” said Bing. “After you, please!”

“My dear Bing, I wouldn’t dream of climbing over first,” said Bong.

“And you may be sure I wouldn’t push over in front of *you*,” said Bing.

An angry roar disturbed them. It was Mr. Stamp-About coming home from his day’s visit to his sister. “WHAT! You still here? You just wait and I’ll knock your wooden heads together till they drop off! You just wait!”

But they didn't wait! They both climbed over at exactly the same moment, lost their balance, fell to the ground, howled, and picked themselves up. Then they rushed off in different directions, the ducks waddling in surprise after Bong, and the goat capering round Bing. What a pair!

"Ninnies!" burst out Mr. Stamp-About. "Wooden-heads! Donkeys! Geese! That's what they are!"

And really, I think he was right, don't you?

# The Dirty Old Hat



Once Flibberty went to have a cup of tea in Dame Trotty's tea-room. It was crowded with people, for Dame Trotty made lovely buns and biscuits.

Flibberty sat down, after he had hung his hat up on the peg behind him. He ordered tea and cakes, and enjoyed his tea very much.

Then he stood up, took down what he thought was his hat from the peg behind, and went out. But it wasn't his hat. It was the Little Enchanter's hat and it was a magic one. It looked dirty and old, but it was crammed full of magic.

Flibberty put the hat on and went out, humming. He wished it wasn't such a long way home. He looked down at his shoes and sighed.

"You're uncomfortable shoes," he said. "You're too small. I wish I had lovely red ones, like the ones Prince Twinkle has."

To his enormous astonishment his old shoes disappeared, and he saw on his feet a pair of fine red leather ones. Flibberty couldn't believe his eyes!

"Look at that now!" he said. "A pair of new shoes—and all for the wishing! There must be something magic about me to-day!"

He stood still and thought for a moment. Then he wished again. "I'd like a red cloak like Prince Twinkle's, too," he said. And at once a red cloak swung out from his shoulder! Flibberty was so delighted he couldn't say a word for quite two minutes.

"I'm grand!" he said. "Red shoes and red cloak! Would you believe it! I'll wish for a few more things!"

He wished for a stick with a gold handle. It came into his hand at once. Marvellous!

"This wishing business is a very good thing!" said Flibberty, pleased. "I'll have a new suit now—gold and silver, please, with shining buttons all the way down!" It came, of course! Flibberty really did look very grand now. He thought he would like a carriage of his own.



“I know what I’ll do! I’ll wish for a carriage and go and call on Gibberty in it!” he said. Gibberty was his friend. They lived together. How surprised Gibberty would be to see Flibberty arriving in a carriage, all dressed up like a prince!

“I wish for a carriage!” said Flibberty. One appeared at once—but it was too small for Flibberty and had no horses.

“I wish for a *big* carriage, and twelve white horses,” he said grandly. They were there! The white horses pawed the ground and one of them neighed.

“They’re absolutely real!” said Flibberty. He climbed up into the coachman’s seat and then decided that there were too many horses for him to drive. So he got down and climbed into the carriage instead. Then he wished for two coachmen and two footmen. “I’ll have them dressed in red and silver,” he said.

They appeared, dressed in red and silver. Flibberty couldn’t help feeling delighted with himself. He hoped he would meet plenty of people on the way home. Wouldn’t they stare to see him in his lovely carriage with coachmen and footmen!

“I’ll have some dogs, too,” he suddenly thought. “I like dogs. I’ll have about a hundred, and they can run behind the carriage.”

“I wish for a hundred dogs, please,” he said out loud. The dogs appeared. They seemed very well-behaved. They didn’t jump up and try to lick Flibberty. They put themselves behind the carriage, and not one of them barked.

Flibberty half-thought he would have some cats as well, just to make a sensation, but he decided he wouldn’t. It might make the dogs ill-behaved if he made cats run with them.

“And now I think I’ll have a sack of gold pieces and throw them out as I go along,” thought Flibberty. “That would be a kind and princely thing to do! I wish for a sack of gold!” It appeared on the seat beside him. Ah, that was fine. Now he would drive slowly along to his house, and wouldn’t he enjoy seeing Gibberty’s face when he came to the door!

“Drive on!” he commanded the coachmen, and on they drove. The horses’ hooves made a tremendous noise, clip-clopping along. People came out to see them. When they saw the beautiful carriage and horse, and the hundred dogs following behind, they stared as if they couldn’t believe their eyes!

They didn’t even know Flibberty! He bowed and smiled to them, but not one of them guessed this grand prince to be the little Flibberty they knew so well. He put his hand into the sack and drew out a dozen gold pieces. He threw them to the delighted people.



Flibberty couldn’t believe his eyes.



"They're absolutely real!" said Flibberty. He climbed up into the coachman's seat.



"Gibberty! It's me, Flibberty!" said his friend with a chuckle.

"This will make them rich!" thought Flibberty, pleased. "There's old Dame Crick—she's picked up three gold pieces! My, my, won't she be glad!"

Soon he arrived at his cottage. Gibberty, hearing the noise of the horses, came running out. He didn't know Flibberty at all. He bowed very low indeed.

"Gibberty! It's me, Flibberty!" said his friend with a chuckle. Gibberty looked up in great astonishment. Yes—it *was* Flibberty. Well, well, well!

"Whatever's happened to you?" said Gibberty.

"I don't quite know," said Flibberty. "It must be my lucky day, I should think. Everything I wish for comes true. It's marvellous."

"Well, wish something for *me*, quick!" said Gibberty.

“Wait a bit, wait a bit! Don’t rush me so,” said Flibberty. “You haven’t admired my twelve white horses and my hundred dogs.”

“I can’t imagine why you wished for a hundred dogs,” said Gibberty, who wasn’t very fond of dogs. “I don’t know how we’re going to feed them, or where they’ll live.”

“I shall wish them magnificent kennels and stacks of the most wonderful food,” said Flibberty.



“Here’s yours. You leave my hat alone!”



He threw it high in the air.

“Well, wish some wonderful food for me this very minute,” said Gibberty. “I’m hungry! Come on, Flibberty, use some of your magic for *me!*”

“I’ll wish you a fine suit of clothes, like mine,” said Flibberty.

“Well, don’t wish me a hat like yours!” said Gibberty. “I never saw such a dirty old thing in my life! Why don’t you wish for a new one?”

Flibberty took his hat off his head and looked at it in surprise. “It’s not mine,” he said. “What a dirty old hat! How disgusting! I shan’t wear it. I shall throw it away!” He threw it high in the air. It caught on a tree—and just as it left Flibberty’s hand, everything that he had wished for disappeared! His new clothes went, his carriage, horses, servants and dogs! Nothing was left at all!

“They’ve gone!” said Flibberty. “Oh, you silly, stupid creature, Gibberty! The magic must have been in that hat! Quick, we must get it down from that tree.” But before they could get it down the Little Enchanter came hurrying along to get it. He had heard of Flibberty’s good luck and had guessed what had happened! Flibberty had taken his hat by mistake.

“That’s *my* hat!” he roared, and he threw Flibberty’s at him. “Here’s yours. You leave my hat alone! If you’ve used up all the magic in it I’ll turn you into a scrubbing-brush and use you

for spring-cleaning!”

“Ooooh!” squealed Flibberty and Gibberty and they tore indoors. But luckily Flibberty hadn’t used all the magic, and the Little Enchanter put his cap firmly on his head and strode off home.

“To think I wore a wishing-cap and didn’t know it but threw it away!” groaned Flibberty. “Next time I’ll be a lot more careful!”

I daresay he will—but there won’t *be* a next time!

# TRANSCRIBER NOTES

As most illustrations have been omitted, page layout is considerably different, and text from within images (chapter titles) has been reproduced.

[The end of *The Sixth Holiday Book* by Enid Blyton]