

THE

*Enid Blyton*

=

HOLIDAY BOOK

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*Title:* The Enid Blyton Holiday Book

*Date of first publication:* 1946

*Author:* Enid Blyton, (1897-1968)

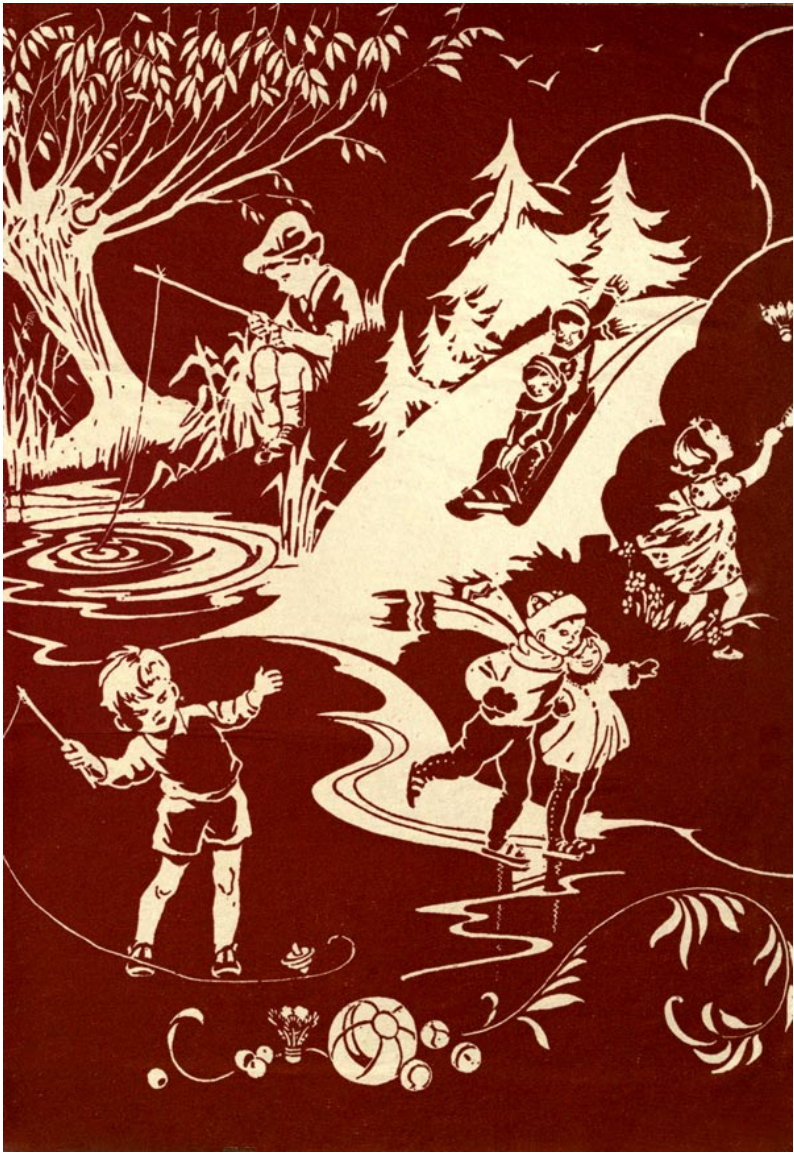
*Date first posted:* February 13, 2023

*Date last updated:* February 13, 2023

Faded Page eBook #20230203

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THE

Enid Blyton

# HOLIDAY BOOK

LONDON  
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON & CO., LTD.

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY PURNELL  
AND SONS, LTD., PAULTON (SOMERSET) AND LONDON

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Cover Art:

Hilda Boswell (1903 - 1976)

Colour Plates:

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# The Pixie in the Pond

ONCE upon a time there was a small pixie called Whistle. You can guess why he had that name—he was always whistling merrily! He lived with his mother and father in a little toadstool house not far from a big pond. It was a lonely house, for no other pixies lived near, and as white ducks swam on the pond there were no frogs or toads for Whistle to play with.

“I’m very lonely, Mother,” Whistle said, a dozen times a day. “I wish I could play with the field-mice. They want to show me their tunnels under the roots of the oak tree.”

“No, Whistle,” said his mother firmly. “The last time you went to see a mouse’s nest you got lost underground, and I had to pay three moles to go and look for you. You are *not* to play with field-mice.”

“Well, can I play with the hedgehog then?” asked Whistle. “He is a good fellow for running about with me in the fields.”

“Certainly not!” said his mother. “His prickles would tear your nice clothes to pieces. Now run out and play by yourself, Whistle, and don’t worry me any more.”

So Whistle went out by himself, looking very gloomy. It was dull having to play by himself, very dull. He shook his head when Tiny the field-mouse ran up to him and squeaked to him to come and play. He didn’t go near the hedgehog when he saw him in the ditch. Whistle was an obedient little pixie.

He ran off to the pond. He liked to watch the big dragon-flies there. They were nearly as big as he was.

It was whilst he was watching the dragon-flies that he saw a merry little head poking out of the water nearby, watching the dragon-flies too! Whistle stared in surprise. He didn’t know there was anybody else near, and here was a little pixie in the pond—a pixie about as small as himself, too!

“Hallo!” said Whistle. “Who are you?”

“I’m Splash, the water-pixie,” said the little fellow, climbing out of the water and sitting beside Whistle. “I live in the pond with my father and mother. We only came last week. I didn’t think there was any one for me to play with, and now I’ve found you. What luck!”

“Oh, Splash, I’m so pleased!” said Whistle. “My name is Whistle. We can play together every day. What shall we play at?”

“Come into the water and I’ll teach you to swim,” said Splash.

“But what about my clothes?” said Whistle. “They’ll get wet.”

“Well, they’ll dry, won’t they?” said Splash. “Come along! Mind that mud!”

But dear me, Whistle was so anxious to get into the water that he floundered right into the mud, and you should have seen how he looked! He was black from head to foot!

“Oh dear!” said Whistle, in dismay. “Look at that! I’d better get out and dry myself, and then see if the mud will brush off. Come and sit by me, Splash, and I’ll teach you to whistle.”

So Splash sat by Whistle in the sun, and the pixie taught his friend to whistle loudly. By the time the dinner-hour came, Splash could whistle like a blackbird! Whistle’s clothes were dry, but the mud wouldn’t brush off. It stuck to his clothes, and was all over his face and hands too. The two pixies said good-bye, and each ran off to his dinner.

Oh dear! How cross Whistle’s mother was when she saw his clothes! “You bad, naughty pixie!” she scolded. “You have been in the pond. Take off your clothes at once. You must have a hot bath.”

“Oh, Mother, don’t be angry with me,” begged Whistle. “I have found a friend to play with. It is a water-pixie called Splash!”

“Indeed!” said his mother, pouring hot water into the tin bath. “Well, just remember this, Whistle—you are *not* to play with water-pixies at all! You will only get muddy and wet, and I won’t have it!”

“But, Mother!” cried Whistle, in dismay, “I do so like Splash! He is so nice. He wanted to teach me to swim.”

“You’ll drown before you learn to swim in that weedy pond,” said his mother. “Now remember, Whistle, I forbid you to play with that water-pixie.”

Whistle said no more. He knew it was no use, but he was very sad. It was hard to find a friend, and then not to be allowed to keep him.

That afternoon, Whistle stole down to the pond. Splash was there, sitting in a swing he had made of bent reed. He was whistling away, having a lovely time, eagerly waiting for Whistle.

“What’s the matter?” he cried, when he saw the pixie’s gloomy face.

“Mother was very cross about my muddy suit, and says I mustn’t play with you,” said Whistle sadly. “So I came to tell you. After this I shan’t come down to the pond, because if I do I might see you and play with you, and I don’t want to upset my mother.”

“Oh, bother!” said Splash, in dismay. “Just as we have found one another so nicely. It’s too bad!”

“Good-bye, Splash,” said Whistle. “I’m very, very sorry, but I must go.”

Off he ran home; and just as he got there he met his father, who called to him.

“Whistle! How would you like to go for a sail on the pond this afternoon? I’ve got a fine little boat here that used to belong to a child.”

“Ooh, how lovely!” said Whistle, looking at the toy boat, which was leaning up against the side of the toadstool house and was even bigger than the house itself!

“Mother! Where are you?” called Whistle, in excitement. “Are you coming for a sail too?”

“Yes!” said his mother. So in a short time the little family set off to the pond, Whistle and his father carrying the ship, and his mother running behind. They set the boat on the water, and then they all got in.

It was a windy day. The wind filled the little white sail and the ship blew into the middle of the pond. What fun it was! Whistle’s father guided the boat along and Whistle leaned over to look for fish. He saw a big one, and leaned so far over that he lost his balance! Splash! Into the water he went head-first!

“Oh! Oh! Save him! He can’t swim!” cried Whistle’s mother in dismay. “Oh, Whistle, Whistle! Quick, turn the boat about and save Whistle!”

But just then the wind blew so hard that the ship simply tore across the pond and left Whistle struggling in the water. Poor little pixie—he couldn’t swim, and he was in great trouble.

But suddenly up swam Splash, the water-pixie. He had watched the boat setting sail, and had kept by it all the way, though the others hadn’t seen him. As soon as he saw his friend fall into the water he swam up to him, and catching hold of him under the arms, he swam with him to the boat.

“Oh, you brave little fellow!” said Whistle’s father, as he pulled the two of them into the boat. “You have saved Whistle! He might have drowned! Who are you?”

“I am Splash, the water-pixie,” said Splash. “I live in the pond. I would very much like to be friends with Whistle and teach him to swim. He has taught me to whistle like a blackbird, and my mother is very pleased. I should like to do something for him in return.”

“Oh, you are the bravest little pixie I have ever seen!” cried Whistle’s mother, as she sat hugging Whistle to her. “Please be friends with Whistle. He must certainly learn to swim. I will make him a little bathing suit, and then it won’t matter if he gets wet or muddy.”

“Oh, Mother, how lovely!” cried Whistle, in delight. “I told Splash this afternoon that I could never see him again, and I said good-bye to him, because you said I wasn’t to play with him—and now he is to be my friend after all!”

“You deserve it, for you’re a good, obedient little pixie,” said his father. “Now you’d better bring your friend home to tea with you, if Mother has enough cake!”

“Oh yes, I made treacle buns this morning,” said Whistle’s mother, “and there is some new blackberry jam too. Ask your mother if you can come, Splash!”

Splash jumped into the water and swam to his cosy little home in the reeds. In a moment or two, three pixies popped their heads out of the water—for Splash had brought his father and mother.

“Thank you for the invitation,” said Splash’s pretty little pixie-mother. “He will be most delighted to come. I am just going to brush his hair. Perhaps you will all come to tea with us to-morrow? We should love to have you.”

So all the pixies became friends, and now Splash and Whistle play together all day long, and Whistle can swim just as well as Splash can; and as for Splash’s whistling, well you should just hear it! The two pixies sound like a cage full of canaries!



# She Wouldn't Believe It

THERE was once a very old, very proud doll. Her name was Florrie, and she belonged to Katie. She was proud because she had belonged to Katie's mother when *she* was a little girl—so you can guess that Florrie was very old indeed.

Now the other toys in the nursery wanted to be friends with Florrie—but Florrie thought herself far too grown-up and grand to bother with young toys like the smiling sailor-doll, the blue teddy-bear, the golden-haired doll, and the pretty Snow-White with her black hair.

“If you speak to me you must call me Madam,” she told the toys. “And pray don't disturb me at night with your chatter and play. Be as quiet as you can.”

The toys giggled. They thought Florrie was very funny. She had a big china head with brown hair, rather tangled. Her dress, which was of blue silk spotted with yellow, came to her feet, and she wore brown kid shoes with laces. A pink sash was tied round her waist.

“She's so old-fashioned!” whispered the toys to one another. “She won't play or laugh—she just goes for lonely walks round the nursery by herself. I wonder what she's made of—rubber, do you think?”

Nobody knew. The golden-haired doll was made of rubber and could be bathed. Snow-White had a pink velvet body, very soft and cuddlesome. They couldn't think *what* Florrie was made of.

Well, she was stuffed with sawdust, just as all old dolls were! But she didn't tell anyone this, for she felt a little ashamed of it. She went each night for her long walks round the nursery, and turned up her china nose at any toy she met.

And then one night the teddy-bear saw a curious thing. He noticed that wherever Florrie went she left a thin trail of something behind her. Whatever could it be?

He went to look at it. It seemed like thick yellow dust to him. He did not know what sawdust was, for he had never seen any. Could it be some powder that Florrie used?

He called the other toys and told them about it. They watched Florrie, and saw that it was quite true. She did leave a little trail of dust behind her wherever she went!

Florrie didn't notice it, of course. You can't see much when your nose is in the air. But soon the toys began to notice something else too.

"Florrie's getting thinner!" whispered the teddy-bear to Snow-White. "Isn't it strange?"

Snow-White looked at Florrie. "So she is!" said the doll. "I wonder why."

"I think *I* know!" said the sailor-doll. "That dust we keep finding here and there is what she's stuffed with. She's leaking! She'll soon be gone to nothing!"

"How dreadful!" said the golden-haired doll. "I'm made of rubber, so I can't leak. What will happen to Florrie?"

"She'll just leak till she's empty and then she won't have a body at all," said the bear. "Well, let her, the stuck-up thing!"

But Snow-White was kind-hearted. "We must warn Florrie," she said. So she went up to the big old doll and spoke to her timidly. "Please, Madam," she said, "I've something to say."

"Then say it quickly," said Florrie, in her grandest voice.

"We think you're leaking," said Snow-White. "Don't you think you'd better not walk about any more? You might leak away to nothing."

Florrie was very angry. "Leaking!" she cried. "I don't believe it! It's just a horrid trick of yours to stop me taking my evening walks. Don't let me hear another word!"

Well, Snow-White couldn't do anything. She and the other toys watched Florrie walking about, leaving her trail of sawdust everywhere as usual, and they wondered how soon all her sawdust would be gone.

Now the little hole that had come in Florrie's back suddenly got very much bigger—and one evening such a heap of sawdust trickled out that really there was hardly any of poor Florrie left except her head and her clothes and the pink covering that used to hold in the sawdust. So she crumpled up on the carpet, and lay there all alone! The toys were upset, but before they could do anything the door opened and in walked Katie's mother!

Of course she saw Florrie on the floor and she picked her up. She saw the sawdust, and she knew what had happened.

“Oh, poor Florrie!” she said. “You’re leaking! I’ll have to get you a nice new body. Sawdust is out of fashion now!”

So she took Florrie away, and the toys didn’t see her for two weeks. When she came back she was quite different! The toy-man had given her a nice fat velvet body, with baby legs and feet. Her long dress didn’t fit her any more, so Mother had made her a woollen frock and a bonnet. She looked sweet!

The toys quickly cooked a few buns on the little stove, and held a party to welcome Florrie back. She was so pleased. The toys in the toy-shop had laughed at her for being old-fashioned, and had called her “Madam Sawdust.” It was lovely to be back in the nursery, where the toys made a fuss of her.

“I’m so glad to see you all,” said Florrie. “I’m sorry I was silly and stuck-up before. I’m half new and half old now, so I feel quite different. I’d like to join in your games and be friends.”

“You shall, Florrie!” cried every one; and you should just see them each night, having a lovely time with Florrie. Everybody is pleased that Florrie is so different—except one person.

Katie’s mother is quite sad when she sees Florrie. “I wish you were the old Florrie!” she says. “I don’t seem to know you now! I loved you best when you were filled with sawdust!”

But Katie likes Florrie better now that she is more cuddlesome, so Florrie is really very happy!



## Some Puzzles For You



1. I always go in front of a rat; but if you have a car, look for me at the back; an ostrich has me in its middle, but an emu never has me at all; I'm the centre of the world and the end of a star; I can always be seen in York, but I don't live in London; I go before royalty, and after a peer; and if you eat a herring for breakfast, you will find two of me in it; a robber will always find me behind him and in front of him too.



What am I?



2. One half of me I see you spread  
With eagerness upon your bread;  
The other half of me you'll see  
Is laid for everyone at tea;  
My whole's a flower of brightest gold,  
Beloved by all, both young and old.



Find the two halves and the whole.



3. I am in every dog you see,  
I grow on every wayside tree,  
I frighten cats and burglars too,  
Tell me what I am now, do!



*Answers on page 42*



# The Golliwog Who Listened

ONCE upon a time there was a lovely nursery where all kinds of toys lived happily together. The golliwog lived in the toy-cupboard with the soldiers, the bricks, the balls and the games. The fairy doll, who was very pretty indeed, lived in the dolls' house, and thought herself very grand.

Then there were other dolls, who lived on the big window-seat with the animals. Not one of the dolls was so pretty as the fairy doll, but one of them was very clever.

This was a small doll dressed as a nurse. She really did know a lot of things. She could nurse people very well, and if any of the toys hurt themselves, or got broken, or were ill, she always knew exactly what to do.

The golliwog loved the fairy doll. He thought she was the prettiest doll he had ever seen, and he did wish she would let him live in the dolls' house with her, because there was plenty of room. But she wouldn't.

"I'll go for walks with you, and I'll go out to tea with you, and I'll share your sweets—but I don't want anyone living in my house!" said the fairy doll.

So the golliwog had to be content with giving the fairy doll nearly all his sweets, and with taking her out to tea in the little toy tea-shop whenever he could.

One day the nurse doll began to speak to all the toys around in her gentle voice.

"Toys," she said, "I think it would be a good thing if I taught you all some of the things I know. Some day I shall be an old toy, and perhaps the children will give me away. Then you will not have me to nurse you and mend you. But if I tell you all I know, and you learn it well, you will be able to look after each other."

The toys thought this was a very good idea. "We'll all come and listen to you each night!" they said; but the fairy doll sulked.

"Who wants to listen to the dull things that that silly old nurse doll tells?" she said to the golliwog. "Don't listen to her, Golly. Come for a walk

with me instead. Let's go and visit the rocking-horse and ask him for a ride."

"I will, after I've heard what the nurse doll has to say to-night," said Golly.

That made the fairy doll very angry indeed. She always liked to have her own way, and she walked off in a rage, her pretty little nose stuck up in the air, and her pretty little feet stamping loudly!

The golliwog sighed—but he went to join the ring that sat round the clever little nurse doll.

That night she told them what to do with cuts and scratches, and she showed them her little bottle of brown iodine. "Always wash a cut or a scratch," she said, "and then dab it with the stuff out of this bottle. Then your cuts will never go bad, but will heal up quickly. Don't forget, will you?"

The toys promised not to. They ran off to play.

The golliwog went to find the fairy doll, but the naughty little thing had locked herself in the dolls' house, and she wouldn't come out. The golliwog was sad. But all the same he went to listen to the nurse doll's lesson the next night too, although the fairy doll said she would never go out to tea with him again if he did.

"But, fairy doll, it's important that we should know how to look after ourselves and after each other too," he said. "Don't you think you ought to come? You might learn something that would be very useful to you one day."

"Pooh!" said the fairy doll rudely, and she actually threw a brick at the golliwog. It didn't hit him but he felt very hurt, all the same.

That night the nurse doll explained how to treat a cold. "It is best to go to bed at once," she said, "and to keep very warm and have a hot drink. Then the cold will go away quickly; but if you are silly and won't go to bed, you will be very ill. Now will you all remember that?"

The toys said they would, and the nurse doll made them tell her what she had told them the night before.

"Good!" she said. "You are learning your lessons well! Come again to-morrow. I have something very important to teach you."

So they all went again the next night, and she told them about sunstroke. "You must always wear a hat that shades the back of your neck when you go

out into the hot sun,” she said. “If you don’t, you will get sunstroke, and be ill. This is a very important thing to remember. I saw you, wooden soldier, going about in the blazing sun last summer without even your helmet on. Don’t do it again.”

“What should we have to do with the soldier if he did get sunstroke?” asked the golliwog, who liked to know everything he could.

“We should have to put him straight to bed in as dark a room as possible,” said the nurse doll. “That’s all for to-night, my dears. Come again to-morrow.”

The next night the toys went again, and this time the nurse doll told them what to do if anyone got on fire.

“You know,” she said, “sometimes people play with matches, or go too near the fire, and their clothes catch alight. Now listen carefully and I will tell you what to do. If you see anyone alight, you must quickly get a rug or a thick blanket and wrap it so tightly round them that the flames can’t burn any more and so they go out. That is the best thing to do. Then put them to bed, keep them very warm, give them some hot milk, and call the doctor. Now can you remember all that?”

Some of the toys couldn’t, so the nurse doll said it all over again. The golliwog had a good memory and he soon knew it all. He went to find the fairy doll, after the lesson was over, for he thought that really she would be interested to hear what the nurse doll had taught them that night.

But the fairy doll was still sulking, though she was really getting a bit tired of being so silly.

“Go away!” she said. “I’m tired of seeing you go to the nurse doll’s silly lessons every night when you might be playing with me. You are very horrid.”

“But, fairy doll, the lessons may be so useful,” said the golliwog. “Think now—I know what to do if anyone cuts or scratches himself; I know what to do for sunstroke; I know what to do for a cold; and I even know what to do if anyone gets on fire!”

“Pooh!” said the fairy doll, banging her front-door shut. “Who wants to know dull things like that!”

The golliwog went away and played sadly with the clockwork mouse, who pretended that he had a cold and wanted the golly to nurse him. The

golliwog loved the fairy doll very much, but he couldn't help thinking she was behaving in a horrid, unkind manner.

The next night was terribly cold—so cold that the nurse doll said there wouldn't be any lesson.

“You had better all cuddle up to one another and keep each other warm,” she said. “Jack Frost is about to-night, ready to pinch our fingers and toes!”

The golliwog went to the dolls' house to ask if the fairy doll would come out and sit on the shelf with him, so that he could warm her. But she wouldn't open the door.

“I'm going to light my fire in the kitchen!” she called. “I shall be nice and warm then. You wouldn't come with me the last four evenings when I asked you to, so I shan't come with you now!”

“Oh, fairy doll, don't be so silly!” begged the golliwog, shouting through the letter-box. “Let me light the fire for you, and get it going properly. Then I will sit with you in the kitchen and talk, because there is no lesson to-night.”

But the fairy doll wouldn't open the door. She took down the matches and struck one. It went out. She struck another—and the lighted head flew off, and fell on to her gauzy frock.

And, oh dear, oh dear! the pretty frock caught fire at once and blazed up. The fairy doll was on fire! She screamed. “Help! Help! I'm on fire! Oh, help, help!”

The golliwog looked in at the kitchen window, horrified. He saw the fairy doll alight. He threw up the window and jumped in, trying to remember what the nurse doll had taught him.

“I must wrap her round in a blanket or a rug!” thought the golliwog. He looked round the room. There was no blanket—but on the floor was a hearth-rug. The golly caught it up and ran to the doll. He wrapped it all round her as tightly as he could, smothering the flames and putting them out.

When he was quite sure they were out, he unwrapped the poor, sobbing fairy doll. He carried her gently to bed and gave her hot-water bottles. He wrapped her in a blanket he had warmed by the fire, and he gave her a drink of hot milk. Soon the nurse doll arrived—for the golly had shouted for her to come—and very soon she had bandaged the fairy doll well, and everything was all right.



“Golly, I am proud of you,” said the nurse doll, when she went. “You remembered everything I told you. You saved the fairy doll’s life. She has been very foolish, for she would not come to my lessons—but you were wise.”

The fairy doll was so grateful to the golliwog. She slipped her hand into his black one and blinked up at him with tearful eyes.

“I’m sorry I was silly and unkind and rude,” she said. “I am ashamed of it now. Please forgive me, Golly. You were right to go to the lessons and I was wrong not to. If you hadn’t gone, and hadn’t learnt what to do, you wouldn’t have known how to save me and I would have been burnt. Please forgive me.”

“Of course I forgive you, fairy doll,” said the kindly golliwog. “But do remember that if you are stupid you get punished for it sooner or later. I think you had better let me come and live in the dolls’ house with you, and teach you to be wise. I can look after you then, and see that nothing happens to you.”

So he had his way after all, and now he lives in the dolls’ house with the pretty fairy doll, who is quite better, and very much nicer. Wasn’t it a good thing the golly learnt his lessons well? Perhaps you will remember his lessons too, and maybe one day they will come in useful to *you*!

# Slip-Around's Wishing Wand

ONCE upon a time there was a great magician called Wise-one. He was a good magician as well as a great one, and was always trying to find spells that would make people happy and good.

But this was very difficult. He had made a spell to make people happy—but not good as well. And he had found a spell that would make them good—but not happy too. It wasn't any use being one without the other.

Now one day he found a marvellous way of mixing these two spells together—but he hadn't got just one thing he needed.

"If only I had a daisy that had opened by moonlight, I believe I could just do it!" said Wise-one, as he stirred round a great silvery mixture in his magic bowl. "But whoever heard of a moonlight daisy? I never did!"

Now just at that moment, who should peep into his window but Slip-Around the brownie. When he heard what Wise-one was saying, his eyes shone.

"Wise-one, I can get a daisy that has opened in the moonlight," he said.

"What!" cried Wise-one, in delight. "You can! Well, there's a full moon to-night—pick it for me and bring it here."

"What will you give me if I do?" asked Slip-Around.

"Oh, anything you like!" said Wise-one.

"Well, will you give me your wishing-wand?" asked Slip-Around, at once.

"How do you know anything about my wishing-wand?" said Wise-one.

"Oh, I slip around and hear things, you know," said the brownie, grinning.

"You hear too much," grumbled Wise-one. "Well, as I said you could have anything, you can have that—but only if you bring me the daisy!"

Slip-Around ran off. He meant to play a trick on the magician! He didn't know where any daisies were that opened in the moonlight—but he knew

how to make a daisy stay open!

He picked a fine wide-open daisy, with petals that were pink-tipped underneath. He got his glue-pot and set it on the fire. When the glue was ready he took the daisy in his left hand and a very fine paint-brush in his right.

Then, very daintily and carefully Slip-Around glued the petals together so that they could not shut. He put the daisy into water when it was finished and looked at it proudly. Ah! That would trick Wise-one all right! He would get the wishing-wand from him—and then what a fine time he would have!

When night came the daisy tried to shut its petals—but it could not, no matter how it tried, for the glue held them stiffly out together. So, instead of curling them gently over its round yellow head, the daisy had to stay wide open.

Slip-Around looked at it and grinned. He waited till the moon was up, and then went to Wise-one's cottage with the wide-open daisy. The magician cried out in surprise and took the daisy eagerly. He put it into water.

“Good!” he said. “I’ll use that to-morrow—it’s just what I want for my spell.”

“Can I have the wishing-wand, please?” said Slip-Around slyly. He didn’t mean to go away without that!

Wise-one unlocked a cupboard and took out a shining silvery wand with a golden sun on the end of it. He gave it to Slip-Around.

“Use it wisely,” he said, “or you will be sorry!”

Slip-Around didn’t even say thank-you! He snatched the wand, and ran off at once. He had got a wishing-wand! Fancy that! A real wishing-wand that would grant any wish he wanted!

He danced into his moonlit village, shouting and singing, “Oh, I’ve got a wishing-wand, a wishing-wand, a wishing-wand!”

People woke up. They came to their windows and looked out.

“Be quiet, please!” called Higgle, the chief man of the village. “What do you mean by coming shouting like this in the middle of the night!”

“Pooh to you!” shouted Slip-Around rudely. “Do you see my wishing-wand? I got it from Wise-one!”

Nobody believed him. But all the same they leaned out of their windows and listened. Higgle got very cross.

“Go home!” he shouted to Slip-Around. “Be quiet—or I’ll have you punished in the morning!”

“Oh no, you won’t!” cried Slip-Around boastfully. “I can wish you away to the moon if I want to! I know what I *will* do—I’ll wish for an elephant to come and trample on the flowers in your silly front garden! Elephant! Come!”

Then, to every one’s immense astonishment an elephant appeared round the corner of the street in the moonlight and began to walk over Higgle’s lovely flowers. How angry he was!

Soon the folk of the village were all out in the street, in dressing-gowns and coats. They watched the elephant.

“That is very wrong of you,” said Dame Toddle to Slip-Around.

“Don’t interfere with *me!*” said the brownie grandly. “How would you like a giraffe to ride on, Dame Toddle? Ha ha! Good idea! Giraffe, come and give Dame Toddle a ride!”

At once a giraffe appeared and put the astonished old woman on its back. Then very solemnly it took her trotting up and down the street. She clung to its neck in fright. Slip-Around laughed and laughed.

“This is fun!” he said, looking round at everybody. “Ha ha—you didn’t think I really had a wishing-wand, did you! Now where’s Nibby—he scolded me the other day. Oh, there you are, Nibby! Would you like a bear to play with?”

“No, thank you,” said Nibby at once.

“Well, you can have one,” said Slip-Around. “Bear, come and play with Nibby!”

Up came a big brown bear and tried to make poor Nibby play with it. Nibby didn’t like it at all. When the bear pushed him in play, he fell right over.

“Now just stop this nonsense,” said Mister Skinny, stepping up to Slip-Around firmly. “If you don’t, I shall go to Wise-one to-morrow and tell him the bad things you have done with the wishing-wand.”

“Ho ho!—by that time I shall have wished Wise-one away to the end of the world!” said Slip-Around. “You won’t find him in his cottage! No—he’ll

be gone. And I shall wish myself riches and power and the biggest castle in the land. And I've a good mind to make you come and scrub all the floors, Mister Skinny!"

"Hrrrrumph!" said the elephant, and walked into the next-door garden to tramp on the flowers there. It was Mister Skinny's. He gave a yell of rage.

"Mister Skinny, I don't like yells in my ear," said Slip-Around. "You yell like a donkey braying. I'll give you donkey's ears! There! How funny you look!"

Mister Skinny put his hands to his head. Yes—he now had donkey's ears growing there. He turned pale with fright. Every one began to look afraid. It seemed to be quite true that Slip-Around had a real wishing-wand. What a dangerous thing for a brownie like him to have!

The little folk tried to slip away unseen, back to their houses. But Slip-Around was enjoying himself too much to let them go.

"Stop!" he said. "If you don't stay where you are, I'll give you all donkey's ears—yes, and donkey's tails too!"

Every one stopped at once. Slip-Around caught sight of Mister Pineapple the greengrocer. "Ha!" said the brownie, "wasn't it you that gave me a slap the other day?"

"Yes," said Mister Pineapple bravely. "I caught you taking one of my apples, and you deserved to be slapped."

"Well, I wish that every now and again a nice ripe tomato shall fall on your head and burst," said Slip-Around. And immediately from the air a large ripe tomato fell on to the top of Mister Pineapple's head and burst with a loud, squishy sound. Mister Pineapple wiped the tomato-juice out of his eyes. Almost at once another tomato fell on him. He looked up in horror, and moved away—but a third tomato fell from the sky and got him neatly on the top of his head.

Slip-Around began to laugh. He laughed and he laughed. He looked at the great elephant, and laughed. He looked at poor Dame Toddle still riding on the giraffe, and laughed. He looked at Nibby trying to get away from the big playful brown bear, and laughed. He laughed at Skinny's donkey-ears. In fact, he laughed so much and so loudly that he didn't hear some one coming quickly down the street. He didn't see some one creep up behind him and snatch at the wishing-wand!

“Oooh!” said Slip-Around, startled. “Give me back my wand—or I’ll wish you at the bottom of the village pond!”

Then he began to tremble—for who was standing there, frowning and angry, but Wise-one, the great magician himself!

“You wicked brownie!” said Wise-one sternly. “You gave me a daisy whose petals were glued open so that it couldn’t shut—not a real moonlight daisy. I have spoilt my wonderful spell. You have no right to the wishing-wand. I shall take it back with me.”

“Oh, why didn’t I wish you to the end of the world when I had the chance!” wailed Slip-Around. “Why didn’t I wish for riches—and power—and a castle—instead of playing about with elephants and giraffes and things!”

“Great magician!” cried Mister Skinny, kneeling down before Wise-one. “Don’t go yet. Look what Slip-Around has wished for! Take these things away from us!”

Wise-one looked around in astonishment and saw the bear and the elephant and the giraffe, and the donkey’s ears on poor Skinny’s head, and the ripe tomatoes that kept falling, squish, on to Mister Pineapple.

“I’ll remove them from *you*,” he said to the listening people, “but I’ll give them to Slip-Around. He will perhaps enjoy them!”

He waved the wand and wished. The elephant at once went to Slip-Around’s garden and trampled his best lettuces. The giraffe let Dame Toddle get off and went into Slip-Around’s house, where he chewed the lampshade that hung over the ceiling light. The bear romped over to the frightened brownie and knocked him down with a playful push.

The donkey’s ears flew from Mister Skinny to Slip-Around—and lo and behold! the ripe tomatoes began to drop down on the surprised brownie, one after the other, till he was quite covered in tomato-juice!

“You’ve got what you wished for other people,” said Wise-one with a laugh. “Good-night, every one. Go back to bed.”

They all went home and got into bed, wondering at the night’s strange happenings. They were soon asleep—all except Slip-Around. He had the elephant, the giraffe, and the nuisance of a bear in his cottage with him—and it was terribly crowded! His donkey-ears twitched, and he had to wipe tomato off his head every minute. How unhappy he was!

Poor Slip-Around! He had to sleep under an umbrella at last, and the giraffe ate up the tomatoes that fell down plop! The elephant snored like a thunderstorm, and the bear nibbled the brownie's toes for a joke. It was all most unpleasant. And somehow I think that Slip-Around won't try to cheat any one again! What do *you* think?

# The Bumble-bee and the Rabbit

**T**HERE was once a large round bumble-bee who flew from flower to flower on the sunny hillside. His coat was velvety and his hum was loud. He was a beautiful bee, and very happy.

One day he flew into a spider's web. The spider crouched under a leaf, fearful of going near the bee and hoping that he would free himself. The spider did not like either bees or wasps in her web. Sometimes, if the wasp or bee was small, she cut the web around them so that they dropped to the ground and crawled away to clean their wings. But she did not like to go near this great bumble-bee.

The bee was afraid. He did not like the feel of the sticky web around his wings. He tried to fly away—but he flew into more of the web, and soon he could not work his wings at all.

The spider watched. Suppose the bee could not get away? He would soon tire himself out and then she could kill him. She stayed under her leaf, watching with all her eight eyes.

A sandy rabbit, hearing the anxious buzz made by the bee, ran up to see what the fuss was about. He was astonished to see the bee caught in the web. The bee saw him and called to him.

“Help me, rabbit! I am caught here! If you could break the web for me I should drop to the ground and be able to clean my wings and fly. Please help me!” The rabbit went closer. He lifted his paw and broke the web. The bee fell to the ground. He cleaned his wings carefully and spoke to the kind little rabbit.

“You are good,” he said. “I am only a little thing and may never be able to repay you for your kindness, but I thank you with all my heart!”

The rabbit laughed. “It was nothing,” he said. “As for repaying me, that you can never do, little bee. You are so small and I am so big—a tiny creature like you cannot help a rabbit. I do not want to be repaid. Fly off in peace.”

The bee soon flew off with a loud buzz. The rabbit went back to his play. The spider carefully mended her web, and hoped she would catch no more



bees.

The days went by. The bee was careful to look out for webs, and did not go near them. The sandy rabbit played happily about the hillside.

He didn't know that a red fox was watching him each morning, hoping that he would go near to the bush under which he was hiding—then the fox would pounce out, and the rabbit would be caught!

The sandy rabbit did not know that any fox was near. He and his friends played merrily each evening and morning. And one morning he went near to the fox's bush.

The fox lay still. He hardly breathed. He kept his eyes on the fat little sandy rabbit. He looked round. No one was near to help him. The rabbit's father and mother had gone down their holes. The shepherd-boy was not yet up. There was no one to save the little rabbit.

A large bumble-bee came sailing by, up early because the sun was warm. He settled on a late blackberry flower to get the honey. The flower was not far from the fox. In alarm the bee suddenly saw the fox's sharp eyes looking at him.

He flew up into the air, wondering why the fox was hiding. He took a look round and then saw his friend, the sandy rabbit, playing very near—oh, much too near that thick blackberry bush!

“The fox is waiting to catch the rabbit!” thought the bee, in fear. “How can I save him? He was so kind to me!”

He saw the fox stiffen ready to pounce. Straightway the bee flew down to the sharp nose of the red fox. He dug his sting into the fox's nose and then flew off in a hurry.

The fox barked in pain as the bee stung him, and swung his head from side to side, rustling the bush. The sandy rabbit heard—and in a trice he was off to his hole, his little white bobtail bobbing up and down as he went, a danger-signal to all the other rabbits there.

“Fox!” he cried, “redfox!”

The fox knew it was no good waiting any longer. He would never catch the rabbit now that he knew his hiding-place. He slunk off, furiously angry with the bee. But the little bee was pleased. “I am only small,” he hummed, “but I can do a kind turn as well as anybody else. You did not know I should save your life one day, rabbit, when you saved mine! Little creatures can often do big things.”

The bumble-bee was quite right, wasn't he!

# Green-eyes' mistake

**G**REEN-EYES was a large black cat with the biggest, greenest eyes you can imagine. He belonged to the witch Tiptap, and, like all witch's cats, he had to help her with her spells.

Green-eyes had an easy life, for he had nothing to do except come when the witch called him, and help her to stir her magic bowl, or sit patiently inside a magic ring whilst she muttered queer spells. He had plenty of good food—fish, milk and sometimes, cream.

He loved cream, and thought he didn't get enough of it.

"I ought to have cream each day," he said to himself. "I am a hardworking witch-cat, and I think my mistress should buy me at least three pennyworth of good rich cream each day. But no—she gets it once a week, and that's all. Mean creature."

"What is the matter, Green-eyes?" asked the witch who saw the cat sulking in the corner.

"I think you should buy me more cream," said the cat gloomily.

"Nonsense!" said the witch, sharply. "How dare you talk like that, Green-eyes. You have a fine life with me—no mice to catch, nothing to do except to give me a little help sometimes. I am really ashamed of you."

Green-eyes twitched his fine whiskers and did not dare to say another word. But he thought a great deal. He wished and wished he could make Tiptap give him more cream, but he could not see how to do it. And then one day he had an idea.

Tiptap called him to help her with a spell. It was a strange piece of magic she was doing. She took a broken piece of china and put it into her big magic bowl. She called Green-eyes to stir it and he did so. Then Tiptap muttered the enchanted words, and the tiny piece of china grew slowly into a beautiful little milk-jug. The witch took it out of the bowl and set it on the table.

She sent Green-eyes for a lemon from the larder. From the lemon she took a little piece of peel and one pip. These she dropped into the jug.

“Pour lemonade, little jug,” she commanded. And then, to Green-eyes’ surprise, the small jug lifted itself into the air and poured lemonade into a glass that the witch had put near. Green-eyes looked into the jug in amazement. There was no lemonade there—only the pip and the bit of lemon skin hopping about. And yet the lemonade certainly came from the jug.

“This is a fine enchanted jug,” said Tiptap, pleased. “I shall sell it to the wizard to-morrow. He is coming to call on me.”

She drank the lemonade herself, and said it was very good. Then she took a tea-leaf from her tea-caddy, a grain of sugar, and a spot of milk and put them in the jug, first taking out the pip and lemon skin.

“Pour tea, little jug,” she said. And at once the jug tilted itself up and poured out a steaming hot cup of tea. There was just the right amount of milk in, and of sugar too. Green-eyes tasted some that Tiptap poured for him into a saucer, so he knew.

“I shall be able to sell that jug for twenty golden pounds,” said Tiptap, pleased. She set the jug on the dresser and went to wash her hands.

“I am going out to tea this afternoon, Green-eyes,” she said. “You must keep house for me. Sit by the fire and listen for the door-bell in case anyone comes.”

Now as soon as Tiptap had gone, Green-eyes thought of a fine idea. If he took that jug for himself, and hid it somewhere, he could make it pour out cream for him whenever he wanted some! Oh, what a fine idea.

“But where shall I hide the jug?” wondered Green-eyes. “I know. I will hide it behind the bath in the bathroom upstairs. I can take my dish up there, and no one will ever know. Ho, ho. I’ll have cream now whenever I want it.”

The naughty cat first of all took his dish upstairs and put it behind the bath, then he went to fetch the jug. It was difficult for him to reach, but he managed it. He pushed a chair to the dresser, jumped up on it, leapt on to the dresser, and took the jug-handle in his mouth. Then, very carefully, he jumped down to the floor again and ran upstairs with the jug. The next thing to get was a drop of cream. But was there any in the larder? Green-eyes didn’t think so. Down he ran again and went to the larder.

He stood up with his front paws on the shelf and sniffed round. No—there was no cream—but wait a minute—there was a bowl of milk there, and on the top of it was a layer of cream, for the milk was very rich.

“Good,” thought Green-eyes, pleased. He took a spoon and scraped off a drop of cream. Then upstairs he went once more, and emptied the spot of cream into the magic jug.

There it was, at the bottom of the jug. Green-eyes felt excited. He spoke to the jug.

“Pour cream, little jug,” he said. At once the jug tilted itself up, and a steady stream of rich cream fell into the bowl. Green-eyes licked it up as fast as it poured in.

And just at that very moment, the door-bell rang.

“It’s only the washing come back,” said Green-eyes to himself. “I’ll just pop downstairs and get it, and then hurry back here. The bowl will be full again by then.”

So, leaving the jug still pouring cream steadily into his bowl, Green-eyes ran down the stairs at top speed. He opened the front door, thinking to see the girl who brought back the washing—but instead he saw the wizard who often came to pay a call on Witch Tiptap.

“Is your mistress in?” asked the wizard, walking into the hall.

“No, sir, she is out to tea,” said Green-eyes.

“Well—what a nuisance,” said the wizard. “I want to write a letter. Where’s the paper and ink?”

“In here, sir,” said Green-eyes, running before the wizard into the little parlour. “You will find all you want here.”

He was just running upstairs when the wizard called him.

“Ho, Green-eyes. There is no ink in the inkstand.”

Green-eyes did not dare to keep the wizard waiting, for he had a very hot temper. So down he ran, and tore into the kitchen to get the big ink-bottle. He filled the inkstand, and went off again. But he was only half-way up the stairs when the wizard shouted for him again.

“What do you want to keep running off like that for? Come here. The nib in this pen is rusty.”

“Tails and whiskers, that cream will be running over,” said Green-eyes in a panic. “What a mess it will make. I’ll have to clear it up before Tiptap comes home.”

He ran to the kitchen drawer and got out the box of nibs that he knew was kept there. He chose one, and gave it to the wizard. Then off he went again, running upstairs.

But before he could reach the bathroom the wizard called him again.

“Green-eyes! Green-eyes! Bless us all, why does that cat disappear like this? Doesn’t he like my company? Green-eyes, will you come here? There are no envelopes at all. How can I write a letter without an envelope to put it in?”

Poor Green-eyes. He fled downstairs again, and found the angry wizard some envelopes. He was just going to slip out of the door once more when the wizard looked at him sternly.

“Why do you keep running off like that?” he asked. “Have you something so important to do?”

“N-n-n-n-no,” stammered Green-eyes, not knowing quite what to say.

“Then stay here,” said the wizard, beginning to write his letter. “I’m tired of calling you whenever I want anything. Sit down in that chair where I can see you, and don’t disturb me by running upstairs again.”

Green-eyes sat meekly down in the chair. Presently the wizard became interested in his letter, and his head bent so low that his nose almost touched the paper. Green-eyes felt quite sure he could not see him—so, very quietly, he slid out of the chair, crept out of the door on velvet paws, and shot up the stairs as if a hundred dogs were after him.

And just outside the bathroom door he saw something that made his heart sink down into his paws! Cream was leaking out under the door!

“The bowl has overflowed, and the cream is all over the floor!” thought poor Green-eyes. “Oh, my! What shall I do? I simply must go into the bathroom and stop that jug.”

“Green-eyes! Green-eyes! Bless me if that cat hasn’t done his disappearing trick again!” suddenly shouted the wizard from downstairs.

Green-eyes was so startled that he fell over, rolled to the top of the stairs, lost his balance there and fell headlong down to the bottom. The wizard rushed out of the parlour when he heard the noise, and stood in amazement when he saw Green-eyes rolling down the stairs.

“Is this a new sort of game you are playing, Green-eyes?” asked the wizard. “A poor sort of game, I should think! You must be covered with

bruises! I want a stamp for my letter. Come and get me one, and then, stars and moon, if you move out of my sight again, I'll turn your whiskers into snakes!"

Green-eyes shook and shivered. He got the wizard a stamp and then sat down meekly in his chair again. This time the wizard kept a sharp eye on him.

"Tell me if you feel you badly want to go and fall down the stairs again, won't you?" he said, licking the stamp. "What an extraordinary cat you are! I wouldn't keep you for five minutes, if I were Witch Tiptap! You haven't any manners at all! Grrrrrrrr!"

He growled so much like a dog that Green-eyes shook like a jelly, and looked round to see where the dog was. The wizard laughed.

"And now, perhaps, you will get me Tiptap's morning newspaper and let me have a look at it," he said. "It is raining and I shall have to wait here till it stops."

Oh dear, oh dear, this was worse and worse! How long was the wizard going to stay? Green-eyes felt very miserable. If only he hadn't meddled with that jug!

He fetched the newspaper, and, on his way, he glanced up the stairs. To his horror he saw that the cream was dripping from the top step to the next one! It had run out on to the landing and was now going to roll slowly down the stairs.

"Sit down again," said the wizard. "I am not going to have you popping in and out of the room. It is most upsetting."

So Green-eyes sat down. Presently a soft dripping sound was heard. The wizard pricked up his ears.

"What's that noise?" he said.

"P-p-p-perhaps it's the k-k-k-kitchen tap dripping," stammered Green-eyes, not knowing what to say.

"Go and turn it off then," said the wizard. "A dripping noise annoys me."

Green-eyes shot out of the door, meaning to go upstairs and get the magic jug—but the wizard heard him going upstairs and roared at him.

"Does your kitchen tap live upstairs? Go into the kitchen and turn it off!"

So Green-eyes went sadly to the kitchen—but, of course, the tap was not dripping. Then he went back to the parlour and once more sat down.

The dripping noise went on. The wizard heard it and looked at Green-eyes.

“Was the kitchen tap dripping?” he asked.

“No, it wasn’t,” said Green-eyes. “P-p-p-perhaps it’s the kettle b-b-boiling over on the stove!”

“Go and see,” ordered the wizard. Green-eyes went, and outside the door he paused. Yes—he would tiptoe up the stairs and see if he could do it without being heard. But the wizard had ears like a hare and he shouted at once.

“Don’t you know your way to the kitchen?”

And Green-eyes sighed and went into the kitchen—but, of course, there was no kettle boiling over. He went back, looking very miserable—for he had seen that the cream had now dripped to the bottom step! The stairs were running with the rich yellow cream—what a mess!

“I can still hear that dripping noise,” said the wizard crossly. “But I suppose it must be the rain.”

Green-eyes said nothing—and then he saw something that made his fur stand up on end! Cream was creeping in under the door! Yes—it really was. It had spread over the hall and had made its way to the parlour. Green-eyes looked at it and didn’t know what to do. So he sat there and just said nothing at all.

The wizard read his newspaper, keeping an eye on Green-eyes all the time. Presently the cream reached his big feet. The wizard shuffled them about, and the cream swirled round. Green-eyes began to shiver with fright.

The cream grew deeper and the wizard felt that his feet were cold. He looked down—and when he saw the cream all round him, he jumped to his feet in fright and astonishment.

“What is all this!” he roared. “What is it? Why, it is cream! Is this a joke, you wicked cat? You have been behaving strangely all the afternoon—creeping away—falling down the stairs—and now comes this cream into the room! What have you been doing?”

“Oh, sir, forgive me!” wept the frightened cat. “I stole a magic jug of Tiptap’s just before you came in, and took it up to the bathroom to hide it.



Just as I made it pour cream into my bowl, the bell rang—and you came. I haven't been able to go upstairs to get the jug and stop it from pouring out cream—and so the cream has come downstairs, and spread everywhere! Oh, whatever shall I do?"

The wizard looked at the cat, and then at the cream. Then he began to laugh. What a laugh! It shook all the ornaments on the mantelpiece!

"Well, it certainly has its funny side," he said. "First of all, go upstairs and stop the jug pouring out cream. Then come down again."

Green-eyes waded out of the room through the cream, and up the stairs. He waded to the bathroom, and sure enough, there was the little magic jug, still pouring away for all it was worth!

Green-eyes put out his paw and caught hold of it. He shook it twice, as he had seen the witch do, and it stopped pouring at once. Green-eyes went downstairs again with the jug.

"Oh, so that's the jug, is it?" said the wizard. "I'll get Tiptap to sell it to me. Now, Green-eyes, set to work, please. I don't like my boots all messy like this. Lick them clean. You like cream, don't you? Well, this will be a treat for you! My word, you'll have enough cream to last you a year!"

Green-eyes licked the cream off the wizard's boots. It tasted dreadful, mixed with boot-polish. Then the wizard said good-bye, took his letter with him, and went out of the door, still laughing.

But poor Green-eyes was left to clear up the creamy mess before his mistress came back! How he worked, poor thing! He found a mop and a broom, and took the biggest pail. Then he began to clean up the cream—and in the middle of his work Tiptap came back!

She stood in the kitchen and looked into the hall and up the stairs. She guessed at once what had happened. But Green-eyes confessed too, and soon Tiptap knew everything.

"You are a very naughty, silly, stupid cat," she said sternly. "I have a good mind to turn you into a mouse for a month."

"Oh, no, mistress, not that!" cried Green-eyes at once. "I might be caught by a cat!"

"You probably would," said the witch, severely. "And I'm not sure it wouldn't serve you right. But you are sometimes useful to me, so I will not do that. Collect all the cream into pails, dishes and bowls, Green-eyes, and

you shall have it every day until it is used up. Magic must not be wasted—and you seem so fond of cream that I am sure you will enjoy it!”

Poor Green-eyes! He worked hard all the rest of the day, collecting the cream into dishes and pails. There were four pails full, and seven dishes, so you can guess what a lot there was. Green-eyes had to wash all the floors, and clean up the stair-carpet too. He was very tired when he had finished. He went to the larder to get himself some milk—but Tiptap stopped him.

“No, Green-eyes,” she said. “Milk is not good enough for you, is it! You must have cream! You may have a dish of the cream.”

“But I don’t want it. I’ve turned against cream, somehow,” said Green-eyes.

“Oh, I can’t have it wasted,” said Tiptap at once. “You must have the cream, my dear cat, or nothing at all.”

So Green-eyes lapped up a dish of the cream—but oh, how he hated it! Then he went to bed. He dreamed of cream and the dishes too, standing in a row on the kitchen floor! It made him feel ill to see them.

The cream turned sour—but still Green-eyes had to lap it, for Tiptap meant to teach him a lesson. He groaned and grumbled—but not until he said that never again would he take anything that wasn’t his, did Tiptap forgive him.

“Well, if you really mean that, I’ll forgive you,” she said. “You need not finish up the cream. Go and empty it away, for it really smells dreadful now. Let this be a lesson to you, Green-eyes. I will say no more about it.”

She kept her word—but, oh dear, whenever the wizard came to see Tiptap, how he teased Green-eyes!

“What’s that dripping noise?” he would say. “Oho, Green-eyes, have you ever heard that dripping noise again? When are you coming to tea with me? I’ll have CREAM for a treat. Would you like that? What! You don’t like cream? Well, well, well, what a surprising cat you are!”

Then Green-eyes would slip away to a corner, and remember the dreadful cream-day—and from that day to this he has been a good and honest little cat. So perhaps it wasn’t a bad thing after all!

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*Answers of puzzles on page 16*

1. The Letter R.
2. Butter-cup.
3. Bark.

# The Tale of Lanky-Panky

ONCE upon a time there was a great upset in the land of Twiddle because *Someone* had stolen the Queen's silver tea-service!

"Yes, it's all gone!" wept the Queen. "My lovely silver teapot! My lovely silver hot-water jug! My lovely sugar-basin and milk-jug—and my perfectly beautiful silver tray!"

"Who stole it?" cried every one. But nobody knew.

"It was kept locked up in the tall cupboard," said the Queen, "and it was on the very topmost shelf. Nobody could have reached it unless they had a ladder—or were very, very tall!"

Now among those who were listening were the five clever imps. When they heard the Queen say that the thief must have had a ladder—or have been very tall—they all pricked up their pointed ears at once.

"Ha! Did you hear that?" said Tuppy. "The Queen said someone *tall!*"

"What about Mr. Spindle-Shanks the new wizard, who has come to live in the big house on the hill?" said Higgle.

"He's tall enough for anything!" said Pop.

"I guess he's the thief!" said Snippy. "I saw him round here last night when it was dark."

"Then we'll go to his house and get back the stolen tea-service," said Pip.

"Don't be silly," said the Queen, drying her eyes. "You know quite well that if you five clever imps go walking up to Mr. Spindle-Shanks' door he'll guess you've come for the tea-service, and he'll turn you into teaspoons to go with the teapot, or something horrid like that!"

"True," said Tuppy.

"Something in that!" said Higgle.

"Have to think hard about this," said Pop.

"Or we'll find ourselves in the soup," said Snippy.

“Well, *I’ve* got an idea!” said Pip.

“WHAT?” cried every one in a hurry.

“Listen!” said Pip. “I happen to know that the wizard would be glad to have a servant—someone as tall as himself, who can lay his table properly—he has a very high table you know—and hang up his clothes for him on his very high hooks. Things like that.”

“Well, that doesn’t seem to me to help *us* at all,” said Tuppy. “We aren’t tall—we are very small and round!”

“Ah, wait!” said Pip. “I haven’t got to my idea yet. What about us getting a very long coat that buttons from top to bottom, and standing on top of each other’s shoulders, five in a high row—buttoning the coat round us, and saying we are one big tall servant?”

“What a joke!” said Pop, and he laughed.

“Who’s going to be the top one, the one with his head out at the top?” asked Tuppy.

“You are,” said Pip. “You’re the cleverest. We others will be holding on hard to each other, five imps altogether, each holding on to each other’s legs! I hope we don’t wobble!”

“But what’s the sense of us going like that?” said Snippy.

“Oh, how stupid you are, Snip!” said Pip. “Don’t you see—as soon as the wizard gets out of our way we’ll split up into five goblins again, take the teapot, the hot-water jug, the milk-jug, the sugar-basin, and the tray—one each—and scurry off!”

“Splendid!” said Tuppy. “Come on—I’m longing to begin!”

The imps borrowed a very long coat from a small giant they knew. Then Pip stood on Pop’s shoulders. That was two of them. Then Snippy climbed up to Pip’s shoulders and stood there, with Pip holding his legs tightly. Then Higgle, with the help of a chair, stood up on Snippy’s shoulders—and last of all Tuppy climbed up on to Higgle’s shoulders.

There they were, all five of them, standing on one another’s shoulders, almost touching the ceiling! Somehow or other they got the long coat round them, and then buttoned it up. It just reached Pop’s ankles, and buttoned nicely round Tuppy’s neck at the top.

They got out of the door with difficulty. Pip began to giggle. “Sh!” said Tuppy, at the top. “No giggling down below there. You’re supposed to be

my knees, Pip. Knees don't giggle!"

Snippy began to laugh too, then, but Tuppy scolded him hard. "Snippy! You are supposed to be my tummy. Be quiet! We are no longer five imps, but one long, thin servant, and our name is—is—is . . ."

"Lanky-Panky," said Snippy suddenly. Everyone laughed.

"Yes—that's quite a good name," said Tuppy. "We are Lanky-Panky, and we are going to ask if we can be the Wizard Spindle-Shanks' servant. Now—not a word more!"

"Hope I don't suddenly get the hiccups!" said Pip. "I do sometimes."

"Knees don't get hiccups!" snapped Tuppy. "Be quiet, I tell you!"

The strange and curious person called Lanky-Panky walked unsteadily up the hill to the big house where the wizard lived. Tuppy could reach the knocker quite nicely, for it was just level with his head. He knocked.

"Who's there!" called a voice.

"Lanky-Panky, who has come to seek work," called Tuppy.

The wizard opened the door and stared in surprise at the long person in the buttoned-up coat. "Dear me!" he said. "So you are Lanky-Panky—well, you are certainly lanky enough! I want a tall servant who can reach up to my pegs and tables. Come in."

Lanky-Panky stepped in. Tuppy, at the top, looked round the kitchen. It seemed rather dirty.

"Yes," said Spindle-Shanks. "It *is* dirty. But before you do any cleaning, you can get my tea."

"Yes, sir," said Tuppy, feeling excited. Perhaps the wizard would use the stolen tea-service! That would be fine.

The wizard sat down and took up a book. "The kettle's boiling," he said. "Get on with my tea."

The curious-looking Lanky-Panky began to get the tea. There was a china teapot and hot-water jug on the dresser, but look as he might, Tuppy could see no silver one.

"Excuse me, please, sir," he said politely. "But I can't find your silver tea-things."

"Use the china service!" snapped the wizard.

“Good gracious, sir! Hasn’t a powerful wizard like you got a silver one?” said Tuppy, in a voice of great surprise.

“Yes—I have!” said Spindle-Shanks, “and I’ll show it to you, to make your mouth water! Then I’ll hide it away again, where you can’t get it if you wanted to.”

He opened a cupboard and there before Tuppy’s astonished eyes shone the stolen tea-service on its beautiful tray.

“Ha!” said the wizard. “That makes you stare, doesn’t it? Well, my dear Lanky-Panky, I am going to put this beautiful tea-service where you can’t possibly get it! I am going to put it into this tiny cupboard down here—right at the back—far out of reach—so that a great, tall person like you cannot possibly squeeze himself in to get out such a precious thing.”

“No, sir, no one as tall as I am could possibly get into that tiny cupboard,” said Lanky-Panky, in a rather queer voice. “Only a very tiny person could get in there.”

“And as I never let a tiny person into my house, the tea-service will be safe,” said Spindle-Shanks, with a laugh. “Now, is my tea ready?”

It was. The wizard ate and drank noisily. Lanky-Panky ate a little himself. Tuppy managed to pass a cake to each of the imps without the wizard seeing, but it was quite impossible to give them anything to drink!

That night, when the wizard was asleep, Lanky-Panky unbuttoned his coat and broke up into five little imps. Each one stole to the tiny cupboard. Tuppy opened it. He went in quite easily and brought out the teapot. Snippy went in and fetched the hot-water jug. Pip got the milk-jug. Pop got the sugar-basin, and Higgle carried the big, heavy tray.

They managed to open the kitchen door. Then one by one they stole out—but as they crossed the yard Higgle dropped the tray!

Crash! It made such a noise! It awoke the wizard, who leapt out of bed at once. He saw the open door of the cupboard—he saw the open door of the kitchen—he spied five imps running down the hill in the moonlight.

“Imps!” he cried. “Imps! How did they get in? Did Lanky-Panky let them in? Lanky-Panky, where are you? Come here at once, Lanky-Panky!”

But Lanky-Panky didn’t come.

“Lanky-Panky has disappeared!” he said. “The imps have killed him! I shall complain to the King!”

The Queen was delighted to get back her tea-service.

When the wizard came striding to see the King and to complain of Lanky-Panky's disappearance, the five clever imps, who were there, began to laugh and laugh.

"Would you like to see Lanky-Panky again?" they asked the surprised wizard. "Well, watch!"

Then, one by one they jumped up on each other's shoulders, borrowed a big coat from the King and buttoned it round them.

"Here's old Lanky-Panky!" they cried, and ran at Spindle-Shanks. "Catch the wizard, someone, for it was he who stole the Queen's things, though he doesn't know we knew it and that we took them back to her!"

So Spindle-Shanks was caught and punished. As for Lanky-Panky, he sometimes appears again, just for fun. I wish I could see him, don't you?



# Bobby the Cow-boy

**B**OBBY had a book all about cowboys. It had pictures in it, showing the cowboys galloping about on their horses and lassoing all sorts of animals. It was very exciting.

“I shall be a cowboy when I grow up,” said Bobby. “I think I had better practise now. I can play at lassoing things with a rope. And perhaps Farmer Straws will let me ride his little pony sometimes.”

But Farmer Straws wouldn't. “No,” he said. “I'm not going to have any little scamps riding my quiet old Ladybird. You keep out of my fields, Bobby!”

Bobby was disappointed. It was difficult to be a cowboy and not have a horse.

“I shall ride on the swing-gate instead!” he said. So he climbed up on to the big swing-gate, tied his reins to the gate-post, and galloped there. Sometimes the wind swung the gate open and shut, and then it was great fun.

Mother gave Bobby the old clothes-line for a rope to practise lassoing with. He was very pleased.

But the other children laughed at him. “Bobby the cowboy!” they said. “Ha, look at him, riding on the gate for a horse, and driving the post! And look at his lasso—it's just an old clothes-line!”

Bobby didn't like being laughed at, but he was a plucky boy, and he wouldn't give up just because somebody laughed at him. He climbed up on to the gate once more and clicked to his horse-post!

And how he practised lassoing! He knew how to make a slip-knot at the end of his rope. He knew how to gather the rope into loops and send it spinning through the air, unwinding as it went. But it was very difficult to make the end loop drop over the thing he was aiming at!

“Bobby tries to lasso the gate-post and he nearly catches a cow!” laughed the other children, watching. “Bobby, try to lasso Rover the farm-dog—you'll find you've caught the pig instead!”

Now it is very difficult to go on doing something when people laugh all the time—but Bobby wouldn't give up. No; he meant to learn lassoing properly—and at last he managed it! It was wonderful to see him aim at a lamp-post and see the loop drop neatly over the lamp and slither down to the foot of the post!

“What use is it, anyhow?” mocked Harry, a big boy, who was the son of Mr. Straws the farmer. “It's all right if you really live out in the Wild West country and have to lasso horses and cows, but what's the use of lassoing lamp-posts?”

“Oh, you never know when anything may come in useful,” said Bobby.

Now one day all the children went down to the river to play. Harry took his baby sister with him, a little girl in a push-chair. She was strapped in safely so that she couldn't fall out. Kenneth, Elsie, Winnie and Tom went too, carrying their boats and balls. They meant to have great fun.

Harry put the baby girl some way back from the river and told her to go to sleep. Then he went off to sail his boat with the others. After that they went away into the nearby field to play ball.

Now the wind began to blow hard, and it blew the baby-girl's pram along. It blew it down the gentle slope that led to the river, and the little girl screamed.

The farmer, who was working not far off, heard the scream and looked up. When he saw his baby girl in the push-chair, running by itself to the river, he gave a great shout. He began to run.

The children heard the scream and the shout, and they were filled with horror when they saw the baby-girl going in the push-chair to the river.

“She'll fall in!” shouted Harry. “Quick! Run!”

Everybody ran, but it looked as if no one would get there in time. But wait a minute—what is Bobby doing? He has stopped—he has undone the lasso-rope he keeps tied around him. He takes it and loops it quickly—and now it is flying through the air!

Whish! It dropped neatly round the handle of the push-chair, just as it had reached the river-bank. Bobby pulled the rope tightly, and the loop gripped the handle fast. Bobby pulled again.

The push-chair stopped, and then ran safely backwards up the bank, away from the river. The farmer caught the handle and pulled it farther back. He undid the strap and took out his frightened little girl.

All the children ran up, pale and scared. “Is Baby all right?” asked Harry.

“Yes,” said the farmer. “Thanks to Cowboy Bobby! That was a wonderful throw of yours, Bobby! You’re a real cowboy!”

All the children stared at Bobby in wonder. So Bobby had been right—his lassoing had come in useful after all! What a good thing he hadn’t given it up when they had laughed at him!

“Bobby, you can ride my pony Ladybird whenever you like,” said Farmer Straws. “If you want to be a cowboy, you shall!”

“Hurrah!” yelled Bobby, and he ran to find Ladybird at once. My goodness, he was soon galloping round the field, for all the world like a real live cowboy!

But the next day was better still, for Mrs. Straws went to town and bought a proper cowboy set—shaggy trousers, leather belt, red shirt, and cowboy hat.

Don’t be afraid if you hear a wild shout from Farmer Straws’ field when you go near! You will see a fierce cowboy galloping on a pony, his lasso whirling through the air, the pony’s hoofs thundering on the grass. It’s only Bobby—but he looks like a real cowboy now!

# The Cockalorum Bird

ONCE upon a time there were two children called Benny and Sarah. They lived in a nice house with their father and mother, and they went to school from Monday to Friday, just as you do.

They were rather quarrelsome children, and they were not at all kind to animals.

Rover the dog hated them, for they trod on his toes and pulled his tail. Tibby the cat ran away when they came, in case *her* tail should be pulled too, or her fur stroked roughly the wrong way. Even the birds in the garden flew off as soon as Benny and Sarah came out, for they were afraid of having stones thrown at them.

Their mother didn't like to see them unkind, but though she scolded them, and often read them stories of animals and their friends it didn't seem to make any difference. And one day—ah, something very strange happened to Benny and Sarah!

Every spring the two children used to go out bird-nesting although they knew that their mother had forbidden them to. They pretended to her that they were going to look for primroses, and it is true that they always brought back a bunch—but they brought back something else too!

Packed away in a box of cotton-wool in Benny's pocket were eggs! Yes, birds' eggs of all kinds, from the pretty sky-blue ones belonging to the little brown hedge-sparrow, to the reddish-brown ones of the friendly robin. There were thrushes' eggs, too, and blackbirds', and sometimes a chaffinch's egg taken from its neat and mossy nest.

When they got home the children blew the eggs empty and hid them away on an old shelf in the dark summer-house. They had a box there, full of eggs—dozens of them, often five or six of the same kind. Nobody knew but themselves. Many, many birds had been frightened and made unhappy by the two children, but Benny and Sarah cared nothing for that!

Now one day they set off as usual, carrying their lunch in a satchel.

“Good-bye, Mother!” they called, “We are going to look for violets and primroses!”

But really they were going bird-nesting, although the day before at school, they had promised their teacher that they would be kind to all birds and not rob their nests. Off they went and soon they were beating the hedges to make the birds fly out, and once Benny hit a thrush with a stone and hurt its leg.

They took two eggs from a blackbird's nest, and heard the poor mother blackbird calling to her mate in terror. They found a robin's nest in an old tin and took all the eggs, which made the robins so unhappy that they flew about singing of their loss all day long.

And then they found the strange egg in the strange nest!

Benny found it. He was passing an old wall and he caught sight of something funny on the top. He climbed up to see what it was—and there, in a cup-shaped nest made of pine-cones stuck together, he saw the strange egg!

He was most astonished to find such a queer nest. He had never seen one made of pine-cones before. He called Sarah up to see it.

“And look at the egg!” he said. “Did you ever see such a curious one? It's almost as big as a hen's egg and what a funny shape and colour!”

“It's quite flat one end and very pointed the other!” said Sarah. “Why, I believe it would stand up on its flat end! And oh, Benny—isn't it strangely marked?”

It certainly was. It was striped in yellow, red and black all the way from end to end. Benny picked it up—and almost dropped it!

“Ooh!” he said, startled, “it's *very* hot!”

So it was—almost as if it had been cooked! Sarah felt it and was most surprised.

“Let's take it home and blow it,” said Benny, excitedly. “It will be the strangest and rarest egg we've got!”

So he put it into his box of cotton-wool and slid down from the wall. It was almost time to go home, so the two children picked a bunch of violets and primroses, in case their mother should wonder what they had been doing all the time, and off they went, back home again.

“I hope you didn't go bird-nesting,” said their mother, when she saw what looked very much like a box sticking out of Benny's pocket.

“Oh no, Mother!” said the children untruthfully. Wasn’t it horrid of them to tell such a story? But they were not very nice children, you see.

They went to the old summer-house as soon as they could, and took out the strange, striped egg. To their enormous surprise it had changed its markings! Instead of being striped in yellow, red and black, it was now spotted with orange and green. It didn’t look the same egg at all!

“I say!” said Benny, rather alarmed. “What’s happened to this egg? Is it magic, do you think?”

“Don’t be silly,” said Sarah. “You know we don’t believe in fairies or magic or anything like that. Go on, blow the egg, Benny, and make it nice and hollow so that we can put it with our collection.”

Benny took up the egg—but he at once let it drop with a loud howl.

“It’s *boiling* hot!” he cried. “It’s burnt my hand!”

“Yes, and you’ve broken the egg, you silly stupid boy!” shouted Sarah, in dismay. She gave Benny a slap, and he hit her back. Then they stopped quarrelling in a hurry—for something very strange was happening!

The egg had broken, certainly—but no yellow yolk had come out. Instead a very small and brightly coloured bird appeared in the broken shell, opened its beak and gave a piercing whistle, like a railway train!

The children stared at it in astonishment and alarm. Whatever bird could it be?

As they looked, it began to grow and soon it was as big as a magpie. It was a very curious-looking creature, for it had a yellow head with a curved beak, bright blue eyes, and striped orange and green feathers with a long tail made of one black feather.

“I don’t like it!” said Benny, in a fright. “Come on, Sarah, let’s go indoors! Perhaps the nasty thing will fly away.”

They left the old summer-house and ran indoors—but that bird followed them. It spread its strange, striped wings and flew after them. It landed on Benny’s shoulder and gave his ear a sharp peck. Then it whistled loudly and piercingly and both children jumped in alarm.

“Stop that dreadful whistling!” called their mother, crossly.

The children didn’t like to say that it was the bird making that noise for they were afraid of having to own up that they had been bird-nesting. Benny

tried to slap the bird, but it flew quickly to Sarah's shoulder, bent round and nipped her nose. Then it gave another loud screeching whistle.

"Didn't your mother tell you to stop that noise?" suddenly shouted their father's angry voice, and out he came. The bird at once disappeared into Benny's pocket, grew very small and kept perfectly still and quiet.

"You can both go up to bed at once and stay there for the rest of the day!" said their father, crossly.

So up the stairs they went, feeling angry with the screeching bird, but not daring to say anything about it. They undressed and got into bed, half-frightened.

"We'd better get rid of that horrid bird," whispered Benny to Sarah. "When it's dark to-night I'll take it out-of-doors and lock it in the gardener's shed."

So that night when everything was dark and quiet, Benny crept down the stairs, with the bird, hoping that it wouldn't whistle. He took it to the gardener's shed, opened the door and pushed it inside. Then quickly he slammed the door, locked it, and ran back to bed.

"It's all right!" he said to Sarah. "It's safely in the shed. Gardener will find it there to-morrow, and we needn't say anything about it."

They fell asleep—but two hours later they were awakened by a gentle tapping on the window. They sat up. A bird-like voice was calling softly to them.

"Let me in! Let me in! If you don't, I shall whistle again!"

"Oh my goodness, it's that bird!" groaned Benny. "It's got out of the shed. What are we to do, Sarah?"

"I'm just going to screech!" said the bird, tapping again. "Oho! Then your father will come and whip you both!"

In a fright Sarah jumped out of bed, opened the window and let in the bird.

"Many thanks," said the bird, and hopped to their bed. "Come on, get in and warm me! I'm cold now, for that shed was damp."

How that bird pecked them in bed! He couldn't seem to get comfortable and he pecked first Sarah and then Benny to make them lie just how he wanted them to.

“Are you a magic bird?” asked Benny, feeling very much scared.

“I’m a Cockalorum Bird,” it answered. “You only see us once in a blue moon. You are lucky to have found my egg, I can tell you. It’s hundreds of years since anyone found a Cockalorum egg.”

“Well, I wish *we* hadn’t!” said Benny, miserably. “I think you are a most unlucky bird. Please don’t make that screeching whistle of yours any more.”

Next day the Cockalorum Bird got up with them and hopped into Benny’s pocket when he was dressed. It seemed to be able to make itself as big or as small as it wished. It was really most peculiar.

The children went to school. The bird snuggled down in Benny’s pocket and fell asleep. Benny was glad. When they came out for playtime he had forgotten all about the bird. He saw the school cat lying on the window-sill in the sun and he ran up to her. He caught hold of her tail and gave it a sharp pull. The cat howled in pain.

The Cockalorum Bird woke up and peeped out. As soon as it saw what Benny was doing it hopped up to his shoulder, pecked a small piece out of Benny’s ear and gave the loudest whistle he had ever made. Then another—and another! The master came running out angrily and looked at Benny.

“Go in at once!” he said. “You shall miss your playtime, you bad boy. Making a noise like that, indeed!”

The Cockalorum Bird had flown off. It was nowhere to be seen. Benny walked sadly into the schoolroom and sat down. “I wish I hadn’t pulled that cat’s tail!” he thought.

Sarah was sorry that Benny was missing his playtime. She went out by herself and saw a dog outside the playground railings. She picked up a stone and threw it. At once she felt two sharp-clawed feet on her shoulder, and there was the Cockalorum Bird again! It pecked her on the nose and then screeched harshly.

The teacher at once sent the little girl indoors, though Sarah sobbed and said she really hadn’t made the noise. “It was the Cockalorum Bird,” she wept.

“Don’t tell such stupid stories!” said the teacher, impatiently. “There’s no such bird!”

The Cockalorum Bird had flown off again. Sarah couldn’t see it anywhere. She went in and sat down in the schoolroom with Benny. The two children looked at one another gloomily.



“We shall have to get rid of that nasty bird *somehow!*” said Benny. “I think I’ll throw it down the well to-night. I’ll put the lid on the well so that it can’t possibly get out again.”

But the Cockalorum Bird didn’t come back that morning, and the two children cheered up. Perhaps it wouldn’t come back any more. How lovely!

After tea they went to play in the garden. One of the next-door hens crept under the fence and Benny saw it. In delight he began to chase it all over the place, and the frightened creature ran squawking here and there.

Suddenly there was a loud whistle and down flew the Cockalorum Bird on to Benny’s shoulder. It tweaked first one of his ears and then the other. Then it screeched again, more loudly than six railway trains!

Out came their father. “Didn’t I say you were not to screech like that!” he roared. “We shall have all the neighbours complaining of you. Well, I warned you last night. Now I shall whip you, Benny.”

Benny was frightened. He ran here and there in the garden, trying to escape from his father. Sarah watched and thought that really he looked just like the hen he had been chasing a few minutes since. His father caught Benny at last, gave him a good whipping and sent him indoors.

“And if *you* start any tricks, you’ll have the same punishment!” he said to Sarah. The little girl looked round nervously for the Cockalorum Bird, hoping that it wouldn’t screech and get *her* into trouble, but it seemed to have disappeared.

She took a book, sat down on the grass and began to read. Presently she saw a spider hanging from her web nearby, mending a little hole in it. Sarah watched. When the spider had finished her mending she ran back to a leaf and hid there. Then Sarah did an unkind thing. She took a twig and made a big hole in the web so that the spider would have to mend it all over again. She and Benny were always doing things like that.

No sooner had she done this than she felt something on her shoulder, and there was the Cockalorum Bird again, looking out of bright blue eyes at her. He opened his beak and gave a loud screech.

Sarah’s mother came to the door. “It’s a good thing your father has gone out to buy a paper,” she said, crossly, “or he would most certainly have whipped you for that, Sarah. I really can’t think what has come over you children the last day or two—so noisy, so disobedient! Come indoors and I will give you some mending to do. I will not have you making those horrible, screeching, whistling noises!”

So Sarah had to go indoors. Her mother put the mending basket before her and told her to darn a hole in one of Benny's stockings. Sarah was a good darner and she set to work to darn the hole neatly—and then, just as she had finished it, in flew the Cockalorum Bird again, put its sharp beak down to the stocking and tore out all Sarah's careful darning!

“Oh, you unkind thing!” cried the little girl, in tears.

“I saw you do it to the spider's web!” said the Cockalorum Bird in his squawking voice. “If it's a nice thing to do to a small spider, it's a nice thing to do to a small girl!” He opened his beak to give a loud screech, but Sarah put her hand on his open beak and closed it.

“Please, please!” she said. “I shall get into such trouble if you screech again.”

Just then her mother came in and the brilliantly coloured bird disappeared in a trice. Sarah's mother was cross when she saw that there was still a big hole in the stocking. “You naughty girl! You haven't done a scrap of darning!” she said. “I shall not let you go out to tea to-morrow now.”

That night in bed the two children talked in low voices about the strange Cockalorum Bird.

“I've noticed that he always seems to come and screech when we do anything unkind,” said Sarah. “Perhaps we had better stop doing those things, Benny.”

“It would be easier to get rid of that horrid bird!” said Benny. “I shall do what I said, Sarah, and throw it down the well to-night!”

Just then the Cockalorum Bird flew in at the door, and sat on the bed rail, its long black tail twitching from side to side. “I'm just going to sneeze,” it said, “and then I believe I've got a screech coming!”

In a fright Benny clutched at the bird, wrapped a towel round it so that it could not make a sound, or even struggle, and shook it angrily.

“Well, I'll just drown you now, you nasty, horrid creature!” he said. He climbed out of the window and slid down the pear tree outside. Then Sarah threw him down the bundle in which the Cockalorum Bird was closely wrapped. The little boy took it and ran off to the old well. He lifted up the lid that covered it, threw the wrapped-up bird quickly down the well, and clapped on the lid again. Then back he went.

“Well, we shan't see or hear that bird any more!” he said, pleased. He climbed into bed and it was not long before both children were asleep.

And then, just as had happened the night before, they were awakened by a tapping on the window-pane! “Let me in, let me in, I am wet and cold!” said the voice of the Cockalorum. “Quick, before I whistle and screech!”

There was nothing for it but to get out of bed and open the window. In flew the big bird, and made straight for the children’s bed. It cuddled up to them and they couldn’t bear it, for it was soaking wet and very cold. It was angry too, and kept pecking their legs with its sharp beak.

Sarah began to cry. “What can we do to get rid of this bird?” she sobbed to Benny.

“You *can’t* get rid of me,” said the bird. “Once I find children like you, I live with them always. I don’t get any fun living with kindly, good-natured children. I never get a chance of screeching or pecking *them*. But I shall get a dozen chances a day of teasing *you*. My, what fun!”

The children lay quiet. They were each thinking the same thing. Perhaps if they stopped being thoughtless and unkind to other creatures, the Cockalorum Bird would find it so dull living with them that he would fly off. They would try it, anyhow!

So the next day they went out of their way to be kind and gentle. They took Rover for a walk. They stroked the surprised cat. They put out bread for the birds. And the Cockalorum Bird drooped its wings and never screeched a screech or pecked a peck. It yawned and waited—but the children didn’t give it a chance to screech or tweak their ears!

And the strange thing was that both of them were very happy. They were pleased to see Rover’s joy when he ran beside them on their walk. They were glad when the cat purred and rubbed itself against them. They laughed to see the sparrows squabbling over the bread they had put out.

“Do you know, Sarah, it’s more *interesting* to be kind than it is to tease things,” said Benny, suddenly.

“It gives you such a nice feeling, too,” said Sarah. “We have been rather horrid, often, you know, Benny.”

“The old Cockalorum Bird is feeling as dull as can be!” whispered Benny. “Let’s pull his long tail and make him jump!”

“Oh, Benny, no! Let’s go on being kind for as long as we can,” said Sarah. “Besides, he would screech.”

So they left the bird alone and he didn’t even try to get into bed with them at night.

Benny forgot the next day and threw a stone at a thrush—and how pleased the Cockalorum Bird was! How it screeched! How it tweaked his ear! And the day after Sarah forgot and trod on a worm. The Cockalorum went nearly mad with joy and whistled till Sarah’s mother came out and smacked her hard!

But the children changed after that. They remembered to be kind and gentle, and they found that they liked it because then all the birds and animals trusted them and came round to make friends. It was so much nicer to have friends than enemies. The Cockalorum Bird grew mopey and one day he spread his striped wings and flew off, over the garden-hedge.

“He’s gone,” said Benny.

“I wonder where to?” said Sarah. “Well, Benny, I’m not sorry we found his egg. We are much happier now. I don’t think we shall ever like to be unkind again and go about teasing things. Do you?”

“Never!” said Benny. And he meant it.

They didn’t see the Cockalorum Bird again. People say it goes about looking for horrid children to live with, but I don’t know if that’s true. Anyway, if ever you see a nest made of pine-cones, don’t touch the egg inside, whatever you do. It *might* grow into a Cockalorum Bird and live with *you*!

# The Magic Shell

JESSIE and Norman had spent a whole month by the sea—and, dear me, how they had loved it. They had paddled and bathed and dug and fished—but now it was all over.

The children were sad. They sat on a sand-castle for the last time, and Jessie was almost in tears.

“I do love the sea so much,” she said. “I don’t want to go home.”

“Nor do I,” said Norman. “I wish we could take a bit of it back with us!”

“I’d like to take the sound of the waves back with me,” said Jessie. “I do so love that soft, sighing, singing noise they make, Norman. It’s a real seaside sound.”

“Let’s find a big bit of seaweed to take back,” said Norman, getting up. “And some shells too, to play with.”

“I don’t want to,” said Jessie. “If I could take the sound of the waves I’d go and look for that. But you can’t take that home with you.”

“Well, just come and help *me* then,” said Norman. “If we can find a long piece of seaweed we can hang it up outside our bedroom window—and if it is dry it means good weather, and if it is damp it means bad weather. It will be fun to keep feeling it to see!”

So the two children began to hunt about for seaweed and shells. Soon their buckets were full of pretty shells that shone brightly when they were wet. Then Jessie found a very long piece of seaweed.

“It’s like a mermaid’s ribbon!” she said, holding it up. “It’s as tall as I am! This will be a lovely bit to take home.”

Just then Norman gave a shout. “Jessie! Look at this enormous shell in the rock-pool here! Come and help me to get it. It is wedged under a rock.”

The two children tugged at the shell—and out it came. It was indeed a big one—very curly and long, with a big opening at the end.

“Oh, this is lovely!” said Jessie. “We’ll put it on the nursery mantelpiece when we get home. It is a real treasure. If I give you my seaweed will you

give me this shell, Norman?”

“All right,” said Norman. So Jessie took the shell and he carried the long ribbon of seaweed. They went home, where Mummy was busy packing.

“Oh, dear me, I haven’t room for anything else!” she said, when she saw them. “You will have to carry your shells and your seaweed in your pails.”

So the two children carried their treasures home themselves. When they got home at last, Norman hung the seaweed outside the bedroom window and Jessie stood the big shell on the nursery mantelpiece. It looked lovely.

The children did miss the sea. “It seems so strange not to hear it outside the window all day and night,” said Jessie. “If only I could hear it again! I am so afraid of forgetting the lovely noise the sea makes.”

She looked so very miserable that Mother laughed. “Good gracious!” she said. “What a long face! Well, you brought plenty of sea-treasures home with you. Play with those.”

“But what I most wanted to bring was the *sound* of the sea,” said Jessie. “I couldn’t bring that.”

“Well, that is just what you *have* brought,” said Mother suddenly, and she took the big shell down from the mantelpiece. “You have brought the song of the sea back in this shell—listen!”

She put it to Jessie’s ear—and do you know, inside that shell she could hear the sound of the far-away sea! Wasn’t it marvellous! She heard the little waves sighing and the big ones singing. How delighted she was!

“Oh, Mummy, Mummy!” she shouted. “The sound of the sea is inside my shell! Oh, how lovely! Oh, it’s like magic! Now I shall be happy because I can hear the sea whenever I want to.”

Wasn’t it strange that the shell sang the song of the sea? Would you like to hear it too? Then find someone who has a big shell, and ask if you can put it to your ear. What a surprise you will get! You will hear the sea inside the shell, murmuring and sighing, far, far away.

It’s like magic, isn’t it!

# The Greedy Little Sparrow

**F**EATHERS was a greedy little brown sparrow who was always first on the bird-table and last to go. How he loved the soaked dog-biscuits, the potatoes in their jackets, and the scrapings of milk pudding that Hilda and Fred put out every morning!

He wished he could keep all the other birds away from the table so that he might have even more to eat. But how could he do *that*?

“I know!” he said at last. “I’ll say that the black cat is about. Then the others will be careful and I shall be able to eat all I want to.”

So the next morning, when Hilda and Fred put food on their bird-table, Feathers began to chirrup loudly to the others.

“Be careful! Be careful! Chirrup! Chirrup! The cat’s about! Chirrup! She’s hiding under a bush! I saw her! Chirrup! She is waiting for us to go on the bird-table and then she will POUNCE! Chirrup!”

All the birds heard this warning cry and stayed quietly in the bushes and on the gutter. Every one was afraid of the cat. No one wanted to be caught by Nigger, whose sharp claws could strike down even a big bird like Glossy the blackbird.

“I’ll fly down to the bird-table and see if Nigger is anywhere about still!” chirruped Feathers, very soon. “Keep where you are, everybody! I’ll fly down!”

He flew down—and in a trice was pecking hard at the bread-crumbs there. “Chirrup!” he called to the others. “Be careful! I think I can see the cat under the lilac bush! I’ll tell you when she goes!”

Feathers had another good peck at the food, pretending to keep a watch for the cat every now and again. The other birds watched him hungrily—but not one ventured to fly down. They were dreadfully afraid of Nigger the cat.

Then the starling, who had been sitting on the chimney-top warming his toes, suddenly gave a splutter. “Why! There’s Nigger in the next-door garden! She can’t be hiding under the lilac bush!”

Sure enough, when the birds looked, there was Nigger peacefully lying in the next garden, asleep in the sun. One by one the birds flew down to the table and were soon enjoying a good meal. But Feathers had taken all the best titbits, you may be sure.

The next day Feathers went on with his trick. As soon as Hilda and Fred had filled the bird-table with scraps, and the birds had flown down to them, Feathers, who was sitting on the gutter, gave a loud chirrup.

“Chirrup! Chirrup! Fly away quickly! I can see a tabby-cat round by that tub! He’s watching you all! He’s going to pounce! Chirrup!”

With a flutter of wings and squawks of fright all the sparrows, chaffinches, starlings, and thrushes flew off the bird-table. Some went to the bushes, some flew to the roof, and others were so frightened that they flew to the fields. Feathers was pleased. He flew down to the bird-table at once and called to the others:

“I’ll keep my eye on that tabby-cat! I can see him from here! I’ll tell you when he’s gone! Oh, you bad cat, I can see you, yes, I can see you! Chirrup, chirrup.”

“Isn’t Feathers brave?” said a little chaffinch with a bright pink chest.

“He’s wonderful the way he sees any hiding cat,” said a cock-sparrow.

“And it’s very plucky of him to wait on the table and tell us when the cat is gone,” said a gleaming starling. “That cat might easily pounce on him.”

Feathers heard what everyone was saying and he chirruped in delight to himself. He was doing something very mean—and here were the others praising him and thinking him such a fine, brave fellow.

“I’m clever, I am,” thought Feathers. “They’re all stupid. I’m the only clever one. See how easily I am tricking them! I keep them all away from the food till I’ve taken the best.”

He pecked away busily, pretending to keep an eye on the cat all the time. Then, when he had eaten all the best scraps, he chirruped to the others:

“You can come down to the table safely now, for the cat has gone. I saw him slink away. He’s afraid of *me!*”

The birds flew down and fed. They were very polite to Feathers, for they all thought he was a charming and helpful fellow.

The next day Feathers spied some cake-crumbs in the next-door-but-one-garden. He loved these, for they were sweet. The children had eaten their tea



in the garden and had left a great many cake-crumbs about. Feathers was pleased.

“Nobody else seems to have seen them,” said Feathers to himself. “That’s lucky. I shan’t share them with anyone. I’ll just fly down and get them.”

As he was about to fly down, a small hen-sparrow chirruped to him from the roof:

“Feathers! Feathers! Be careful! There is a big Persian cat in the garden! Don’t go down for those cake-crumbs!”

“Oho!” said Feathers to himself, with a quick look round. “So there is another sparrow who is playing my trick and pretending there are cats about so that she can get the crumbs herself! No, no, little hen-sparrow—you can’t trick *me* like that. I’m too clever.”

He flew down to the crumbs and began to peck them up. The little hen-sparrow on the roof hopped up and down in the greatest excitement and fear. “Feathers! The cat is there! Come back, come back! Eat the crumbs later when the cat is gone!”

Feathers took no notice. He went on pecking up the crumbs, which were really delicious. That little hen-sparrow could be as clever as she liked—*he* wasn’t going to take any notice.

But the hen-sparrow was not being clever—she was being kind. The cat really *was* there! And suddenly poor Feathers knew it, for there came a soft rustle—and the Persian cat pounced on the greedy little sparrow.

It would have been the end of Feathers if the little hen-sparrow on the roof hadn’t made such a noise. Lucy, the little girl that the cat belonged to, heard the noise and came running out. She made the cat let Feathers go—and he flew off with a broken leg and no feathers in his tail.

Poor Feathers! It was a dreadful punishment for greediness and untruthfulness. He thought he was so clever—but he wasn’t even clever enough to know that it is foolish to be greedy and to tell untruths.

If you see a little sparrow with a rather short tail and one limping foot, have a look at him. It’s sure to be Feathers.

# Here Comes Santa Claus

## *A Little Play for a Christmas Party*

A CHRISTMAS party is great fun, isn't it! We have balloons and crackers, lots of good things to eat, games, and perhaps a Christmas Tree.

Maybe in the middle of the party Santa Claus arrives to give away presents from the tree, or from his big sack. Of course, he is usually Daddy or Uncle or Grandpa, dressed up in a red cloak and hood, with big rubber boots on, and a fine white beard.

Here is a little play for two or three boys and girls to act, preferably those who are giving the party. As you will see, when you read it, it brings Santa Claus to the party, and this makes a great excitement, especially for the little ones, who will probably think that Santa Claus is quite real.

### *Characters:*

A BOY, JOHN.

A GIRL, MARY.

ANOTHER GIRL (OR BOY), ANNE (OR TOM).

SANTA CLAUS.

AN IMP. SERVANT TO SANTA CLAUS.

The characters can be altered if wished, to all girls or all boys, or may be less in number or more than those suggested. In fact, make the characters fit your own little family.

*Properties Needed.* These are very simple indeed. The scenery is just a corner of whatever room you are going to act in. A table, two or three chairs are set about. The children are dressed in overalls, which are put over their party frocks and suits, hiding them completely. Santa Claus needs the usual red cloak, rubber boots, red hood, and white beard. The imp can be dressed in long stockings, and a short tunic of any colour wished. He wears a pointed cap with a feather set in it.

Jingling bells are needed, and someone must be prepared to be outside the house, or in the hall to jingle the bells, which are supposed to be reindeer bells.

THE SCENE:

*A room in an ordinary house just after Christmas. If there is a curtain, or screen, draw it aside to show the three child actors all busy together. One is blowing up balloons. One is busy making paper chains. The third is making out a list of party games, with paper and pencil.*

JOHN (*putting down a half-blown balloon*): My goodness, you do need a lot of puff to blow up balloons. How many shall we want for our party, Mary?

MARY: Oh heaps. Shall I take a turn at blowing up the balloons for you, and you take a turn at these paper chains, John? I'm getting rather tired of making them for the party. (*They exchange chains and a balloon.*)

ANNE: I'm thinking of all the games we can play at our party. Blind man's buff—hunt-the-thimble—hunt-the-slipper—general post—spin-the-trencher—do tell me some more, you others!

MARY: What about nuts-in-May? We always play that to start with.

ANNE (*writing it down*): Oh yes. I'd forgotten that. I say, won't it be a fine party—with all those coloured balloons—and gay paper chains everywhere—and a lovely Christmas cake with candles—and a Christmas tree!

JOHN: I wish it would hurry up and come. I'm longing for it. If only we could get Santa Claus here too!

MARY: One of us could have dressed up as Santa Claus if only we'd had the clothes. But we haven't (*puffs at a balloon*). Gracious! This balloon simply *won't* blow up.

ANNE: Think of some more games please. Shall we have hide-and-peek?

JOHN: No. That means children rushing all over the house, and the very little ones get scared. Have you put down Musical Chairs? Everyone likes that.

MARY: Yes, put that down, Anne. Now, let's think of some . . .

*(As she says this, there comes the sound of a bump, off. Then a yell. "Oh, oh, oh." The children jump in alarm.)*

ANNE: Whatever's that? It sounded like somebody falling down bump in the garden!

JOHN: And somebody yelling. Hark, there he goes again!

IMP (*off-stage*): Oh, oh, oh! What a bump! Oh!

MARY: Who is it? What can the matter be?



I'm an imp. I belong to Santa Claus.

ANNE: We'd better go and find out.

*(Before she can go, there comes a knock at the door.)*

JOHN: Come in!

*(Enter the IMP, his feathered hat on his head. He looks rather woe-begone, and rubs himself behind. He bows to the children, and takes his hat off in a wide sweep.)*

IMP: Hallo to you! Sorry to burst in like this—but something awful has happened to me.

MARY *(in great surprise)*: Who are you? You look like an imp, or pixie or something!

IMP *(grinning)*: I'm an imp. I belong to Santa Claus as a matter of fact. And, as I said, something awful has happened.

CHILDREN *(together)*: What?

IMP: Well, you see, it was like this. I wanted a ride on a reindeer, so I went to the reindeer stable, and jumped on the back of one—and off we went! And when I wanted him to go faster, he wouldn't. So I whipped him, and he threw me off, bump, right down to the ground! I was riding through the sky, you see.

ANNE: Were you really? You must have had a terrible bump, then!

IMP *(rubbing himself again)*: I did. I shall have a great big bruise tonight. The thing is—that tiresome reindeer has galloped off, back to the stables—and here am I, not knowing where I am at all—or how to get back home to Santa Claus's castle. Do you know the way?

JOHN: No, of course we don't. Haven't you got a wishing-ring or anything to take you back in a trice?

IMP: No. *(Suddenly looks at his hat.)* Wait a minute, though—my hat used to be a wishing hat, because it has a Cockyolly Bird's feather in it. But it isn't a wishing-hat any more, because I was naughty and used the wishes badly. So Santa Claus said my wishes mustn't come true.

MARY *(taking hat and looking at it in excitement)*: What! Was it once really a wishing-hat! How marvellous! If only its magic was still in it—we could all wish wishes!

IMP (*snatching hat away from her*): Now don't you start wishing anything, for goodness sake! What I wish won't come true—but the magic is still there for other people to use.

ANNE: What, really! Do you mean that if one of us put that hat on, and wished, the wish would come true?

IMP: Yes, it would. You could have one wish each. But you're not going to! People wish such silly things—they want sacks of gold and things like that. As if *they* would bring anyone real happiness.

JOHN (*trying to take hat*): Oh, *let* me put it on and wish. Do let me!

IMP (*holding it firmly*): Certainly NOT. (*Suddenly sees the balloons.*) I say! What lovely balloons! Do let me hold one on its string! (*Puts hat down, and picks up balloon, and plays with it.*)

MARY (*in loud whisper to John*): Get the hat and put it on, quick!

ANNE: And wish. Go on, John! The imp isn't looking!  
(*John snatches up wishing-hat, and crams it on his head, excited.*)

JOHN: What shall I wish? Quick, tell me!

MARY: Wish for Santa Claus to come here! Do, do! I've always wanted to see him, all real and alive!

(*IMP turns round and sees JOHN with his wishing-hat on his head. Runs to grab it, crying, "No, no, don't wish."*)

JOHN: (*fending him off*): I WISH SANTA CLAUS WOULD COME  
HERE AND SEE US!

IMP (*sinking down in chair, covering face with hands, and beginning to cry*): Oh! You've wished a wish—and now Santa Claus will come—and he'll see me here—and know I borrowed one of his reindeer! You mean horrid boy!

ANNE (*excited*): But will he really come, Imp? I can't believe it!

IMP: Just stay quiet a minute, and listen. You'll soon hear him. He'll come in his reindeer sleigh.

(*All stay quiet, hold their breath, and listen.*)



"Hallo, there! Did somebody wish me here?"

MARY (*clutching JOHN's arm*): Listen! I can hear something.

(*A faint tinkling of bells is heard outside the house. It grows louder and louder and louder.*)

JOHN: The reindeer bells! It is, it is!

(*Bells jingle very loudly. Then stop. A loud voice cries "Whoa, there, whoa! WHOA!"*)

ANNE (*loudly*): It must be Santa Claus!

(*The sound of loud feet is heard in the hall. Then comes a bang at the room-door. It opens—and SANTA CLAUS pops his head in.*)

SANTA: Hallo, there! Did somebody wish me here?

THE CHILDREN (*together*): Yes, yes! We did!

JOHN: Welcome, Santa Claus!

(SANTA CLAUS *strides over to the children and shakes hands with them all, beaming. The IMP tries to hide behind chair.*)

SANTA: How do you do, how do you do! Pleased to see you all. Why did you wish me here?

JOHN: Well—not for anything special, really. Just to see if you were really and truly real! We used the imp’s wishing-cap.

ANNE (*plucking it off JOHN’s head, and putting it on her own*): Here’s his hat. And there’s the imp! (*Points.*)

SANTA: Oh, so it was you, Imp, was it, who borrowed that reindeer of mine. How many times must I tell you not to ride the reindeer?

IMP: Sorry, Santa Claus. Anyway, I’ve got an awful bump, where I fell to the ground.

SANTA: Serves you right! Well—now that I *am* here, children, is there anything I can do for you? What are all these balloons and paper-chains for? Going to have a party?

MARY: Yes, we are. To-morrow. We were getting ready some of the things for it. (*A sudden thought strikes her.*) Oh, Santa Claus—would you—would you come to our party to-morrow? The children would so love to see you!

SANTA (*taking out notebook and looking at it*): To-morrow? No, I’m sorry, to-morrow is impossible. I’ve got to go to a hospital, and give out toys to the sick children there. Quite impossible to come here too, I’m afraid.

ANNE (*disappointed*): Oh, I wish—I do do wish our party was to-day—now, this very minute—then you’d *be* here—and all our guests would see you.

JOHN (*pointing at the wishing-cap on her head*): Anne! You’ve wished! And you had the wishing-cap on!

ANNE (*shocked*): So I did. I never thought what I was doing. Gracious! Will my wish come true? Will our party be to-day—now, this very minute?

(*The children suddenly look out to the audience, their guests, as if they now saw them for the first time. They clutch one another, and point.*)

MARY: It *is* the party! Look—there’s Peter—in his best clothes!

ANNE: And James—and Susan—and Jane—all in party clothes! They're looking at us!

JOHN: They've come to our party! Our wish has come true! Our party is to-day—now, this very minute—and here in front of us are all our guests!

MARY (*looking down at her overall in dismay*): But how awful! I haven't got any party clothes on—only my old overall! I *can't* be at our party dressed like this. But there's no time to change. Everybody's here.

ANNE (*giving her the wishing-hat*): Well, take this then, and wish. It's your turn to wish. Wish for us all to be in party-clothes, quick!

MARY (*putting on hat*): I wish for us all to have on our party clothes!  
(*Nothing appears to happen. The three children look down at their clothes, but their overalls are still on.*)

ANNE (*sadly*): The wish didn't come true. What a pity!

SANTA (*beaming, and lifting up ANNE'S overall*): Oh yes, it came true. What's this I see appearing under your overall?

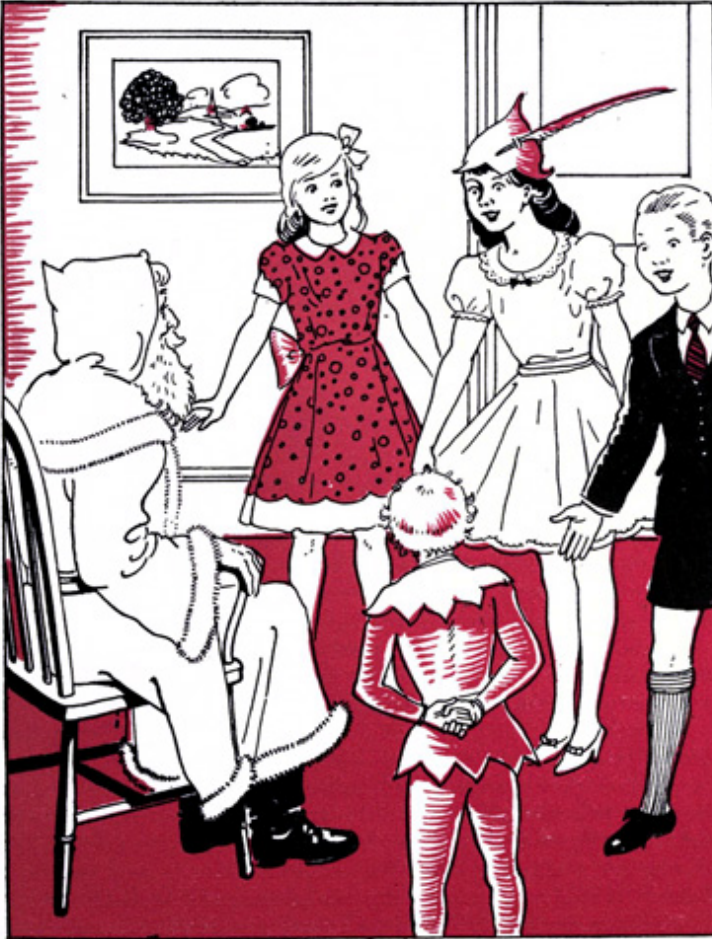
ANNE (*joyfully*): Oh, my blue party frock is here, underneath! It's suddenly come, under my overall! My wish came true!  
(*She strips off overall, showing pretty party frock below. JOHN and MARY do the same. They prance about a little, pleased.*)

SANTA: Well, that's all right! All your wishes came true. Your party is to-day, not to-morrow—you've got your party clothes on, instead of your overalls—and here am I all ready to do what you want me to do!

JOHN: Oh Santa Claus—we'll introduce you to all our guests—and then will you come and give us the presents off our Christmas Tree? Do, do, do!

SANTA: Anything you like. My imp here can help me. It's time he did a little work.





She strips off overall, showing pretty party frock below.

JOHN (*facing audience*): Let me introduce our Christmas friend to you!  
Santa Claus! Three cheers for Santa Claus!

*(Everyone cheers, audience included. Then SANTA goes down into the audience, and makes friends. He then goes with everyone to the room where the Christmas Tree stands, or, if there is no tree, sends his IMP into the hall to fetch his sack of toys.)*

END OF THE CHRISTMAS PARTY PLAY

*(You can perform this play without asking permission from anyone, and without paying any fee.)*



## Our Own Christmas Crackers

**H**AVE you any *small* presents to give to your family at Christmas time? Perhaps you have a thimble for somebody, or a pencil-sharpener, or a tiny brooch? Well, instead of wrapping it up in paper, or putting in a box, make a Christmas cracker for it!

It will look pretty on the Christmas breakfast table, and is an amusing way of giving the present. I will tell you how to make the cracker.

You will want a piece of thin white paper for the lining of the cracker. Also a bit bigger piece of coloured paper. Red crinkled paper makes very pretty crackers, if you can get it.

Put the white lining paper on the coloured paper, and roll them both carefully together, the size of an ordinary cracker. See Picture 1.

Now pinch in at one end, and tie round the pinch with some coloured thread to hold it in place. Pop the present into your cracker. Pinch in the other end, and tie. See Picture 2. Now you have a nice little cracker. If you have a coloured scrap, paste it on the front of your cracker to finish it off nicely, or cut out a tiny picture and paste that on instead.

Your cracker won't "pop" of course, though you can pull it and let the present out, just for fun! Don't forget to put a nice little message in with the present, will you?

# The Pig That Went to Market

ONCE there was a gnome named Mister Snooks. He lived in Tweedle Cottage with his little fat pig, Snorter. At least, Snorter wasn't supposed to live *in* the cottage, but as Mister Snooks *would* leave the back door open, and Snorter was very fond of sitting by the fire, it seemed as if the little pig was always indoors.

One day Mister Snooks opened his money-box and found that it was quite empty. He didn't know what to do. He was a lazy, forgetful gnome, and he really didn't want to go out to work. Oh dear! Why couldn't his money have lasted just a little longer!

"Ooomph!" said Snorter the pig, walking in at the open kitchen door and sitting down comfortably by the fire.

"Haven't I told you a hundred times you are not to come indoors!" shouted Mister Snooks and he shooed the pig out. But he once more forgot to shut the door and after a few minutes Snorter sidled in again and sat quietly down on the hearth-rug. This time Mister Snooks didn't notice him. He was too busy staring gloomily at his empty money-box.

Then an idea came into his head. "I will sell Snorter, my little fat pig!" he cried. "He will bring me quite a lot of money! Yes—that is a good idea. What use is he I should like to know? All he does is to eat up the scraps for me, and wear a hole in my hearth-rug with sitting on it. I will go and fetch him and take him to market this very day!"

He went to the back door and looked out.

"Snorter, Snorter, Snorter!" he called. "Come here!"

Well, of course, Snorter was already there, sitting by the fire, so he didn't move. He just looked round at his master.

Snooks didn't see the pig. He kept looking out of the door and calling angrily: "Snorter! Do you hear me? Where are you? I want you! Come here, Snorter! Oh, bless that pig, wherever has he gone?"

"Ooomph!" grunted Snorter, by the fire.

Snooks turned round and saw him there. “Oh, there you are,” he said, crossly. “How many times have I told you not to . . . still, never mind, I’m going to sell you at the market to-day, so you won’t be bothering me much more by coming and sitting by my fire!”

Snooks put on his hat, coat and scarf, and took a piece of string out of the string-box. He tied it round the pig’s hind leg and they started off together down the street.

When they came to the bus-stop, Mister Snooks sat down on the seat there. It was not quite time for the bus. He tied the pig’s leg to the leg of the seat, then took out his newspaper and began to read it. When the bus came, he folded up his paper and jumped on the bus. He paid his fare and opened his newspaper again.

“The Market! the Market!” shouted the conductor, at last. Mister Snooks once again folded up his newspaper and jumped off the bus. He walked to the market, and met there a great many farmers, all with cows, goats or sheep, talking about the weather and their fields and crops.

“Good day, Mister Snooks,” said one of them. “What have you come to market for? Can I sell you a fat goose?”

“No, thanks,” said Mister Snooks. “I’ve come to sell Snorter, my little fat pig.”

“Where is he?” said the farmer. “I might buy him. I want a nice little pig like that.”

Snooks looked all round him. Snorter was nowhere to be seen. “Now where is he?” wondered Snooks. “Let me see, I had him on a string.”

“Well, you hadn’t got him with you when you came into the market,” said Mister Straw, the farmer, grinning. “You don’t mean to say you’ve come to sell your pig and have left him behind, Snooks! Ho, ho! That’s just like you!”

“Well . . .” said Snooks, scratching his head and looking most astonished. “I did start out with him, I know. I remember tying him to the leg of the bus-stop seat—but I don’t remember getting him into the bus. Bless us all! If I haven’t left him tied up to the seat!”

“Ho, ho!” roared Mister Straw. “That’s a good joke! Well, he won’t come to market by himself, Mister Snooks. You’d better go and fetch him! I’ll buy him if you bring him.”

Mister Snooks ran to a bus going to his village and jumped on it. He sat down and unfolded his paper again. He didn't like to think about how foolish he had been. When he arrived at the place where he had first caught the bus that morning, he looked out eagerly to see the bus-stop seat. But no little fat pig was there! Someone had untied him and he had wandered off. Mister Snooks spent a whole hour looking for him, and then went home, most annoyed with himself.

He went indoors and took off his things. When he went to put something in the dustbin he left the kitchen door open as usual—and in a few minutes, the little pig, who had quietly trotted back to his garden, walked in. He sat himself down on the hearth-rug, and warmed himself by the fire. When Snooks went to take the kettle off the stove, he fell over Snorter, and bumped his nose on the fender.

“Oh, so there you are!” he said, sitting up and staring at Snorter. “How many times have I . . . oh well, never mind. I'm very glad you are back! I shall take you to market to-morrow. Now, get out of my way, unless you want boiling water dripped on you!”

Snorter knew Mister Snooks' carelessness with kettles, and he trotted under the table. Mister Snooks shooed him out into the garden, but in five minutes' time he was back again, oomphing quietly in front of the fire. He really was a most persistent little pig!

Next day Mister Snooks again put on his hat, coat and muffler, found a new bit of string and set off with the pig trotting quietly behind him. Snorter couldn't make up his mind what his master was thinking of doing, but imagined that he was just taking him for a walk, like a dog. He quite enjoyed it, for a change.

This time Snooks didn't have to wait for the bus. It came rumbling up just as he got to the bus-stop. In he jumped, taking the surprised pig with him.

“You can't have that pig here,” said the conductor. “Passengers won't like it.”

“Well, could I put him outside by you?” asked Snooks. Snorter was sitting quietly on one of the seats, most astonished at everything. “I'll pay you a bit extra if you'll let him sit outside there, where you let people put their bags sometimes.”

“All right,” said the conductor. So Snorter was trotted out by the conductor, and stowed away just under the stairs that led to the top of the

bus. He sat there quietly beside two bags, and poked his nose out to see what was passing.

Snooks paid fares for two, and then undid his newspaper. He had soon read it from cover to cover, and would have gone right past the market if the conductor hadn't bawled in his ear, and tapped him hard on the shoulder.

"The Market, sir, the Market!" he cried. "Didn't you say you wanted the market. Come out then, we can't wait here all day for you to get out!"

Mister Snooks jumped with fright to hear such a shouting in his ear. He pushed his newspaper into his pocket and rushed off the bus, nearly falling on his nose. Then, catching sight of Farmer Straw in the distance, he ran after him.

"Hie, hie!" shouted the conductor. "What about your pig?"

Mister Snooks didn't even hear him, he was panting so much! He tore on, after Mister Straw.

The conductor danced with rage on his bus, and yelled more loudly than ever. "Your pig, I say! You've left your pig, your PIG, PIG, PIG!"

But Mister Snooks was too far away to hear a word. The conductor, thinking that the pig would follow Snooks to the market, undid the string and tipped him down the steps. The pig was astonished. This was a most surprising day. He had no idea where his master had gone, so he stood still, put his nose into the air and sniffed. His nose told him where his home was, so the little fellow started off down the dusty lanes, trotting merrily back to the garden he knew so well.

Meanwhile Mister Snooks had caught up Farmer Straw. "Hey, there!" he panted. "Farmer Straw! Stop a moment. Do you still want to buy my pig?"

The farmer stopped and turned round. He grinned when he saw Mister Snooks, all out of breath and red in the face.

"Yes," he said. "I'll buy your pig, Snooks. Is he nice and fat?"

"Oh, fine!" said Snooks. "As fat as butter. He's the best pig in the world."

"Where is he?" asked the farmer, looking about.

Snooks looked round too. He was surprised to see no pig. He scratched his head, and frowned. Wherever could Snorter be?

“Don’t tell me you left him tied up to the bus-stop seat again!” cried the farmer, with a shout of laughter. “Oh, don’t tell me that, Snooks!”

“No, indeed I didn’t,” said Snooks. “I remember quite well taking him on the bus, because the conductor made a bit of a fuss about him. I had to put him outside by the bags there.”

“Well, where is he, then?” said Mister Straw.

“I must have left him on the bus,” said Mister Snooks, looking very blue. “Yes—that’s what happened. Oh dear me, how forgetful I am!”

“Well, look, there’s the bus you came on, going back home again,” said the farmer, pointing. “Catch it and get your pig! Quick! I’ll wait here for you.”

Snooks ran to the bus and jumped on it. The conductor stared at him in surprise.

“Where’s my pig?” said Snooks. “Quick, tell me! I’m going to sell him.”

“Well, you won’t sell him to-day!” said the conductor. “I shouted and shouted after you when I found you had left your pig here—but you didn’t take any notice, so I let him loose, thinking he’d come after you. Didn’t he come?”

“No, he didn’t,” said Snooks, gloomily. “Oh well, it’s no good my going after Farmer Straw now, without my pig. He’ll only laugh himself purple in the face. I’d best go home. Here’s my fare, conductor.”

Snooks went home in the bus and let himself in at the front door. He had left the back door open as usual, but he had forgotten that. He went into the kitchen to set the kettle on the stove—and dear me, bless us all, there, sitting on the hearth-rug as usual, was Snorter, the fat little pig! He had found his way home quite well, taking many a short cut on the way, and, finding the back door open, had gone in to sit by the fire.

“Oh, so you’re back again, are you!” said Snooks, pleased. “That’s good. I thought I’d lost you. Now get out of the kitchen, Snorter. Shoo! Shoo!”

Out went Snorter, grunting “Oooooomph! Oooooomph! Oooooomph!” But in two twinks he was back again, for, as usual, Snooks forgot to shut the kitchen door!

Now the next day Snooks took up his hat, muffler and coat, and found a new piece of string to take the pig to market. He looked at himself sternly in the glass and said: “Now, Snooks, just be sensible to-day!”

“Remember to take the pig *into* the bus—and remember to take him *out of* the bus! Then maybe you’ll get him to market and be able to sell him for a fine price to Farmer Straw!”

Then off he went, the pig trotting happily beside him on the string. Snorter was no longer surprised at anything now. He just thought that his master must be quite mad, but he didn’t mind at all.

They got safely into the bus, and the conductor made the pig stand outside again.

“Please don’t let me get out of the bus without my pig this time,” said Snooks to the conductor, when he paid his fare and the pig’s. “I really must take him to market to-day.”

The conductor promised. The bus rattled on, and after some time the conductor bawled out “The Market, the Market! Remember your PIG, Mister Snooks, remember your PIG, PIG, PIG!”

“All right, all right!” said Mister Snooks, going red when he saw everyone staring at him. “You needn’t keep *on* saying it. I’ll remember the pig all right!”

He got out of the bus and took the pig with him. Snorter jumped down and trotted along to the market beside his master, very much enjoying saying “How do you do” to all the cows, goats, sheep, geese and ducks that he passed.

Snooks looked everywhere for Mister Straw the farmer, but he couldn’t see him. Someone told him that the farmer had gone to have a buttered bun in Dame Sally’s cook-shop, so he went there. He tied up Snorter outside, and went in to find Farmer Straw.

Snorter stood outside talking to a grey goose there and a fat goat. Both belonged to the same master, and their strings were tied together.

“My master wants to sell me,” said the goose, and was just going to tell the pig all about her life when Mister Snooks came out of the cook-shop. Farmer Straw wasn’t there. He had gone to sell two cows in the middle of the market at twelve o’clock.

Quickly, Mister Snooks untied the nearest string and set off to find the farmer—but the foolish man had not looked to see that he was untying the right string—and bless us all, he had the string belonging to the goose and the goat. Think of that! The little pig was left behind and the goose and the



goat hurried after Mister Snooks, wondering whatever in the world was happening.

“SS-ss-ss-ss!” hissed the goose. But Mister Snooks took no notice. He was far too busy looking for Mister Straw.

At last he spied the farmer, who had just sold his cows at a very good price indeed, and was looking very pleased with himself.

“Farmer Straw!” called Mister Snooks, hurrying up to him. “I’ve been looking for you all the morning. Will you buy my pig?”

“Certainly,” said Mister Straw, jingling all the money in his pocket. “I want a nice fat pig like yours, Mister Snooks. Where is he?”

“I’ve got him on this string,” said Mister Snooks. “Come up, Snorter, come up!”

The farmer stared in astonishment at the goose and the goat on the string. Then he stared at Snooks.

“Do you think you really have a pig to sell me?” he asked. “Or are you quite, quite mad?”

Snooks stared angrily at Mister Straw. Then he looked round to see his pig—and he nearly fell backwards in amazement when he saw not one pig, but a goose and a goat, staring solemnly at him!

“But there *was* a pig!” he said. “There really was! Oh dear—whatever can have happened to him this time!”

Then Farmer Straw began to laugh till the tears ran down his big round nose. “Oh, Snooks, you’ll be the death of me!” he cried. “You really will! You’ve gone and taken someone else’s animals instead of your poor little pig. How you do lose that pig to be sure! Anyone would think you didn’t want him!”

Snooks stared at the goose and the goat, and his heart beat fast in dismay. Yes—he had left the pig behind at the cook-shop. He remembered seeing the goose and the goat outside now. His pig must be there!

Off he went at top speed, the goose waddling behind him, hissing and cackling and the goat trotting in surprise. They couldn’t understand things at all.

Back to the cook-shop went poor Mister Snooks—and there, looking very lonely and forlorn outside, was poor little Snorter the pig. He looked up

at his master with surprised eyes when he saw him coming back with the goose and the goat.

Snooks quietly tied up the two creatures hoping that no one had noticed the mistake he had made. But it was no use. Out of the shop came a furious little man, with bright red cheeks, angry eyes and a big stick!

“So it was *you* who took my goose and my goat, was it?” he cried. “Take that, and take that!”

Thwack, thwack! Poor Mister Snooks got such sharp blows on his shoulders that he danced with pain. He almost ran away without his pig—but he thought that really he couldn’t go without him again. So he quickly untied Snorter and ran off with him, his shoulders smarting with the blows that the furious little man kept giving him.

“My!” thought Mister Snooks. “This is the last time I am so forgetful. It doesn’t pay! It leads to no end of trouble! Oh dear! Now I must find Mister Straw.”

He hunted about for the farmer for two hours and couldn’t find him anywhere. Lots of people told him where they had just seen him, but when Mister Snooks arrived there, hot and bothered, he had always just gone.

But at last Snooks found him. He was about to get into his farm-cart, ready to drive home.

“Hie, hie!” shouted Snooks, running up. “Wait a moment. Will you buy my pig? I really *have* got him this time!”

He went up to Mister Straw, and the farmer looked down at the pig. “Ah,” he said. “That surely *is* a fine pig, one of the fattest I’ve ever seen! A fine little fellow, surely!”

“How much will you give me for him?” asked Mister Snooks, eagerly.

“Nothing!” said the farmer. “You look into my cart, Snooks, and tell me what you see there.” Snooks looked—and in the bottom of the cart lay—what do you think—a fine fat little pig, with a very curly tail and very bright eyes! “I’ve just bought him!” said the farmer, whipping up his horse and starting off home. “Sorry, Mister Snooks—you’re just too late. It was a pity you kept forgetting to take that pig of yours to market! I’d take him home and keep him if I were you!”

So away back home went poor Mister Snooks with Snorter the pig. He didn’t try to take him to market to sell him any more. No—he decided that it

was too hard work to keep losing him and finding him again. So now he goes out to work and earns quite a lot of money.

As for Snorter the pig, you can guess where *he* is! Sitting warming his nose by the kitchen fire—for, as you may know by now, Snooks never *can* remember to shut his kitchen door!

# The Funny Old Dragon

ONE wintry morning James had the biggest surprise of his life! He was going across the field-path on a misty day when he heard something snorting in the field over the hedge.

“I wonder what it is,” he said, and he peeped to see. And, good gracious me, in the next field was a dragon! Yes, a dragon, just like you see in a story-book, with a long spiky tail and four clawed feet!

James was so astonished that he stared and stared and stared. The dragon saw him and nodded to him.

“Good-day,” he said, in a mournful voice. “I’m looking for work. Can you tell me of any?”

“Well,” said James, still more surprised to hear the dragon’s strange, husky voice. “I’m afraid I don’t know of any work a dragon can do. How did you come here? I didn’t know there were any dragons at all nowadays.”

“There shouldn’t be, really,” said the dragon. “But somehow I grew, though I know I’m dreadfully out of date and useless. Nobody wants a dragon nowadays, not even to fight with. So I left the place where I lived and came out to look for work. I’m very unhappy, really.”

James squeezed through the hedge. He was sorry for the dragon, who had very large, soft brown eyes. He took a good look at him.

“Well, I should think you’d better keep yourself hidden,” he said. “It’s not likely anyone would be frightened of you nowadays, but you might be caught and put into the Zoo in a great big cage, like the lions and tigers and bears—and you might not like that!”

“Oh no, I shouldn’t!” said the dragon in alarm. “Couldn’t you take me home with you and let me be your pet? I’ve a very sweet, loving nature, really.”

“No, I don’t think my mother would like a dragon on the rug in front of the fire,” said James. “In fact, I’m sure she wouldn’t. And Daddy would say you smelt.”

“Smelt!” said the dragon, offended. “Do I smell? What do I smell of?”

“You smell of smoke,” said James, sniffing.

“Ah, that’s because I can breathe out fire and smoke just like the old dragons could in the fairy-tales!” said the dragon. “Watch!”

James watched. The dragon breathed out a lot of smoke from his nose and mouth, and a long red flame spurted out too. The dragon looked proudly at James.

“What do you think of that?” he said. “A good trick, isn’t it?”

“My goodness!” said James, “you’d be useful to Daddy when he lights bonfires! A puff of your flame and smoke and any bonfire would go well! I wish *I* could do that!”

“Listen, boy!” said the dragon excitedly. “Couldn’t I help with people’s bonfires? I could hide in a chimney in the daytime somewhere, and then my breath coming out at the top would look like chimney smoke—but at night I could creep out and go all round puffing at people’s bonfires and making them burn well. I should love that. That would be a real good piece of work for me to do!”

“Well, if I let you do that, will you teach me how to breathe out fire and smoke just like you do?” asked James longingly.

“Of course!” said the dragon. So they shook hands solemnly, and James managed to take the dragon to his house by the side-door, get him into the study, and stuff him up the chimney without anyone seeing.

The dragon was long, but not fat, so he was quite all right in the chimney. His breath shot out at the top, and no one thought it was anything else but ordinary chimney smoke.

That night James gave him a tug and he slid neatly down and slipped out into the garden. He went to the bonfire that James’s Daddy had tried to light. There had been a shower of rain and the bonfire was almost out.

“Puff! Fffffff! Puff!” went the dragon busily, blowing out smoke and flames. The bonfire flared up at once and the rubbish began to burn merrily. The dragon laughed and so did James. This was fun!

“Where’s the next bonfire?” asked the dragon. “I don’t feel useless and out of date any more, James. I *am* enjoying myself!”

Well, the old dragon got everybody’s bonfire burning very well indeed, and James knew that all the gardeners and Daddies would be simply

delighted the next day. And he would be the only one that knew the secret! James felt rather grand.

“Teach me how to breathe fire and smoke, please, dragon,” he said. “You promised you would.” So the dragon gave him his first lesson. My goodness, it was most exciting, I can tell you! James was able to breathe out just a little bit of blue smoke at the end of his first lesson.

“Hoo!” said James, “won’t I make the boys stare at school! My word, no one will dare to be rude to me or punch me when I can breathe out fire and smoke! I *shall* have fun!”

The dragon went back to his chimney after that and James crept into bed. Every night they went out together, and soon they were very fond of one another indeed. The dragon was the kindest-hearted creature, very fond of a joke, and James did wish he could build him a large kennel and have him for a pet. But somehow he felt sure people wouldn’t like it.

“I’m very happy now,” the dragon told James. “I have good work to do—and I have a friend. That is all I want. Be sure to let me know, dear James, whenever any of your friends want their bonfires kept burning in the night, and you may be sure I will go and do what I can for them.”

So if your Daddy can’t get his bonfire to burn well, send me a card for James, and I’m sure he’ll arrange things for you. And if you meet a boy who can breathe fire and smoke out of his mouth and nose, you’ll know who he is—it will be James, the only boy in the kingdom who keeps a dragon up the chimney!

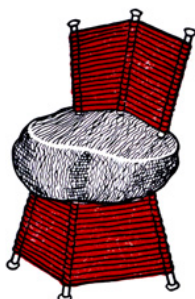
# CONKER FURNITURE



STOOL



CHAIR



WICKER CHAIR



ARMCHAIR

**W**HEN I was a little girl I furnished my doll's house with chestnut furniture. If you are a little girl, you can do the same. If you are a boy, you can make the furniture for your sister.

You want nice big flattish conkers, long pins, and some wool. Now, are you ready?

Make a stool first. How easy! Just a flat conker, with three pins stuck underneath—but it stands quite well! We don't need the wool for that, unless you like to twist wool round each leg to make them look nice.

Now for a chair. We will have another flat conker, and stick in four pins for legs, and three at the back. Now the wool comes in. Wind it in and out of the three pins to make a pretty back to the chair.

Now we will make a "wicker" chair. Put in the pins as before, but wind the wool round the four legs as well. That makes a very fine "wicker" chair indeed. You will have to twist the wool round each leg as well as passing it round the four of them, or it will slip up and down too much.

Can you make an arm-chair? Think it out yourself! You just want shorter pins for the arms, don't you? See what nice ones you can make.



# The Mouse That Lost His Whiskers

THERE was once a most inquisitive little mouse called Woffles. He poked his sharp nose into everything, and knew everyone's business. He had a long thin tail, and the finest whiskers of his family. They spread out on each side of his face and gave him a very knowing look indeed.

Woffles was proud of his whiskers. He twitched them about when he spoke, and everyone noticed them and said: "Oh, Woffles, how fine your whiskers are!" Then he felt pleased.

One night Woffles looked out of his window and saw a bright light in the garden next door. Mr. Tailer, a large vole, lived there. Woffles wondered what he could be doing in the garden so late at night, and he felt very curious. He really must go and see!

Mr. Tailer was simply lighting a bonfire to burn his rubbish, that was all. He had turned out a lot of old boxes and papers and he wanted to burn them. The bonfire wouldn't light properly, for it had been raining and the pile of rubbish was wet—so Mr. Tailer went indoors to get some paraffin to throw on the heap. Then it would flare up and soon burn away.

Woffles crept out of his back door, climbed over the fence and ran to the rubbish-heap, where he could see a little flame trying to lick up the rubbish.

"I wonder what old Mr. Tailer is burning!" thought Woffles to himself. "Perhaps there is a box here that would do to keep my firewood in."

He began to scrape about busily in the pile, and he didn't hear Mr. Tailer coming back with a tin of paraffin. Mr. Tailer threw some paraffin on the heap, the little flame caught it and it all flared up in a rush, startling Woffles almost out of his wits!

He rushed off, jumped over the fence and ran indoors, very much frightened. And then he had another dreadful shock—for when he looked at himself in the glass, oh dear me! His beautiful long whiskers had all been burnt off when the fire flamed up! Woffles stared at himself in horror.

"My whiskers!" he said, in a frightened whisper. "My beautiful, beautiful whiskers! They are gone! Oh, how dreadful I look! Oh, what will

people say! How they will laugh at me! Oh, why did I poke my nose into old Tailer's rubbish-heap? What a terrible thing to happen to me!"

Poor Woffles didn't sleep that night. He tossed and turned in his small bed and wondered what to do. At last he made up his mind that he would tie up his face in a handkerchief, to hide that he had lost his whiskers, and then he would see if he couldn't get some from somebody. Perhaps Dame Longnose could get him some. She was very clever indeed.

So the next day everyone was most astonished to see Woffles with his face tied up in a handkerchief. They felt sure he had the tooth-ache and they were very sorry for him.

"Poor Woffles!" said Mrs. Rabbit. "Come along to my burrow to-night when my husband is at home. He will pull out any tooth that is aching."

"Oh, no thank you!" said Woffles, and ran off in a hurry. He didn't want people to start pulling his teeth out! It was quite bad enough to have lost his whiskers without losing his teeth too!

He thought he would go and visit Dame Longnose. So he packed up a bag and off he went. That night he arrived at the Dame's cottage and she let him in, surprised to see the little mouse so late at night.

"Dame Longnose, I've lost my whiskers," said Woffles. "Could you get me some new ones?"

"I might take a few from my cat," said Dame Longnose. "But you'll have to work for me for a week if you want new whiskers."

"Very well," said Woffles, with a sigh. He felt sure that Dame Longnose would work him very hard indeed. And she *did*! He had to be up early every morning and light the fire. Then he had to clean the cottage, and when that was done he had to go and chop firewood for an hour. All the time he tried to keep out of the way of the old dame's cat, who lay dozing in a warm basket by the fire. Luckily for Woffles the dame fed her cat very well indeed and he was not very much interested in mice.

One night, when Woffles was sleeping peacefully under the mangle in the scullery, he heard the cat hissing and spitting at Dame Longnose. Then he heard a smack, and then more hissing and spitting. He trembled and wondered what the matter was.

It was the old dame asking her cat for some of his fine whiskers for Woffles the mouse. Woffles had done a week's work and the witch meant to pay him the next day by giving him six of her cat's big white whiskers. But

the cat was angry about it and hissed and spat whenever the old dame cut one off—though he could well spare a few for he had a most magnificent set of whiskers, really far too thick.

The old woman took the six whiskers and put them into a box, ready for the morning. Then she went to her bed, lay down, and soon began to snore. The cat felt very angry.

“To think that my fine whiskers should go to a miserable little mouse!” he raged, as he walked up and down the kitchen like a tiger. “I won’t have it! No, I won’t! Where is that mouse? I’ll go and tell him what I think of him!”

He went into the scullery and smelt the mouse under the mangle. He put a paw there and tried to get the frightened mouse out. “Oho! So it’s you that my mistress has taken my whiskers for!” hissed the cat. “You nasty, creeping little creature! How dare you come here and ask for my whiskers?”

“I d-d-d-didn’t,” said the mouse, trembling. “Dame Longnose offered them to me for a week’s work.”

“Well, as soon as I see you wearing my whiskers, I shall eat you up,” said the cat, fiercely. “I shall get my whiskers back that way! Ho ho! What a joke! All right, mouse, you may wear my whiskers to-morrow—but remember—I shall have you for my dinner, as sure as I can lap milk!”

With that the cat went back to the kitchen, feeling pleased with himself. As for Woffles he was in a terrible way. He wanted those whiskers—but he didn’t want to be the cat’s dinner! Oh no, that would be dreadful.

“I’d better run away whilst I’ve got the chance,” thought poor Woffles. “I daren’t stay here now. The cat is so angry because I’m to have some of his whiskers. Well, I must just go without them, that’s all!”

He waited until he thought the cat was fast asleep, then he went to the door, slipped under it and ran for his life. His face was still tied up in his handkerchief, for he had not untied it all the week. He still felt so ashamed of not having any whiskers.

He took his little bag with him, but he didn’t want to go home. People would be so surprised to see him with his face still tied up. He hid in a ditch until the morning came and then he set out on his way again. Presently he met a hedgehog, who shouted good morning to him.

“Where are you going?” he asked.

“I want to buy some new whiskers somewhere,” said Woffles. “Do you know where I can get some?”

“Well, why not try a toy-shop?” said the prickly hedgehog. “You know, toy rabbits, cats and dogs all have whiskers, so I daresay if you went to a toy-shop you could get some fine ones there quite cheaply.”

“Oh thank you! That’s a splendid idea!” said Woffles gratefully, wondering why he hadn’t thought of it before. He hurried on until he came to a small village and then he looked for a toy-shop. He found one and went inside. The door-ell rang and a queer little gnome popped up above the counter.

“What do you want?” he asked.

“Have you any whiskers for sale?” asked Woffles. “I’ve lost mine and I want some new ones.”

“Certainly!” said the gnome, and he took down a box from a shelf. “Come and look! I’ve all kinds, all colours and all lengths!”

Woffles was delighted. He sat on a chair by the counter and looked eagerly at the box. What wonderful whiskers there were there! Long stiff black ones, bright red ones, small soft white ones, deep blue ones—oh, every kind you can imagine!

“How much are they?” asked Woffles, feeling for his small purse.

“Sixpence a set,” said the gnome.

“Oh dear! How expensive!” sighed Woffles, who only had six pennies in his purse, and didn’t want to part with all his money at once. “Well, I suppose I must have a set. Here is the money.”

He put his six brown pennies down on the counter and the gnome took them at once. “Which set of whiskers will you have?” he asked.

“I think—I think I’ll have those nice long, bright red ones!” said Woffles, thinking how grand he would look with such bright whiskers. The gnome took them out of the box and put them on the counter. Then he put away the box and took down from another shelf a round work-basket. He took up a big darning needle and threaded one of the whiskers through the eye-hole. Woffles looked at him in alarm.

“What is the needle for?” he asked.

“To sew on your whiskers, of course!” said the gnome, impatiently. “What do you think? I always sew on these whiskers for my customers. They can’t do it themselves. I sewed on two sets yesterday—one on a toy cat and the other set on a velvet lion. They looked fine, I can tell you! Now, take

off that handkerchief you've got wound round your head, and I'll just sew these whiskers on neatly for you."

"B-b-b-but it will hurt m-m-m-me!" said Woffles, in a fright. "Can't you *stick* them on!"

"No good at all," said the gnome. "Stuck-on whiskers always come off. Sewing is the only thing for whiskers. Please hurry up and take off that handkerchief. I'm busy to-day!"

"No," said Woffles, firmly. "No. I'm not going to have that great needle sticking into me, sewing on those whiskers. Give me back my money, please. I won't buy whiskers that have to be sewn on."

"You certainly won't have your money back!" said the gnome crossly. "What, after all the trouble I've taken, you say you're not going to have those lovely whiskers. I never heard of such a thing! Come along now—I'm ready to sew on the whiskers at once!"

He suddenly came round the counter and made a dash at Woffles. The mouse was frightened and jumped off the stool at once. When he saw the big needle shining in the gnome's horny hand he gave a shriek and fled out of the door. He ran until he had no breath left and then he hid himself under a bush.

"I've left all my six pennies behind!" he wept. "And I've still got no whiskers. Oh, what an unfortunate creature I am!"

Someone passing by heard him crying and stopped to peep under the bush. It was an old witch. She had kindly eyes and a smiling mouth, for she was a good witch. She was sorry to see such a heartbroken little mouse.

Woffles told her all his troubles. She listened very kindly, and then she patted his small head.

"Come home with me and help me with my spells for two weeks," she said. "Then I will make you some fine whiskers and put them on by magic so that they won't hurt a bit."

Woffles was delighted. He went happily home with the witch and was soon busily helping her with her spells. How he worked! He chanted magic songs. He stood inside hundreds of magic chalk circles whilst the witch made spells. He stirred magic potions until his paws ached and felt as if they would drop off. He hunted for magic herbs from morning till night and grew quite thin with all his hard work.

When the end of the two weeks came the witch smiled at him. “You have done well, Woffles,” she said. “Now I will make your new whiskers for you. Come and see me.”

Woffles watched her. First she poured a little moonlight into a cup. Then she took a peacock’s feather and cut tiny pieces off it. She put them into the cup too. Then she asked a spider to spin webs across the cup. After that she turned the whole thing upside down, chanted a few queer magic words and turned the cup the right way up. The web, the moonlight and the bits of feather were all gone. Inside the cup was a set of wonderful blue whiskers, just the right size for Woffles!

“Take off your handkerchief and let me put them on for you,” said the witch. “It won’t hurt a bit.”

Joyfully Woffles unwound his handkerchief and turned his little brown face to the witch. She stared at him. Then she stared even harder. Then she began to laugh. Woffles couldn’t understand it. What was the joke?

“Oh Woffles!” said the witch. “You don’t want any whiskers after all! Go and look at yourself in the glass.”

He ran to the glass on the wall and peered in—and to his great astonishment he saw that he had a very fine set of whiskers indeed—just like his old ones! He stared and stared—where had they come from?

“Oh Woffles, you silly little mouse, your burnt-off whiskers have grown again!” said the witch and she laughed till she cried. “To think you’ve worked for a week for old Dame Longnose, and given that toy-shop gnome six pennies, and worked for me for a fortnight for new whiskers—and all the time you didn’t need them because you had a lovely new set growing under your handkerchief. Ho ho ho!”

Woffles was glad, and yet he was sorry. What a lot of work he had done for nothing! How people would laugh when they heard about his whiskers! What a foolish fellow he had been!

“It’s no use my giving you these whiskers now,” said the witch, throwing them into the fire. “But let me give you a piece of advice instead, Woffles. Don’t go poking that sharp little nose of yours into other people’s business! Then your fine new whiskers will be safe!”

“Thank you,” said Woffles, humbly, and he ran off home with his bag. Everyone was delighted to see him again—but he didn’t say a word about his adventures. No—he was much too ashamed of himself.

“I’ll keep my nose to myself in future!” he said to himself—and, as he has still got his very fine whiskers, I expect he has kept his word!



## Tig, the Brownie Robber

**T**HERE was once a robber brownie called Tig. He was big and fat and vain, and he had twenty servant brownies who followed him everywhere. Tig was a rogue. He and his twenty little servants would creep up to a village in the night, surround it, and then, with loud shouts and yells, frighten all the people so that they came rushing out of their homes. Then the brownies would run into the open doors and steal anything they could lay their hands on.

Everybody was afraid of them.

One of the servants always carried a large trunk, full of Tig's beautiful coats. Tig wore all kinds of colours, and his coats were sewn with silver and gold, and set with precious stones. He was very proud of them indeed.

Now one day, as Tig and his servants passed quietly through a wood on their way to a village they meant to surprise that night, they were seen by a small pixie whose name was Shrimpy, because he was so little. He heard the sound of quiet tramping, and looked out of the hole of the tree in which he was living. How excited he was to see the robbers!

"If anyone catches those robbers they get a sack of gold!" thought Shrimpy with joy. "Now, I am a clever pixie. Maybe if I follow the robbers I shall learn their ways and find some way of catching them all!"

So he jumped out of his tree and began to follow the robbers. But he hadn't gone very far, creeping behind trees and watching them, before Tig caught sight of him. Tig had very sharp eyes in his round fat face, and they didn't miss anything.



“Oho!” he said in a large voice. “Catch that pixie, servants. He is following us!”

And in a trice Shrimpy was caught and taken before the robber thief.

“What shall we do with him?” said one of the servants. “Shall we throw him into the lake?”

“Or tie him to the topmost branch of a tree?” said another.

Shrimpy didn’t like the sound of this at all. “Please let me join your band,” he said, thinking that he could easily escape at any time. “I will do any work you like.”

“Ho ho!” laughed Tig. “What! A shrimp like you do work for us! What work could *you* do?”

“I am very strong,” said Shrimpy.

“Well, if he’s so strong, let him carry your trunk of coats, Master!” said the brownie whose job it was to carry the trunk on his shoulder all day. He was getting very tired of it.

“Very well,” said Tig, with a big grin all over his fat face. “You shall join our band, and carry my trunk, Shrimpy.”

So poor Shrimpy had to put the heavy trunk on his small shoulder and carry it about all that day. Dear me, it *was* heavy! He didn’t like it at all, and he wished he hadn’t tried to interfere with the robbers.

“Never mind,” thought Shrimpy, his quick little brain working hard. “Maybe I can find some way to catch the robbers yet. Oh, if only I could!”

It was cold weather. In the daytime the brownies were warm, but at night they shivered and shook. Tig was all right because he just put on a few of his extra coats, and was as warm as toast. But the servants had no extra coats, and they felt very cold indeed.

That night was really freezing. Tig gave orders that his servants were to camp under the trees, and he would march on a little way ahead to a cottage he knew. A friend of his lived there, and he meant to have supper with him.

“I’ll be back in the morning,” he told his men. “Shrimpy, you come with me. I may want to change my coat to-night, when I see my friend, so you must carry my trunk. And if there is any message to give my men, you shall go back with it.”



And in a trice Shrimpy was caught.

Shrimpy groaned. Oh dear! He had so hoped that he could find a hole in a tree and sleep there, warm and comfortable that night. Now he had to carry that horrid trunk through the wood for miles!

He put it on his shoulder and followed Tig. How glad he was when the master brownie came to the cottage and was welcomed by his friend!

“I shan’t want any of my coats after all,” said Tig, with a grin. “I knew I shouldn’t. But I thought it would do you good to carry that trunk a bit longer!”

And with that the unkind brownie slammed the door and left Shrimpy outside with the trunk.

“All that way to go back with this hateful trunk!” groaned poor Shrimpy. “Oh, it’s too bad! I could have been resting all this long time. How I hate Tig!”

He put the trunk on his shoulder and staggered back through the wood with it, thinking how horrid Tig was, and how he wished he could punish him. And slowly a plan came into his quick little mind.

He was so pleased with it that he almost danced for joy, though the trunk felt heavier than ever. At last he got back to the camp. He called to the men.

“There is a message from the master!”

“What is it?” cried the men, gathering round him, shivering, for their fire did not give out much heat.

“You are to warm yourselves by digging a big pit to-night,” said Shrimpy. “It is to be a trap for an enemy, and must be finished quickly, before the daylight comes. If it is finished well, Tig says you may each have a coat of his to keep you warm to-night. I will button them round you. Now, work hard!”

Grumbling loudly the tired servants took spades from out their bags and began to dig a big pit. When it was finished they were certainly very warm. Shrimpy was busy whilst they were digging. He was unpacking the trunk.

Inside there were a great many coats, all made very large indeed to fit Tig, who really was an enormous brownie. Shrimpy got each one out, and felt his way to young trees that stood here and there in the wood. He carefully put a coat round each slender tree, but did not button it up.

“Is the pit finished?” he asked at last. “Good! Now, I have taken the coats out and got them ready for you to put on. You had better put them on back to front and then the cold wind will not blow down your chests. You can have your backs against a tree.”

He took the first brownie and led him to a tree round which he had put one of Tig’s big coats. He made the servant slip his arms into the sleeves back to front—and then, very quickly, Shrimpy buttoned the coat up tightly down the back—round the tree-trunk! And there was the servant buttoned to the tree so that he couldn’t possibly get away, for he could not reach to undo the buttons!



One by one Shrimpy buttoned up the tired brownies.

One by one Shrimpy buttoned up the tired brownies. It was dark, so they did not see what Shrimpy was doing. One or two of them grumbled because the tree felt so hard and uncomfortable at their back—but they were so very tired that they fell asleep even though they were so uncomfortable.

Shrimpy was simply delighted. He had fastened all the servants to the trees! They couldn't undo the coats! They could only yell for help—and that was just what he wanted them to do! Aha! Wait for the morning, Tig, and see what happens to you!

As soon as daylight came creeping through the trees, little Shrimpy ran to the pit that the servants had dug the night before. It was very deep, and the sides were very straight. Shrimpy gathered armfuls of bracken and pulled sticks and twigs from the bushes. He strewed them over the pit opening so that it could not be seen.

Then he hid himself in a hole of a tree and waited to see what would happen.

As soon as the servants awoke they tried to free themselves from the trees they were buttoned to—but they could not. They struggled and shouted, they tried to reach the buttons at the back of the tree, but it was no use at all. The coats were strong and big, and held them prisoner.

Shrimpy looked out of his tree and giggled. The servants saw him and shouted at him angrily;

“Come and set us free! Come and unbutton us!”

But Shrimpy laughed and shook his head.

“You wait till Tig comes!” roared the angry brownies. “He will untie us, and catch you and punish you! This is a very silly trick to play!”

Just then Shrimpy heard Tig coming along singing loudly.

“Here comes robber brownie Tig,  
Fat and plump and round and big!”

sang Tig, very pleased after his good warm night and fine hot breakfast.

“Master! Master! Help us!” yelled his servants. “Shrimpy has buttoned us to the trees in your coats and we can't get away!”

Tig stopped singing and glared through the trees. He could just see his servants there, neatly buttoned up to the trunks! He gave a roar and rushed towards them.

Shrimpy appeared round the trunk of a tree and grinned at him. “You wicked little thing!” cried Tig, and tore after Shrimpy. Shrimpy ran to where the pit was hidden beneath bracken and twigs. He leapt lightly over it, but Tig did not know the pit was there, and he fell heavily into it—plonk!

He roared again and got up. But the pit was so deep and steep that he couldn't get out! There he was, caught in the hole his servants had dug—and there were his servants, crying and howling because their master had disappeared into the pit and couldn't rescue them!



“You wicked little thing,” cried Tig.

Shrimpy laughed with joy and then set off to the nearest town. Very soon he was back with fifty pixies, fairies, and elves. How they laughed to see the twenty brownies buttoned up in big coats to tree-trunks, and Tig stamping round the deep pit, trying in vain to get out!

“You are the cleverest little pixie in the world!” they said to Shrimpy, as they unbuttoned each brownie and tied him up with rope. “You shall have a sack of gold for your clever night's work!”

He did—and with it he bought himself a large toadstool, with three windows in the top and a door in the stem. He bought himself cobweb curtains from the big spider under the hedge, and got the

fairy carpenter to make him some lovely furniture.

“I shan't have to live in a hole in a tree any more!” he said joyfully. “I am very grand now. I shall get a wife as small as myself, and we will live in our toadstool house together and have a fine time!”

As for Tig and the brownies, they were sent off to the moon for one hundred years, so they won't worry anyone for a long, long time!

# Stars for the Christmas Tree

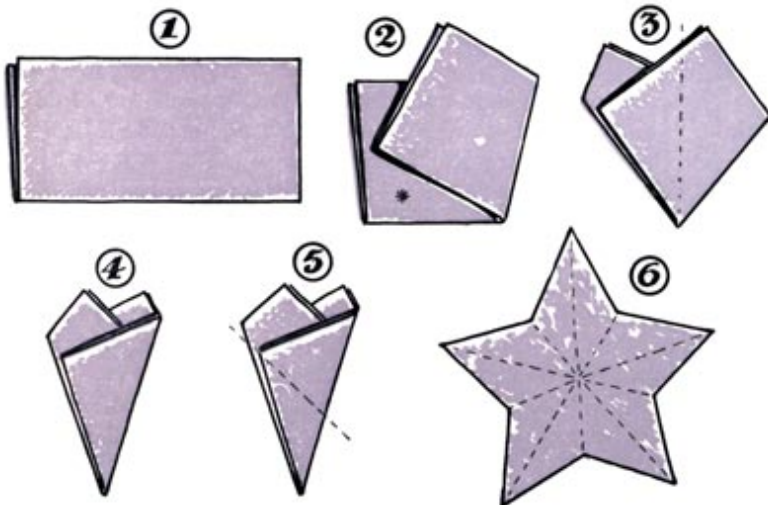
**W**OULD you like to make some five-pointed stars to hang on the Christmas Tree, or to decorate the nursery or school room? I'll tell you how to do it.

You will have to look very carefully indeed at the pictures. Fold a piece of coloured paper in half, as in Picture 1. Use coloured paper if you can. Silver or gold paper will make lovely stars if you can get some.

Now fold the paper as I have drawn for you in Picture 2. Can you manage that? Do you see the bit I have marked with a little star? You must now fold that bit backwards, so that your paper looks like Picture 3. Done that? Good! Now fold the right-hand piece back, so that you get the shape in Picture 4. Notice the two points at the top. They will help you to see that you have the right shape.

Now for the five-pointed star! Get your scissors. Cut across your paper where I have drawn the dotted line (Picture 5). Your paper is now in half. Take the *bottom* half and unfold it—and there is your silver or gold five-pointed star (Picture 6). Isn't it pretty?

If you can't fold the paper right at first, go on trying. You'll get the star in the end.







## Riddle-me-ree

Riddle-me-riddle-me-riddle-me-ree!  
Tell if my answer you can see!

My first is in horse but isn't in ass,  
My second's in form but isn't in class,  
My third is in lady and also in girl,  
My fourth is in hair but isn't in curl,  
My fifth is in spade but isn't in barrow,  
My sixth's not in bow, you'll find it in  
arrow!

My seventh's in yellow but isn't in red,  
My eighth is in thimble but isn't in thread,  
My ninth is in one and in two and in four,  
My tenth's not in apple, you'll find it in  
core,

My eleventh's in kingdom but isn't in  
land,

My whole? Well—it's something you've  
got in your hand!

*Answer on page 224.*





# The Firework Goblins

ONCE upon a time there were some naughty little goblins. They were always on the look-out for anything they could take home to use for themselves—buns off a window-sill, left there to cool, somebody's washing left on the line at night, a parcel dropped off a van. Ah, they were wicked little creatures, there was no doubt about that!

But one day they got hold of something that taught them a lesson! Just listen.

They were walking home one night when they came to the shed belonging to three boys—Tom, John, and Peter. It was their play-shed, and in it they kept their tools, their barrows, and other odds and ends. And, as Guy Fawkes' Day was coming, they kept their fireworks there as well.

They had a fine lot of fireworks! They had been saving their money for weeks, and as they bought their fireworks they put them into a big bag. There it was, hanging on a nail, getting nice and full.

“There are rockets!” said Tom.

“And Catherine-wheels!” said John.

“And Golden Rain, and Roman Candles, and jumping squibs, and whizz-bangs!” said Peter. “Oooh! What a time we'll have!”

Well, so they would have had a grand time, if those naughty goblins hadn't come walking by and poked their noses into the shed! One of them, Snooky, saw the bag hanging up on a nail, and he ran to get it.

“It may be full of gold!” he whispered to the others. They set off down the road in glee. But they didn't notice that the bag had a hole in the bottom, and out of that hole dropped some of the smallest fireworks!

It was the hole in the bag that helped Tom, Peter and John to follow the little thieves. They arrived at the shed one evening after tea just after the goblins had gone—and found their bag of fireworks stolen! Oh dear!

“Who's taken it!” cried Tom angrily. He went to the door and looked about. The moon was up but he could see nobody about the roads.

“Look!” said John suddenly, pointing to a little squib lying in the road. “Whoever took the bag went that way, for there’s a squib that must have fallen out of it!”

“Yes—the bag had a hole in it!” cried Peter. “Let’s see if any more fireworks are down the road.”

They went down the moonlit road—and, sure enough, here and there they found a firework that had slipped out of the hole in the bag. Then they came to a very muddy bit of lane, and the three boys stood there looking puzzled, for the footprints in the mud were not at all like theirs!

“These footmarks are of queer little pointed feet!” said Peter. “I believe it’s goblins or brownies who have taken our fireworks!”

“Come on, after them then!” cried the others; so on they went at top speed, keeping a good look-out for the fallen fireworks.

Well, very soon the goblins heard the three boys coming after them. They looked round in alarm. The boys seemed very big indeed to the tiny creatures, and the goblins were frightened.

“Hi, stop, you little robbers!” cried Tom, in a loud and angry voice.

“What shall we do—what shall we do?” said the goblins to one another. “They will catch us with the bag if we go on.”

“Look, there’s a bonfire over there! Let’s empty the bag on to it, and let everything burn to bits,” said Snooky. “Then the boys won’t be able to find out that we’ve taken it!”

So the silly little creatures ran to the bonfire, and emptied all the fireworks on to the flames. They stuffed the bag deep into the heart of the bonfire and it began to burn away.

The three boys ran up angrily. “Where’s our bag of fireworks?” cried John.

“Yes, what have you done with it?” cried Peter.

“What bag? What fireworks?” asked the goblins pretending to be very much astonished. “We don’t know anything about fireworks?”

But they soon did—for the fire got hold of those fireworks one by one, and exploded them with loud pops and bangs!

“BANG!” said a rocket, and flew up into the air with a whizz! It exploded into red and green stars, and the goblins shrieked in fright.

“What is it? Oh, what is it?”

The boys began to laugh. “You silly goblins, you’ve thrown the fireworks on to the fire—they’ll all explode! You’d better look out!”

The goblins clung together, hardly daring to move. A jumping squib went off with a bang and sprang right out of the fire! Whizz!

“OW!” yelled Snooky, for it landed on his toe. “Get away!” The squib jumped to the next goblin, and then to the next. How those goblins howled! They had never in their lives seen fireworks before and they didn’t at all know what they were. The three boys laughed till the tears ran down their cheeks.

“BANG!” A whizz-bang went off with a loud clap, and the goblins jumped high into the air. Then a Catherine-wheel got alight, jumped out of the fire, and tried to whizz round on Snooky’s foot. Oh dear! oh dear! Snooky ran to the other side of the bonfire. But here a rocket was waiting for him and shot out. It caught hold of Snooky and took him up into the air!

“Let me go! let me go!” yelled Snooky, holding on for all he was worth. A shower of bright stars shot out round him, and then the empty rocket-case fell to the ground again, taking Snooky with it. Bump!

“Ooooooh!” said Snooky, when he got his breath back. “Ooooooh! What was that?”

But before anyone could tell him it was a rocket, six fireworks went off together in the bonfire and a shower of stars shot out everywhere. Then a whole bundle of jumping squibs went off at once, and leapt out of the fire in a hurry. They jumped right into the middle of the goblins and chased them all about the field, hopping now here and now there! The three boys laughed till they could laugh no more.

“This is a good punishment for you!” shouted Tom. The goblins heard his voice, and, feeling far more frightened of the fireworks than they were of the boys, they ran to Tom, Peter and John, and knelt down before them.

“Tell these things to stop!” wept Snooky. “I don’t like all these bangs and pops and jumps and sparks!”

“BANG! BANG!” went another rocket and shot by Snooky’s head, taking his topknot off as it flew.

“Come with us,” said the boys to the little goblins, and they picked them all up and carried them back to the dark shed, far away from the banging

fireworks in the bonfire. Tom lighted a candle and the three boys looked sternly at the trembling goblins.

“You are bad little scamps,” said Peter. “I’ve no doubt you have many a time stolen other things, as well as our fireworks. Well, you had a good punishment this time!”

“And we would just like to know what you are going to do about giving us back fireworks in place of those you have taken!” said Tom.

“You deserve to be popped in the middle of all those fireworks going off now,” said John—and the goblins trembled as they heard the bang-pop-bang-pop of the fireworks still going off in the bonfire.

“Please forgive us and we will try to earn some money for you to buy more fireworks,” said Snooky in a small voice.

“Well, come back here to-morrow night, without fail,” said Tom.

“We promise to, on our honour as goblins,” said every goblin at once. Then they ran off.

Well, my goodness me, how hard those goblins worked all through that night and the next day! They ran errands for witches, they minded baby fairies for the elves, they held the rabbits still whilst they were being harnessed to the pixie carriages, and they helped a wizard to make a powerful spell that smelt so bad that the goblins felt really ill! And for all their hard work they were paid four pieces of silver.

They gave these to the three boys the next night, and Tom, John, and Peter were very pleased. “Now we shall be able to buy even more fireworks than before!” cried Tom.

And so they did, and had a wonderful time on Firework Night. But the goblins were nowhere to be seen. No—they were not going to be caught anywhere near fireworks again!

“We won’t steal anything any more,” said Snooky. “We’ve learnt our lesson! We really, really have!”

# The Magic Sweet Shop

BETTY and Robin were going over Breezy Hill for a walk when they saw a narrow path that they had never seen before.

“Hallo!” said Robin, in surprise. “Where does that path go to? I’ve never been along it.”

“Perhaps it’s just a rabbit-path,” said Betty. “There are lots of rabbits on Breezy Hill.”

“No, it isn’t a rabbit-path,” said Robin. “It’s too wide for that. Let’s go down it and see where it leads to, shall we, Betty?”

So off they went down the funny little green path, and that was the beginning of their strange adventures!

When they had gone some way they came to what looked like a tiny village—just three or four cottages set closely on the hillside with two little shops in the middle. One of these was a sweet-shop.

It was a funny little shop with a small window of thick glass, and behind the panes were tall, thin bottles of brightly-coloured sweets.

“A sweet-shop,” said Betty, surprised. “I didn’t know there was one on this hill, did you, Robin?”

“No,” said Robin, puzzled. “It’s a funny place, Betty. There doesn’t seem to be anybody about—and yet I feel as if people are peeping at us from behind curtains. But whenever I look, there’s nobody!”

Betty looked all round. There was nobody anywhere. The doors of the cottages were shut, and not a sound was to be heard. It was a strange little place.

Betty pressed her nose to the sweet-shop window and looked at the bottles of sweets. She began to read the labels on them. Then she cried out in surprise.

“Robin! These are very queer sweets! Just read what they are!”

Robin looked at the labels, and certainly the names of the sweets in that sweet-shop were very strange. A bottle of blue sweets was labelled Giant-

sweets, and a bottle of pink ones was called Dwarf-sweets. Another bottle had the label Invisible-sweets.

“You know, this must be a magic shop,” said Betty, excited. “Let’s go in and buy some of the sweets! I’ve got a penny and so have you.”

So they pushed open the door, which had a little tinkling bell, and went inside the dark shop. At first they thought there was nobody there, and then they saw behind the counter a small nobby-looking man with a pair of large spectacles on his long nose. He had a strange tuft of hair growing straight up from his head and two long, pointed ears. He was sitting by himself reading a brightly coloured newspaper.

When the bell rang he looked up. He didn’t seem at all surprised to see the children.

“What do you want this morning?” he asked, folding up his newspaper neatly.

“Could we have a pennyworth of mixed sweets each?” asked Robin, eagerly. “They look such funny sweets.”

“There’s nothing funny about them at all,” said the shopman, twitching his pointed ears like a dog. “They’re quite ordinary.”

He took five bottles from the window and emptied some sweets into his scales. Betty looked at the labels on the bottles so that she would know which of the sweets were which. She saw that a Giant-sweet, a Dwarf-sweet, an Invisible-sweet, and two others, one a Spiky-sweet and the other a Home-again-sweet, were put into the scales. She felt very much excited.

Each of them was handed a bag of these sweets by the shopman. He took their pennies and put them into a tin box. Then he picked up his newspaper and began to read it again.

“Shut the door when you go out,” he said.

They ran out and shut the door carefully behind them. Then they stopped outside to look at their very strange sweets. They didn’t like to eat them in case anything queer happened to them.

“Shall we go back into the shop and ask the man there to tell us what will happen if we eat these sweets?” said Robin. Betty nodded—so back they went.

“What will happen if we eat these sweets?” asked Betty, putting her head in at the door.

“Try, and see!” answered the shopman, without looking up from his queer newspaper. “Shut the door, please.”

The children didn’t like to ask him any more so they went outside again. They walked up the little crooked street, talking hard about their strange sweets. They didn’t look where they were going, and they were surprised when they came to a big white gate that was placed right across the road so that they could go no further.

“This is stranger and stranger,” said Robin puzzled. “I’ve never seen that village before, and now here is a gate across the road that I’ve never seen before either.”

“We’ve never been this way,” said Betty. “What shall we do? Climb over the gate? We are nearly at the top of the hill.”

“Yes, let’s,” said Robin. So over the gate they climbed. They walked on down a lane lined on each side by great hedges of hawthorn, whose blossoms were as thick as snow. It was lovely.

They came to the top of the hill and looked down. To their great surprise they saw quite a town on the other side!

“How queer!” said Betty. “There has never been anything on the other side of this hill before. Now there are houses and shops everywhere!”

They went on down the hill towards the town, and soon came to some most peculiar-looking people. They were very round, and their arms were very long indeed. Their faces were as red as tomatoes and they all wore big white ruffs round their necks, which made their faces seem redder than ever.

Some of them were riding in small motor-cars, rather like toy-motors but with hoods like sunshades instead of proper hoods. Betty and Robin stared in astonishment.

They stood in the middle of the road and looked about at the queer folk. A motor-car with a bright yellow hood came along at a tremendous pace. Robin jumped to one side, but Betty was just too late and the little car ran into her. To her great amazement it exploded like an air-balloon and flew up into the air in a hundred pieces! She wasn’t hurt at all, but simply fell over into the road.

The little round man in the car shot up in the air and down again. He landed with a bump by Betty and he *was* cross!

“You silly, stupid, foolish, ridiculous girl!” he cried. “Why didn’t you get out of my way? Look what you’ve done to my car. It’s gone pop!”

“Well,” said Betty, getting up and dusting herself. “I’m sorry about it, but you had no right to come along at such a dreadful pace. You didn’t even hoot.”

“You horrid, nasty, rude, selfish girl!” cried the man, looking as if he was going to smack Betty. But Robin was not going to have his sister spoken to like that, so he pushed the man away and spoke sharply to him.

“Now then, now then! Don’t speak to Betty like that! Haven’t you any manners? You might have hurt her very much running into her like that! It’s a good thing your car *has* gone pop because you won’t be able to drive like that again for a little while!”

The little round man went quite purple with rage. He took a trumpet from his pocket and blew loudly on it. “Tan-tara! Tan-tara!”

At once a whole crowd of the funny-looking people came running up and took hold of Betty and Robin.

“Take them to prison!” shouted the man whose motor-car had exploded. “Give them nothing but bread and water for sixty days!”

Robin was very angry but he could do nothing against so many, and he and Betty were marched off to a big yellow building and locked up in a tiny cell together. Robin banged on the door but it was no use. It was locked and bolted on the outside.

“Look here, Betty!” said Robin, suddenly. “Let’s eat one of these sweets each. Perhaps something will happen to help us then!”

So they each picked from their bags a blue sweet and put it into their mouths. And before they had half-eaten them a very curious thing happened! They began to grow taller. Yes, and fatter, too! In fact they were soon giant-like, and their heads touched the cell ceiling.

“I say! Those must have been the sweets out of the Giant-sweet bottle!” said Robin, in excitement. He kicked at the cell-door and it nearly broke, for his feet were now very big.

“Stop that!” cried an angry voice outside. “If you kick your door again, prisoners, I shall come in and smack you both!”

“Ho!” said Robin, pleased. “I shall certainly kick it again! Then when it’s opened, Betty, we’ll walk out and give everyone a shock!”

“Bang, bang, bang!” he kicked the door hard again. At once it was unbolted and unlocked and a very angry keeper came in. But when he saw



Betty and Robin both as tall as the ceiling, nearly filling up the whole cell, his red face turned pale and he fled for his life!

“Now we’ll go out,” said Robin, and he and Betty somehow managed to squeeze themselves out of the door! They walked out of the prison, seeing everyone run in fear before them. How they laughed to see the astonishment on the red faces of the townsfolk, who now looked very small indeed to the children.

They went down the street, frightening everyone they met, and soon came to cross-roads. There was a signpost there, and on one arm was printed “To Giantland.”

“Goodness!” said Betty. “How exciting! We are giants now, Robin, so do let’s take this road to Giantland. It would be fun to see some giants.”

So they took the road to Giantland, feeling more and more excited. After half-an-hour’s walk they came to some enormous trees and knew that they were coming near to Giantland. They were soon there after that—but dear me, the giants were far bigger than the children had guessed they would be! Although Robin and Betty were much bigger than they were usually, they were still very small compared with the giants!

A very large giant with eyes like dinner-plates saw them first. He gaped at them in surprise and then called to his friends, in a voice like thunder.

“HIE! LOOK HERE! HERE ARE SOME QUEER CHILDREN!”

In a trice the children were surrounded by a dozen enormous giants. They didn’t like it at all. One of the giants poked his finger into Robin’s chest.

“He’s real,” he said, in a booming voice. “He’s not a doll.”

“Of course I’m not a doll!” shouted Robin, crossly. “Don’t poke me like that!”

It amused the giants to see how cross Robin was, and they poked him again with their big, bony fingers. Robin felt sure he would be bruised all over.

“Aren’t they nasty, unkind creatures,” said Betty, almost crying, for she didn’t like the great giants with their enormous eyes and teeth like piano-keys. “Can’t we escape, Robin!”

“How can we?” said Robin, trying to push away a finger that came to tickle him. “Oh, Betty, I know! Let’s eat another sweet!”

In a great hurry the children took out their sweet-bags and ate a pink sweet each. In an instant they felt themselves growing smaller and smaller—smaller and smaller.

The giants seemed to grow bigger and BIGGER and BIGGER. Soon they were so big that they seemed like mountains! The children were tinier than sparrows to the giants—tinier than lady-birds even!

“Quick!” said Betty, catching hold of Robin’s hand. “Quick! Let’s go somewhere safe before their great feet tread on us!”

There was a large hole in the ground not far from them and Betty and Robin ran to it. It seemed like a dark tunnel to them, but really it was a worm-hole! The children were now so small that even a worm-hole was enormous to them.

Down the tunnel they went, and suddenly came to a thing that looked like a large snake. It was a worm that squeezed itself against the tunnel side most politely so that they might go past. They ran on, rather frightened. A great beetle hurried by them, treading heavily on Betty’s toes. It was all rather alarming.

“I wish we could get out of here,” said Robin, after a time. “Oh look, Betty! There’s a tiny pin-hole of light far ahead of us. That must be where the worm-hole ends. Come on!”

On they went and at last came out into a wonderful place of sunshine and green grass. Nobody was about at all, but not far away were some great red and brown animals.

“They must be giant cows,” said Betty, looking at them. “I hope they won’t eat us!”

The cows saw the two small children and walked over to them. One cow put her head down to nibble at them. Robin ran away and pulled Betty with him. The giant cows followed, very curious about these little creatures in their field of grass.

Betty was afraid she would be gobbled up by one of the enormous cows. She ran from buttercup to buttercup trying to hide. Then she noticed that, as the cows ate the grass, they left out the prickly thistles and would not touch them. And a good idea came into her head.

“Robin! Let’s eat one of the Spiky-sweets,” she cried. “I know which they are—the yellow ones! I don’t know what will happen to us, but if we grow prickles the cows won’t eat us. They will think we are a kind of thistle!”

So they each took a yellow sweet and ate it. Then they looked at one another in surprise—for at once dozens of spikes and prickles grew out all over them! They were as prickly as thistles and holly leaves! The cows soon left them alone then, and went off to another part of the field in disgust.

Betty and Robin ran down a very big rabbit-hole, and frightened a family of rabbits very much indeed as they went. They ran on until they came to where the hole led up to the open air again and then out they rushed into the sunshine.

They were on a green hillside, and nearby was a notice which said: “Broomstick Hill. Trespassers will be turned into Snails.”

“Ooh!” said Betty, alarmed. “Look at that notice!”

But they hardly had time to read the notice again before there came a whirring in the air, and to the children’s enormous surprise about a hundred witches came flying through the sky on long broom-sticks, darkening the sunshine as they gathered together like black clouds. Then down to the green hillside they flew together.

And, of course, the very first thing their sharp eyes saw was Betty, her black hair flying in the wind, and her prickles all round her! Robin had hidden behind a bush, but Betty was so surprised to see the witches that she hadn’t even thought of hiding!

Just as the witches came rushing over towards them Robin pulled Betty down beside him. “Get out your sweet-bag and eat a sweet!” he whispered. “We’ve got two left. Eat the purple one and we’ll see what happens!”

“Where are those trespassing children!” cried the witches. “We will turn them into snails! How dare they come to our hillside and listen to all we say!”

Betty and Robin popped their purple sweets hurriedly into their mouths. They looked at one another—and to their great astonishment they couldn’t see each other. At first they didn’t know what had happened, and then they guessed—the sweets had made them invisible!

Betty put out her hand and tried to find Robin. She felt him and took his hand in hers. He was rather prickly but she didn’t mind. She dragged him

down the hillside and then looked back at the witches. They were hunting in astonishment all around the bush where they had seen Betty.

“There is no one here!” they cried. “Where have they gone?”

By this time Betty and Robin were at the bottom of the hill. They could not see one another but they held hands very firmly in case they lost each other.

“I’m tired of this adventure,” said Betty, at last. “Are you, Robin? We always seem to be chased by something—giants, or cows, or witches. Goodness knows what it will be next time! Let’s go home.”

“But we don’t know the way,” said Robin, looking all round. “I’m hungry and I’d love to go home. I wish I *did* know the way!”

“Let’s eat the last sweet and see what happens,” said Betty, feeling for her sweet bag. “We’ve eaten all but the Home-again sweets, and maybe they will take us home!”

So they put a red sweet into their mouths. Before they had finished eating it they could see one another—and all their prickles had gone! They were so pleased, for they were both tired of being so *very* prickly! They waited to see what else would happen. Would a big wind come and take them home? Or would their legs walk them safely back? What would happen?

Nothing happened at all. They just sat there at the bottom of the hill and waited in the sunshine. But still nothing happened. It was very queer. Wouldn’t the Home-again sweets take them back home? If not, how could they get home? They were quite sure they would never be able to find their way!

And then Betty began to look around her. She saw a big birch tree that she seemed to know. She noticed a house not far off. She heard a milk-cart clattering along a road a little distance away—and she suddenly jumped up with a cry of delight.

“Robin! We *are* home! This is the hill just outside our own garden! That’s our house over there! There’s the milkman’s cart, look! Why we’re home and didn’t know it! However could we have got here! I’m sure the hill outside our garden isn’t really a witch’s hill.”

They were most astonished, but it was quite true—they *were* home again, for they were just outside their garden, and they could even hear their gardener whistling a tune to himself as he hoed the garden beds!

“Well, how surprising!” said Robin, standing up. “We’re safely back after a lot of queer adventures. Let’s go and tell mother. Perhaps she’ll come with us and see that funny magic sweet-shop.”

Off they went, and that evening they took their mother up the hillside to find the sweet-shop. They followed the little path—but alas, it did not lead to any sweet-shop; only to a great many rabbit-holes!

“It’s just a rabbit-path!” said mother. “You must have dreamed it all, my dears!”

But they really didn’t you know!

# Beware of the Snake

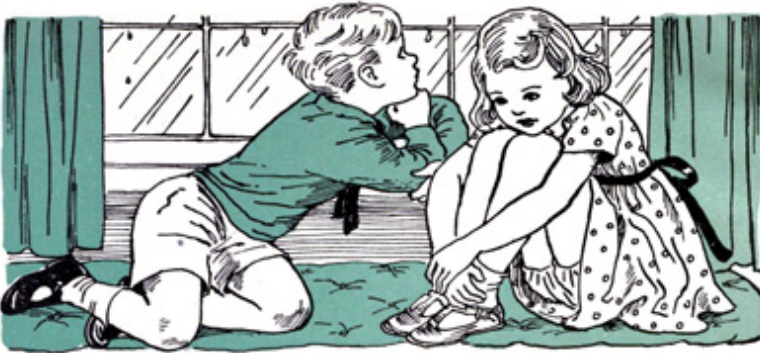
**L**ET'S make a funny snake to-day. This is a very good thing to do on a rainy afternoon in the holidays, if you have already got the material collected.

All you want for your snake are plenty of acorn cups of all sizes, and one nice large acorn.

Now, take your acorn and draw eyes and mouth on it. That's easy! Now get a strong needle and thread it with black cotton, the strongest Mother has.

Push the needle through the acorn, which is to be the snake's head, drawing the cotton after it. The cotton should have a knot at the end, and a bit beyond it, to make the tongue. Look at the picture and see.

Now choose your biggest acorn cups, and begin to thread them one after the other. They will fit into each other as you thread them. Choose smaller and smaller ones so that the snake's body tapers nicely. Finish the body off with a knot, leaving a bit of cotton to make the tip of the tail. And there's your nice wriggly snake! You can make him as long as you like.



# The Goblin Looking-Glass

IT was a very wet day and Micky and Pam couldn't go out to play in the garden. They were cross about it because they wanted to dig in their sand-pit. They stood at the window and grumbled.

"It's no use being cross, my dears," said Nurse. "Get your bricks or your books and amuse yourselves. I am going down to help Mummy to make a new dress for Pam, so be good whilst I am gone."

Nurse took her work-basket and went downstairs. The children were left alone. They turned away from the window and stared round the nursery.

"I don't want to play with bricks," said Micky. "And I'm tired of all my books. I wish something exciting would happen."

"Nothing lovely *ever* happens!" sighed Pam. "You read of such glorious adventures in books—but nothing ever *really* happens to children like us."

"There isn't even anything very exciting in the nursery," said Micky. "We haven't a gramophone like Peter has. And we haven't a nice clockwork railway like Jack's. There's nothing nice in our nursery at all."

"No, nothing—except the big looking-glass," said Pam, pointing to a full-length mirror hung on the wall. The children liked this very much because they could see all of themselves in it, from top to toe. Round the mirror was carved a most exciting pattern of fruits, flowers and tiny little goblin-like creatures peeping out from the flowers. It really was a lovely looking-glass.

Pam and Micky liked to look into it and see their nursery reflected there, the other way round. Micky looked at the mirror on that wet, rainy morning, and an idea came into his head.

"I wonder if there is anything magic about that mirror," he said, going over to it. "You know, it's very, very old, Pam. Let's look carefully at all those little goblins carved round it and see if we think there's any magic about them."

So the two children looked carefully at each goblin, and rubbed each one to see if anything happened. But nothing did. Micky was disappointed. He leaned against the mirror and looked into it at the nursery reflected there.

And then he saw a most queer and curious thing. He saw standing in the mirror-nursery a little, carved chair, just by the fire-place—but when he looked back into the real nursery there was no chair at all!

"Pam! Pam! Look here!" he cried, excitedly. "Look into the mirror. Do you see that funny carved chair, standing by the fire-place? Well, it's in the

mirror, but it isn't in our nursery! What do you think of that!"

Pam looked. Sure enough, it was just as Micky had said. A small carved chair stood in the looking-glass—but it wasn't in the real nursery at all. It was only in the looking-glass. It was carved like the mirror itself, and seemed to match it perfectly. Whose was it? Who sat there? And why was it in the looking-glass but not in the nursery itself?

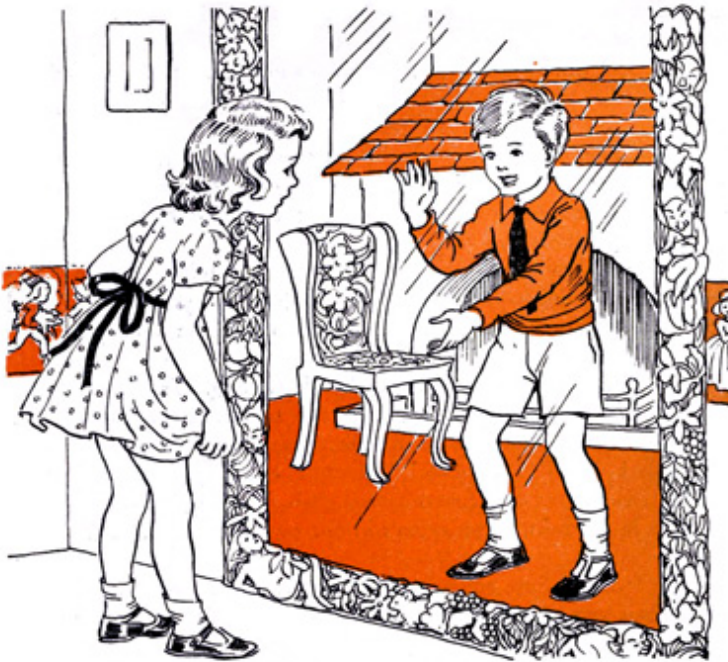
"Pam, Pam! Something exciting has happened at last!" cried Micky. He pressed his face against the glass to try and see further into the mirror—and suddenly he gave a great cry of surprise and fell right through the mirror into the reflection beyond!

Pam stared in astonishment. There was Micky on the other side of the mirror, staring at her, too surprised to speak. Then she heard his voice, sounding rather far away.

"Pam! I'm the other side of the mirror! Take my hand and come too. We'll have a real adventure!"

Pam stretched out her hand and took Micky's. He gave her a pull and she passed right through the looking-glass and stood beside Micky. They looked back at their nursery—and as they looked, they saw the door open and Nurse come in.





"Pam! I'm on the other side of the mirror! Take my hand and come too."

"Don't let her see us," whispered Micky. "It would spoil everything. Quick, hide!"

He ran out of the door in the mirror with Pam. They expected to find themselves on the broad, sunny landing that lay outside their own nursery door—but the looking-glass house was different. Instead of a wide landing there was a narrow, dark passage. Micky stopped.

"This is funny," he said. "It's quite different from our house. I wonder where we really are, now."

Pam felt a bit frightened and wanted to go back, but Micky wouldn't let her. No, this was an adventure, and he wanted to go on with it.

"There's nothing to be afraid of," he said. "I'll look after you."

He took Pam along the dark passage and came at last to stairs going up and down. They were queer stairs, going in a spiral, and the children wondered whether to go up them or down them. They decided to go up them.

So up they went and came at last to a big, grey door set with orange nails. They pushed it open and looked inside. And they saw a very strange

sight!

A small goblin-like man, with funny, pointy ears, sat hunched up in a corner by a big fire-place, leaning over a large red book. Tears were running down his cheeks and made a big pool at his feet. The children stared at him in surprise.

“What’s the matter?” asked Micky, at last. The goblin jumped so much with fright that his book nearly fell into the fire. He snatched it out and sat down again on his stool, holding his hand to his beating heart.

“Oh!” he said. “Oh! What a fright you gave me! I thought you were Bom, the big goblin. How in the world did you get here?”

“Oh, never mind that,” said Micky. “We *are* here that’s all. What were you crying for?”

“Look at this book,” said the goblin, beginning to cry again. “It’s a book of recipes. I’ve got to make some special lemonade for Bom, and I can’t read very well, so I just simply can’t find out how to make it! There are such long words here—and Bom will whip me and stand me in a corner all night if I haven’t got the lemonade ready when he comes back.”

“I’ll read it for you!” said Micky. He took the book and read out loud.

“Enchanted Lemonade. To Make—Take the juice of five lemons that have grown best in moonlight. Take some yellow honey from the bumble-bee that visits the night-shade on Friday evening. Take a spoonful of blue sugar. Stir with a Kingfisher’s feather. Say five enchanted words over the mixture.”

“Oh, thank you!” cried the small goblin, delighted. “Now I know exactly what to do. Oh, you really are kind and clever. I’ll make the lemonade at once!”



A small goblin-like man with funny pointy ears.



It came back with a small jar of honey.

He took five strange-looking, silvery lemons from a dish in a cupboard. Then he found a tiny flute in one of his pockets and blew on it. In a moment or two a very large bumble-bee flew in at the open window. The goblin spoke to it in a curious humming voice, and the bee flew out. It came back in a few minutes with a small jar of yellow honey, which the goblin took from it with a smile. Then out flew the bee again.

Micky and Pam watched in amazement. The goblin shook some blue sugar from a bag into a silver spoon and mixed it with the juice of the lemons and the honey. Then he took a bright blue feather from a jar and stirred the mixture, muttering over it the strangest words that the children had ever heard.

“There! It’s made!” said the goblin, happily, putting the bowl of lemonade on the window-sill. “Thanks to you, little boy! But, tell me—what are you doing here in Bom’s house? Does he know you are here?”

“No,” said Micky. “I didn’t even know it was Bom’s house. We came through the mirror in our nursery, and found everything quite different.”

“You came through the mirror!” cried the little goblin, in fright. “Oh, be careful, then! It’s years and years since anyone did that. It’s a sort of trap, you know. Bom always hopes someone will fall through that magic mirror one day, and then he finds them and makes them his servants for a hundred years. They are allowed to go back then, but, of course, they are old and so they never want to. They always end up as goblins, like me.”

Micky and Pam listened in astonishment and dismay. They wanted an adventure, but not a horrid one.

“Where is Bom?” asked Micky. “Perhaps we can get back to our nursery before he sees us.”

“I don’t think you can,” said the goblin. “I believe I can hear him coming now. Quick, take these—they may help you sometime or other. Go and hide behind that couch. Maybe Bom won’t see you then.”

Micky took what the goblin pressed into his hand and then dragged Pam behind the couch. It was only just in time. The door opened and through it came a magnificent goblin, dressed in a cloak of pure gold and a tunic of silver with sapphire buttons. His hat, which he hadn't bothered to take off, had a wonderful curling feather in it, and his long, pointed ears stuck out below it.

“Ho, Tumpy!” said Bom, in a loud voice. “Have you made that lemonade? Where is it?”



Bom took him up in his big hand and shook him.

Tumpy, the little goblin, ran to the window-sill and fetched the bowl of lemonade. To the children's surprise Bom raised it to his lips and drank it all off at one gulp.

“That's good,” he said. “Very good.”

Then he stood and sniffed the air as if he could smell something.

“Tumpy,” he said, in an angry voice. “You have had visitors. Where are they?”

Tumpy was very frightened but he wasn't going to give the children away. He shook his head and taking up a broom, began to sweep the floor. But Bom took him up in his big hand and shook him so hard that Micky and Pam were sure they could hear his teeth rattling together.

Micky was not going to let anyone be hurt for him. So he stepped boldly out from behind the couch with Pam.

“Stop shaking Tumpy,” he said. “We are not really his visitors. We didn’t come to see him.”

Bom dropped Tumpy in surprise, and stared at the two children.

“Did you come to see *me*, then?” he asked. “Oh, perhaps you are the two children of the Wizard Broody? He told me he was sending them out travelling, and that they might perhaps call and see me.”

“Perhaps we are, and perhaps we aren’t,” said Micky, grandly. “We shall not tell you our names.”

Bom looked at them sharply.

“Well, if you are, you can do two or three things for me,” he said. “I’ve a silver canary that won’t sing. If you are the Wizard’s children, you can easily make it sing for me. Then I’ve a sack of stones I can’t turn into gold, no matter how I try. You can do that for me, too. Then I’ve a candle that won’t light. You must make it light for me. If you can do those things I shall know you are the Wizard’s children and you shall go in safety. But—if you cannot do them, then who will you be? Perhaps children that have come through the goblin mirror! Aha!”

Micky put on a bold face, and hoped that Pam would try not to cry. He meant to go back to the mirror room as soon as he had a chance, and climb through the looking-glass into his own nursery.

“I’ll try to do what you want,” he said. “Take us to the canary.”

Bom marched to the door, and the children went after him. Micky looked behind him at the little goblin Tumpy, and saw that he was pointing and signalling to him. Micky knew why. It was to remind him that Tumpy had given him something. He patted his pocket to show Tumpy he remembered, and then followed the big goblin down the curly stairs.

Bom took them to a little room. There was only one thing in it and that was a big golden cage with a silver canary in it. The little bird sat glumly on its perch, and its bright eyes looked at Bom and the children when they came in.

“This is the canary,” said Bom. “He won’t sing. Let me see you make him open his mouth and trill sweetly.”

“Oh, no, we cannot let you see our magic,” said Micky, much to Pam’s surprise. “You must leave us alone, and come back in half an hour. We cannot do magic with a goblin looking on.”



He began to stroke the canary.

“Very well,” said Bom, and he left the room. Micky was delighted. He waited until the goblin was gone and then he ran to the door.

“We can easily escape before he comes back,” he whispered to Pam. But alas! The door was locked on the outside. The children were prisoners.

Pam began to cry, but Micky wasted no time. He felt in his pocket to see what the little goblin

Tumpy had given him. He took the things out. There was a red feather, very tiny. A shining golden button—and a very small key. That was all.

“Well, I don’t know what use these are going to be,” said Micky, dolefully. “A feather, a button and a key!”

“Sh!” said Pam, suddenly. “Can you hear something?”

Micky stood still and listened. He heard a whispering coming through the keyhole of the locked door. It must be Tumpy.

“Stroke the canary with the red feather!” said the whispering voice. “Stroke the canary with the red feather!”

Micky at once took the feather and stuck it between the bars of the golden cage. He began to stroke the canary with the red feather. He did it until he was quite tired, and then he asked Pam to take a turn too. So she stroked the canary for a long time. But he didn’t make a movement, and he didn’t sing a note. It was disappointing.



Once more a tiny whisper came through the keyhole.

“That horrid big goblin will be back again soon,” sighed Micky, still stroking the canary. “Oh, I wonder if this is any use.”

Just as he said that the canary gave a tiny chirruping noise. Then it suddenly took the red feather in its beak and tucked it into the silvery feathers that grew from its throat. Micky watched in surprise.

The canary hopped up and down in its cage. Then it opened its mouth and began to sing. How it sang! It was the loudest song the children had ever heard! The door burst open and in came Bom, looking very surprised and pleased.

“Well, well, I didn’t think you’d do that so quickly!” he cried. “The Wizard Broody must have taught you a great deal of magic! Now come and change my sack of stones into gold for me! Ho ho! You shall have a great feast and two big precious stones for yourselves when your tasks are finished!”

The children left the singing canary and once more followed Bom, this time into a curious little room hung round with black curtains, embroidered with goldfish. In the middle was a big sack. Bom pulled it open at the neck. It was full of stones.

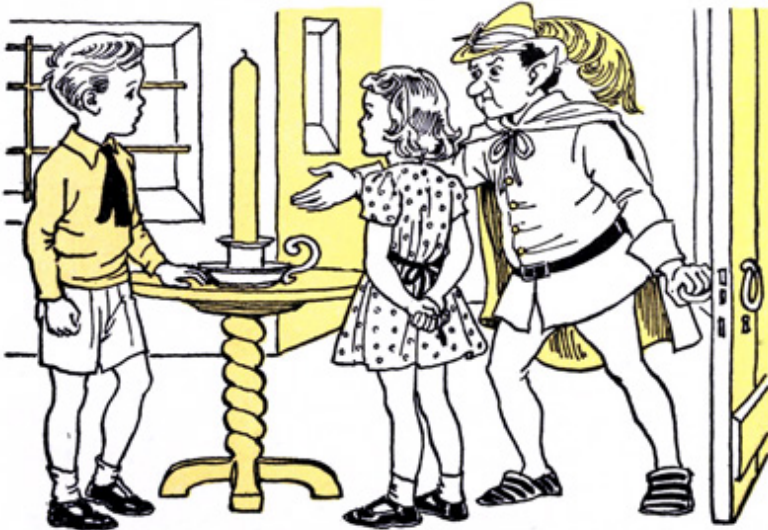
“Here you are,” he said. “Change these into gold for me. I’ll go away again if you don’t like me to watch you.”

He went out and banged the door. Once more Micky ran to it and tried it—but no, it was fast locked. He stared in despair at the sack. Then he looked behind all the curtains to see if there was a door or window, but there wasn’t. The only light came from a great lantern hung from the low ceiling.

“Micky! There’s that whispering again!” said Pam, in a low voice. Micky rushed to the door and listened. Once more a tiny whisper came through the keyhole. “Put the shiny button in the sack. Put the shiny button in the sack.”

“It must be Tumpy again,” said Micky, gladly. “What a good thing we were able to help him make that magic lemonade, Pam!”

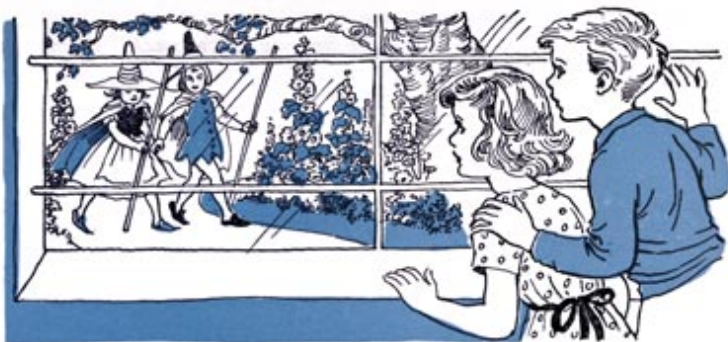
He took the golden button from his pocket and slipped it in the sack. It fell down between the stones and disappeared. Micky watched to see what would happen, quite expecting the stones to turn at once to gold. But they didn’t.



“This is a witch’s candle,” said Bom. “If only I could light it.”

The children watched and watched them—but they still remained grey stones. They were afraid Bom would come back—and goodness me, just as they were thinking he surely must be back soon, they heard the door opening. It was Bom!





“Goodness!” cried Micky suddenly. “They must be the wizard’s children.”

Micky shut the sack quickly, hoping that he and Pam could slip out of the door before Bom could see the stones had not changed to gold. But the wily Bom had locked the door behind him!

He pulled open the sack—and to the children’s great amazement they saw that the stones had changed to shining gold after all! There they were, yellow and bright. They must just have changed as the goblin came into the room.

“Smart children!” said Bom, pleased. “Clever children! I didn’t think you’d be able to do that! I shall write and tell your father you are very clever indeed. Now come and light the candle that won’t light! Then you shall have a grand feast, and go home with two fine emeralds in your pockets!”

Micky and Pam followed him to yet another room, this time set with many sunny windows. On a pink table was a tall golden candlestick and in it stood a pink candle.

“This is a witch’s candle,” said Bom. “If only I could light it, it would burn for ever. Light it for me. I will leave you alone for a while.”

Out he went and locked the door behind him. Micky ran to listen to any whispering that might come—but oh dear me, Bom must have come back and caught poor Tumpy at the keyhole, for hardly had the whispering begun than there came the sound of an angry voice, and several sharp slaps. Then somebody began to cry and was hustled away.

“That was poor old Tumpy, I expect,” said Micky. “Now we shan’t know how to light that witch-candle! Well, I’ve only got one thing left, and that’s a little key. I’ll see if I can do anything with that.”

He took it out and ran it up and down the candle. Then he struck a match from a box lying nearby and tried to light the candle. But no, it wouldn't light. Micky did everything he could think of, but it wasn't a bit of good. Nothing would make that strange pink candle come alight.

Pam was looking out of one of the windows. Not one of them would open, but she was looking out to see what lay beyond. There was a wonderful garden set with big, brilliant flowers, and flying about were the brightest, strangest birds she had ever seen. Pam stared as if she couldn't believe her eyes. Then she saw something else.

"Micky!" she called. "Come here! Look at these two queer children coming up the path to the house."

Micky looked. Certainly the children were queer. They both had on pointed hats, and long, sweeping cloaks on which were embroidered moons, suns and stars. They carried long, golden sticks in their hands.

"Goodness!" cried Micky, suddenly. "They must be the Wizard's children—the ones he mistook *us* for! *Now* what are we going to do! Bom will soon know we are not the right children, and he will be very angry! Oh dear, whatever shall we do!"

Pam looked wildly round the room—and suddenly her eyes caught sight of a very small door, not more than eighteen inches high, set at the foot of one of the walls.

"Look, Micky!" she cried. "There's a tiny door over there! Do you think we might perhaps open it and squeeze through?"

Micky looked—and in a moment he was down on his knees trying to open it. But it was locked! He groaned.

"Try that tiny key you've got!" whispered Pam, in excitement. "It might fit!"

Micky tried it, with trembling hands. It fitted! He turned it in the lock and pushed open the door. And at that very moment there came an angry voice outside the room, and the children heard the big door opening.

"I'll punish them!" cried Bom's voice. "Telling me they were Wizard children when they weren't! I'll make them my servants for a hundred years! Ho ho!"

Micky pushed Pam through the tiny door and then squeezed hurriedly through it himself, just as Bom rushed into the room. The angry goblin saw them going through the little door and he rushed over to them. But he was

far too big to get through it himself!

“I’ll go round the other way and catch you!” he roared.

The children found themselves in a low passage. They stumbled along—and suddenly Micky felt a little hand in his, and a voice spoke to him.

“Don’t be afraid, it’s only me, Tumpy! I’ve come to guide you to the looking-glass room. If we’re quick we shall get there before Bom does.”



Micky tried it. It fitted!



“I’ll come back again to-night,” he whispered.

Micky was so glad to have Tumpy! He hurried along with him, Pam following close behind. Down long twisty passages they went, in and out of funny little rooms, upstairs and downstairs and once through a dim, dark cellar. It was terribly exciting.

At last Tumpy pushed them into a room that seemed very familiar. Yes, it was the looking-glass room at last! It was just like their nursery. Over on the wall was the long mirror.

“Quick! Quick! He’s coming!” cried Tumpy, and the two children heard the sound of hurried footsteps and a loud, angry voice. Micky rushed to the mirror and leapt through it. He helped Pam through, and then suddenly thought of dragging the little goblin Tumpy through too. It seemed such a shame to leave him behind to the cross and unkind Bom. So he went through as well!

Micky looked round. He was in his own, proper nursery. How glad he was! So was Pam. Micky looked into the glass. He saw Bom the big goblin suddenly appear there, shaking his fist at them. Then he faded away, and Micky could see nothing but the reflection of his own nursery. Not even the funny little goblin chair was there now.

Tumpy heard footsteps outside the nursery door and he jumped out of the window. “I’ll come back again to-night!” he whispered.

Nurse came into the room, smiling.

“Well, have you been good children?” she asked.

“Oh yes,” said Micky. “We’ve had a lovely time!”

“That’s splendid,” said Nurse. “Well, it’s stopped raining, so you can go out. Go and get your rubber boots.”

They went, and when they were in the dark hall-cupboard, putting on their boots, Micky spoke to Pam in a low voice.

“Did it really happen, Pam? Or did we imagine it? *Did* we go through that looking-glass?”

“Yes, rather!” said Pam. “Anyway, Tumpy came back with us. You can ask *him* if it was true or not, when he comes to see us to-night! What an adventure we’ve had!”

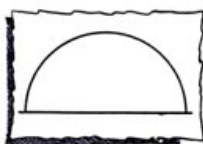
And now they are waiting to see Tumpy again. I *wish* I could see him too!

# TENTS for the TOY SOLDIERS

Do your toy soldiers ever go to camp? No, you say, because they haven't any tents! Well, let's make some, then we can have a proper soldiers' camp. You want scissors, some fairly thick white paper, a pair of compasses, and some gum or seccotine. Ready? Now first, on your piece of paper, draw a straight line. Now with your compasses draw a half-circle, as in *Picture 1*. Done that?

Now draw a neat V where you see it marked in the picture. Cut out the V. *Picture 2*.

Now roll the paper round to the shape of a little tent, and brush some gum down the edges. Pin the edges together till the gum holds. *Picture 3*.



PICTURE 1



PICTURE 2



PICTURE 3

There's your tent! Make as many as you like. It's fun to make flags to fly from the tops of the tents too. Colour them and cut them out. Use a pin for a flag-pole, and fly the flags over the tents. You will soon have all your soldiers enjoying themselves in camp.



# The Tale of Bubble and Squeak

**B**UBBLE and Squeak, the brownies, lived in No-no Village. Their cottage was all by itself, right at the very end, so the two brownies did just what they liked, and nobody said they were not to.

They were cunning little creatures, the two of them, up to all sorts of tricks. They used to drive Dame Tuffles's hen into the hedge and keep her there till she laid an egg for them. They sometimes pulled the biggest branch of Mister Yum's apple-tree right down over the wall and picked off all the apples they could reach, as fast as they could. Oh, they were full of tricks, and loved to get something for nothing!

But one day they went too far, and were well punished, as you will hear. It all began as they were coming home from market one afternoon, going over Bumble-bee Common, singing at the tops of their voices.

"Sh!" said Bubble, as they came near a very lonely little cottage. "Here's Wizard Once-a-Day's house. Go quietly, or he'll come out and chase us."

So they went very quietly indeed, and as they went they heard a loud sound of hissing and cackling. They knew what *that* was!

"It's Once-a-Day's Geese," said Squeak. "He has the finest in the kingdom, Bubble. My, they must lay him enough eggs to give him fried, boiled, and scrambled geese three times a day!"

"No, he has them once a day, made into a big egg-pudding," said Bubble. "A goose egg is very big, Squeak—big enough to make a whole meal for both of us. If only we had a goose! It would be fun to have goose-egg each day."

"Sh!" said Squeak. "I can hear Once-a-Day talking. Let's peep through the hedge and see who he's talking to."

So they peeped through a hole in the hedge—but they could not see who the wizard was talking to—because he wasn't talking to anyone. He was talking to himself.

"I haven't enough geese," he was saying. "I need three more, because I sold two to Witch Google the other day, and one to Mister Yum. I must make

some more.”

“Did you hear that?” whispered Bubble to Squeak, in excitement. “He said ‘*make* some more!’ We shall see how he makes them if we keep quiet!”

So they kept as quiet as could be and watched—and they saw a most extraordinary sight.

In Wizard Once-a-Day’s garden grew some very fine gooseberry bushes. Once-a-Day went to a bush and looked at it. He picked a fat green gooseberry from it, and then another. He picked a third gooseberry from another bush. Now he had three. He put them down on the ground and drew a chalk circle round them.

“Now, where’s my pot of moonlight dew?” he said. He went indoors and brought out a yellow pot of shining dew that he had collected in the moonlight. He splashed a few drops over the three green gooseberries.

Then he danced round solemnly, holding up his long cloak as he went, his tall hat nodding on his big head. He sang a song that the watching brownies knew was magic:

“Gooseberries green, gooseberries round,  
Gooseberries lying upon the ground,  
I don’t want your berries, so go away, please,  
But leave me, yes, leave me, your cackling geese!”

As he finished singing this queer song, the gooseberries began to swell. They turned a grey-white colour. They grew feathers. They grew legs. They grew a head on a long neck! Lo and behold, there were no green berries in the circle, but three fine grey geese, cackling loudly! The gooseberries had disappeared—the geese were there. The two brownies opened their mouths wide in astonishment and nearly fell through the hole in the hedge. So that was how Wizard Once-a-Day got his flock of beautiful geese! No wonder they all had rather green tails—that must be the remains of the gooseberries!

Once-a-Day slipped a loop of string round the neck of each goose and led them to the field where the others were feeding. As soon as they saw them they cackled loudly in delight, and ran to meet them.

“Well!” whispered Bubble to Squeak. “What a way to make geese! I know now why gooseberries have their funny name. They have goose-magic in them. Fancy that!”

Once-a-Day heard Bubble whispering, and he called out in a furious voice: “Who’s there? I’ll turn you into a pair of slippers and wear you to bed each night!”

“Ooooh!” squealed the brownies, and raced off as fast as ever they could. They didn’t stop till they got home.

Now the next day Bubble went out alone. He didn’t tell Squeak where he was going, and Squeak wondered why. In an hour’s time Bubble came back, holding something in his hand, his face red with excitement.

“What’s the matter, Bubble?” asked Squeak. “You look as if you are ready to burst!”

“See!” said Bubble, and he held out his hand to Squeak. In it lay a big green gooseberry.

“Bubble! You don’t mean to say you’ve stolen one of Once-a-Day’s gooseberries!” cried Squeak.

“Well, seeing that we know how to make geese from gooseberries, I didn’t see why I shouldn’t have a try,” said Bubble boldly. “Come on, Squeak. We’ll soon have a goose of our own now! Hurrah!”

“Goose-egg for breakfast each day!” sang Squeak.

“Boiled, fried, or scrambled!” sang Bubble, throwing the gooseberry up into the air and catching it again.

“Don’t do that,” said Squeak in alarm. “It might roll down the sink or something.”

“All right,” said Bubble. “Now where shall we make the goose, Squeak? In the kitchen here, I think. We don’t want to let any one see what we are doing. We must say that we bought the goose at market, if any one asks us where we got it.”

“But suppose it has greeny feathers in its tail, like Once-a-Day’s,” said Squeak. “Every one will know.”

“We’ll cut its tail feathers off,” said Bubble. “Where’s the chalk, Squeak? And we want some of our moonlight dew.”

“They are in the drawer,” said Squeak, and he got them out. “The chalk is rather small, but it will just do. Now—I’ll draw the circle here.”

He drew a nice big circle on the kitchen floor. Bubble put his green gooseberry in the middle, and splashed it with dew. “I took the gooseberry



off Once-a-Day’s biggest bush,” he said. “He was out shopping. Now we’d better dance round and sing the magic song, Squeak.” So they danced solemnly round the chalk ring, singing loudly:

“Gooseberry green, gooseberry round,  
Gooseberry lying upon the ground,  
I don’t want your berry, so go away, please,  
And leave me, yes, leave me, one of your geese!”

They had to alter the last line a little bit, but it didn’t seem to matter—for, as they stopped singing, a strange change came over the gooseberry. It turned a grey-white. It grew feathers. It grew legs. It grew a head on a long neck! Lo and behold, the berry vanished and a big grey goose was there instead. How marvellous!

“Oooh! Look at that!” cried the two brownies, jumping up and down in excitement. “A goose of our own! A fine grey goose!”

“Ss-ss-ss-ss! Cackle, cackle, cackle!” said the goose and walked out of the chalk circle. It went up to Squeak and pecked him hard on the leg.

“Oooh! Don’t!” said Squeak, and rubbed his leg. “I say, Bubble, we forgot to have a loop of string ready to put round the goose’s neck. Where is there a piece?”

“I’ll get it,” said Bubble. “Ow! Get away, goose! Don’t peck me in the back like that! Ow!”

The goose had given Bubble a few hard pecks. “Ss-ss-ss-ss, cackle, cackle, cackle!” it said.

Bubble ran to the string-tin, and got out a big piece of string. He made one end into a loop and went to the goose.

But the goose wasn’t going to have string round its neck! No, no—it was going to have a fine time on its own! It pecked Bubble’s hand so hard that Bubble dropped the string and began to cry.

The goose waddled into the larder and had a look round. There was a meat-pie there. The goose took a good peck at it, and liked the taste very much. Before the brownies knew what was happening, the pie went down the goose’s throat and it cackled in delight. That tasted good! It looked round for something else.

“Bubble! Look! The goose is eating all our food!” shouted Squeak. “Stop it, stop it!”

“Stop it yourself,” wept Bubble, holding his pecked hand. “It is a perfectly horrid goose.”

The goose ate three apples, a jam tart, a cherry cake, and two lettuces. Then it pecked a big hole in a loaf of bread.

“Come out, come out!” shouted Squeak, smacking the goose with a broom.

The goose took the broom in its strong beak and cracked the handle in half!

“Oooh! There’s our best broom gone!” said Bubble in dismay. “Ow! It’s pecked me on the nose, it’s pecked me on the nose!”

“Shoo it outside!” said Squeak. “It’s the nastiest bird I ever saw. I wish we hadn’t made it now.”

“Shoo, shoo, shoo!” shouted Bubble. But the goose wouldn’t be shooed! It wandered round the kitchen and pecked at everything it saw. It pecked down the pretty blue curtains. It pecked holes in the carpet. It pecked at a coat of Bubble’s which was hanging on a chair, and tore a sleeve right out!

“Oh! You wicked creature!” yelled Bubble in dismay. “That’s my Sunday coat. Look what you’ve done!”

“Ss-ss-ss-ss!” hissed the goose. “Cackle, cackle, cackle!” It was having a fine time.

“Bubble, we can’t keep this goose if it’s going to behave like this,” said Squeak in despair. “Do help me to shoo it outside.”

So the two brownies tried to shoo the bird out again—but all it did was to peck sharply at them, and very soon it seemed as if the goose were shooing the brownies, and not the brownies shooing the goose! They ran out of doors. The goose followed them, pecking away at their legs and back. They ran down the path and out into the road, crying.

“Shut the gate, Squeak, shut the gate!” yelled Bubble. So Squeak banged the gate.

“Now you just stay there, you horrid bird,” said Squeak. “We are going to find some one to fetch you away. We won’t keep you! We’ll sell you!”

“Ss-ss-ss-ss, cackle, cackle, cackle!” said the goose, sounding just as if it were laughing at the brownies. It flew to the top of the gate, flapped its great wings, and then flew down into the road. It hurried after the brownies.

“Oooh! It’s after us!” cried Bubble. “Run, Squeak, run!”

Well, that goose chased them up the hill. It chased them over the common—and it drove them right into Wizard Once-a-Day’s garden! And there was Once-a-Day, grinning all over his clever face!

“I was waiting for you,” he said to the frightened brownies. “I saw you steal that gooseberry, Bubble. I hadn’t gone to market as you thought. I knew if you made a magic goose you wouldn’t be able to manage it, and it would bring you back to me! Well, have you had a nice time with the goose?”

“No,” wept the two brownies. “We are very sorry we used one of your magic gooseberries, Once-a-Day. We hope you won’t punish us.”

“Oh no,” said Once-a-Day, “I don’t mind a bit. You can go home—but take your goose with you!”

“Take the goose!” cried Bubble. “Oh no, Once-a-Day, don’t make us take the goose! It pecks us to pieces!”

“Well, I don’t want a goose that somebody else has made,” said Once-a-Day.

“Please, please have it,” begged the brownies, falling down on their knees. “Oh, please, Once-a-Day.”

“Now just listen to me, Bubble and Squeak,” said the wizard, suddenly very stern. “I know all about you two cunning little creatures and your tricks. I’ll keep the goose—but if I hear that you have been sly or mean or dishonest in ANY way—I’ll send the goose down to your cottage. Do you understand?”

“Y-y-yes,” stammered the brownies, going very red indeed.

“Then go,” said Once-a-Day, “and I’ll keep the goose, just as long as you keep your promise! If you forget it I’ll forget the goose—and it will come running down to peck your fat legs!”

Off went the two sorry little brownies—and so far as I know the goose hasn’t been back to their cottage, so I expect they must be remembering to keep their promise. I didn’t know there was such goose-magic in gooseberries, did you? But I’m glad I know why they have such a funny name!

# Mr. Snifty's Dustbin

**M**ISTER SNIFTY was a surly old goblin who gave everybody a very bad time. He was the head of Greenapple Village—and how strict and stern he was!

If any child was late for school he had to take his Saturday penny to Mister Snifty. If any one was out too late at night, Mister Snifty went round to their house and locked the door—then the poor brownie or gnome or fairy had to sleep in the front garden. Really, he was a dreadfully strict person, and all the people of Greenapple Village groaned and wished they could make nice, plump, smiling Mister Jolly their chief.

But they didn't dare to try and do this because of Mister Snifty's magic dustbin. This was a most extraordinary thing. It was about the size of a small round table, not so big as an ordinary dustbin, and was bright green. But the strange thing about it was this—that whatever was put into that dustbin disappeared at once!

So the dustman didn't have to collect the rubbish from Mister Snifty's house, because there never *was* any. As soon as he put an old newspaper into the dustbin it was gone for good. And all his broken bottles, old tins, potato peel, and other rubbish disappeared in just the same way. It was marvellous. It was always empty because everything disappeared in it.

Now you wouldn't think that any one would be afraid of a magic dustbin, would you? But the people of Greenapple were, and for a very good reason too.

It was little Dame Smiler who told the story of how she had seen Snifty use the dustbin for something quite wrong.

“I was peeping over the wall,” she said, “and I saw that old pixie tramp, who sells ferns, knocking at Snifty's door. Snifty told him to go away—and when he wouldn't go, I saw Snifty take hold of him and his ferns and pop him into the dustbin! And when I went to look into the dustbin when Snifty was out that afternoon, I couldn't see the old tramp there at all. He had gone, like all the rubbish.”

Well, you can guess that the Greenapple folk thought twice, then, about offending Snifty. Nobody wanted to be put into his dustbin. So they all were very careful, and didn't say a word to make Snifty think they were really very tired of him.

One day Chiddlewinks the pixie sent out invitations to a party—and he sent one to Snifty too. People thought that was silly—for a party with Snifty looking on was no fun at all. Why, he always had to win musical chairs and blow out the candles on the cake and everything!

“You are silly, Chiddlewinks,” said every one crossly. But Chiddlewinks didn't say a word. He just smiled a most peculiar smile.

The day of the party came. Chiddlewinks borrowed twelve chairs from his friends and some cups and saucers, for he hadn't enough of his own. It was to be a very grand party.

Red-Cheeks, Chiddlewinks' friend, popped in and out of the cottage, carrying cups and saucers and chairs and making himself very useful. And very often Chiddlewinks and Red-Cheeks would whisper together and then laugh loudly.

For they had a Plan. It was a very daring Plan indeed. The night before the party Red-Cheeks was to paint his own dustbin, which was about as large as Snifty's, a bright green colour. And he was to steal into Snifty's garden and exchange the two dustbins.

“I don't expect Snifty will notice that your dustbin isn't magic,” said Chiddlewinks. “Because he just takes off the lid, throws his rubbish in without looking and puts the lid on again!”

What were they going to do with Snifty's dustbin? Ah, that was the daring Plan!

“I shall cover the top and the sides with red velvet,” said Chiddlewinks, “so that the dustbin will look very grand indeed—like a very smart stool! And I shall put the dustbin, looking like a stool, at the head of the table, Red-Cheeks, and you will pretend that *you* are going to sit there. That will make Snifty very angry, for he always thinks he should sit at the head of everything. He will push you away and sit on the red stool himself—and he'll fall into the dustbin and disappear.”

“Well, don't you go and put the lid on before you cover the stool,” said Red-Cheeks. “My, what a joke!”

The party began. Every one stared in surprise at the fine red velvet stool that was at the head of the table. Nobody had seen it before and they wondered if Chiddlewinks had bought it. Red-Cheeks was very fussy and hustled people to the tea-table, saying, “Now take your seats. Chiddlewinks is just going to pour out tea.”

Snifty was there, of course, looking extra grand in a blue silk suit with buttons down the back and front. He frowned at Red-Cheeks, and then he saw that the little fellow was actually going to put himself at the head of the table—on that grand red velvet stool! That was too much for Snifty.

He pushed Red-Cheeks so hard that he fell over. “Make way for me,” he said in his crossest voice. “I think this is *my* seat!”

“It is, it is!” squealed Red-Cheeks in delight as he saw Snifty sitting down hard on the red velvet cloth that was spread over the top of the dustbin.

The velvet gave way beneath Snifty’s weight—it fell into the dustbin—and Snifty fell with it, clutching at the table as he went. He fell right inside it and Red-Cheeks pushed his legs in to make sure!

Then, before their eyes, the folk of Greenapple Village saw their surly, strict chief disappear, just as he had made the old tramp disappear before. He was gone!

How they yelled and cheered!—and it wasn’t long before Mister Jolly was made chief, and as he was as nice as his name, Greenapple Village was soon very happy and contented indeed.

As for old Snifty, goodness knows where he went to! Anyway, he’s gone to all his old bottles and peel and tins—and the old tramp too. So he’ll have plenty of company, won’t he?

# Good Gracious, Bruiny

JACK had a big brown bear on wheels. It really was a lovely one. Jack could ride on its back, or wheel it by its handle, and he often took it out on his walks with him.

Bruiny had a growl. Jack could make him growl if he pulled a string in Bruiny's neck. Then Bruiny said "Urrrrrrr!" in a lovely deep voice. He was a nice, comfortable bear, and Jack loved him. He did wish the bear could talk to him—but Bruiny could only growl, and that might mean anything.

One day Bruiny and Jack had a big adventure. They were walking down the lane, Jack pushing Bruiny by the handle, when there came a great noise of shouting from the field nearby.

And out of the hedge jumped a gnome carrying a bag! He leapt on a tiny bicycle, and rode off at top speed. After him, squeezing through the hedge, came two small brownies with long beards.

"Oh, the rascal, oh, the rogue!" said one. "He's gone off with all our gold!"

"And he's on a bicycle so that we can't catch him!" said the other. "There isn't even a rabbit we can ride on!"

Jack stared hard at the little men. He knew quite well they were fairy folk and he was most excited. He pulled Bruiny's string and Bruiny growled. "Urrrrrrrrr!"

"Good gracious!" said the two brownies, and they jumped round at once. "A bear!" they cried. "A fine strong bear! We'll ride after the gnome on him!"

"But he's only a toy one," said Jack. "He has to be pushed. He won't go by himself."

"Oh, yes, he will, if we rub a little magic ointment on his legs," said the first brownie. "Will you lend him to us for a little while?"

"Yes, if I can come too," said Jack.

“All right,” said the brownies. “There is room for all of us on the bear’s back. We are small.”

One of them took a jar of ointment from his pocket and rubbed it on Bruiny’s legs. At once Bruiny waggled his legs and jumped right off his four big wheels! There he stood, quite alive, his little brown head shaking in delight, and his ears twitching.

“Come on!” said Bruiny, in a growly voice. “I’ll catch the thief for you. Urrrrrrrr!”

Jack got on his back. He was so excited. The brownies got on too, one in front of Jack and one behind.

“Gee up!” cried the front one.

And Bruiny geed up! My goodness, how he galloped along! It was the first time he had ever used his legs properly—and didn’t he enjoy it! Jack had to hold on quite tightly in case he fell off.

“Good gracious, Bruiny!” he shouted. “I never thought you’d come alive—and what a pace you can go!”

In a few minutes they saw the gnome pedalling along on his bicycle in front of them. “UrrrrrRRRRR!” growled Bruiny, in his loudest voice.

The gnome heard the noise and looked back. When he saw the bear, and Jack with the Brownies, he nearly fell off in surprise. He gave a shout and pedalled on even faster than before.

On they all went, and on, Bruiny galloping like a horse, and growling “Urrrr!” every now and again. Soon they were just behind the gnome. Bruiny snapped at the bicycle wheel.

The gnome gave a scream and pedalled on faster than ever. He turned into a field-path. Bruiny went after him. Down the path cycled the gnome at top speed, but, oh, my goodness me, that path only led to the river!

The gnome couldn’t stop in time. He cycled straight into the water, splash! He dropped the bag of gold just as he fell. The bicycle went into the river too.

Bruiny pulled up just in time. Jack nearly shot over his head into the water too, but he caught hold of the string that made Bruiny growl, and just saved himself.

“Urrrrrrrr!” said Bruiny. The two brownies scrambled off and picked up their bag of gold. They looked at the gnome in the water.



“He can swim all right,” they said. “My word, this is a good punishment for him! He will be wet through, and he will lose his bicycle! Serve him right, the wicked little robber!”

“Urrrrrr!” said Bruiny. “Serve him right!”

Off they went on Bruiny’s back again, but not so fast. When they got to the lane Jack was very sorry. It had been such a thrilling adventure.

“Must Bruiny go back on his wheels again?” he asked. “I do so like him alive.”

“Well, if he stays alive some one will take him to live at the Zoo, as sure as his name’s Bruiny!” said one of the brownies. “But listen, Jack—you’ve been very kind to lend him to us—so we’ll do something for you. When you are alone, rub some of our ointment on to his legs, and he’ll come alive just for you, for a little while.”

“Oh, thank you!” said Jack, taking the jar of ointment in delight. “That will be lovely.”

Bruiny climbed back to his wheels. He became still. He was only a toy again—but there was a twinkle in his eye that hadn’t been there before. Ah, Bruiny knew he was to come alive many a time again!

And he does—but *only* when Jack is quite alone in the nursery, or out in the wood. It must be fun to have a bear like that, mustn’t it?

# The Tale of Mr. Busybody

**M**ISTER BUSYBODY lived in a small cottage called Bo-Peep in the very middle of Dreamy Village. He liked living in the middle of the village very much because then he could see all that was going on.

What a busybody he was! He poked his nose into everything, gave advice where it wasn't wanted, and knew everybody's secrets before anyone else did. People became very tired of him but Mister Busybody couldn't stop poking his nose into things—it was such a habit with him.

But one day something happened that stopped Mister Busybody for always. Ah, that was a funny joke, and the folk of Dreamy Village still laugh about it when they tell the story. This is what happened on that long-ago morning in the quiet village of Dreamy.

Just opposite Mister Busybody's house was a small field, and now and again a fair came to set up swings and roundabouts there. Sometimes a gypsy came, who could tell fortunes. Sometimes a passing wizard put up his tent there for the night, and did magic tricks for the little folk to marvel at.

Now one night there came to this little field Old Man Jog-About, quite a famous magician, who spent his time jogging about the country on his little white donkey, showing folks for a penny or two the marvellous things he had found on his travels. He set up his yellow and blue tent and then sent out notices to say that he had with him the famous red and green shoes belonging to the old witch Oddmedodd. Now these shoes were very strange. As soon as anyone put them on they at once ran off with the person whose feet were inside them! Many a time had the old witch Oddmedodd tried this trick on people she wanted to get rid of.

No one knew how Old Man Jog-About had got the shoes, but everyone wanted to see them and touch them. Nobody would dare to try them on, of course, but it would be most exciting to see the magic shoes that had run away with so many people.

So that evening scores of the little folk went to Old Man Jog-About's tent, and paid a penny to see the wonderful shoes. Jog-About's servant, little Pipkin, soon had his bag full of pennies, and grinned in delight at his master.

Mister Busybody paid his penny like the rest and heard it clink into Pipkin's leather bag. He gaped at the famous shoes, bright red and yellow, laced with green thongs. They were pointed shoes, with no heels, and looked rather small. Mister Busybody touched them and felt how soft yet strong, the leather was.

To think that they had once belonged to the old bad witch, Oddmedodd! Dear, dear, dear!

Mister Busybody went back home that night and dreamed all about the shoes. He got up the next morning still thinking about them, and he wondered where Old Man Jog-About kept them when he wasn't showing them to people.

"He ought to keep them somewhere safe," thought Busybody. "He ought to have a big wooden box for them with a fine fat key. I don't expect he has, though! Folk are very stupid. I shouldn't be a bit surprised if he keeps them in an ordinary shoe-bag! Yes, and one day they'll be stolen!"

Busybody sat down to his breakfast, quite worried about where Jog-About kept the magic shoes. He got up from his porridge and treacle half-way through his breakfast and went to peep through the curtains at the field opposite, where the old magician had his tent.

Pipkin, the little servant, was outside the tent, cleaning the buttons on his tunic and whistling loudly.

"Dear dear!" said Busybody, "what a way to clean buttons! Doesn't even take his tunic off! Fancy Old Man Jog-About having a servant as lazy as that. And goodness me—what's he doing *now*?"

Mister Busybody stared through the curtains and gaped in astonishment—for Pipkin was cleaning a pair of red and yellow shoes with a dirty old duster.

"Why—why! He's actually cleaning those magic shoes with a dreadfully dirty duster!" said Busybody, in great surprise and disgust. "I shall go and tell Old Man Jog-About what I have seen. Really, he should dismiss a dirty, lazy servant like that and find a new one. Now *I* should do very well indeed to go about the country with him and take the pennies from the people. *I* am clean, *I* am hardworking, *I* am . . ."

But dear me, it would take too long to tell all the wonderful things that Busybody thought he was! He went back to his breakfast, but he didn't finish it. He grew quite excited at the thought of being Old Man Jog-About's servant. How grand it would be to travel with a famous magician! How

pleased he would be with a fine fellow like Busybody, and perhaps he would share all the money with him—then Busybody would indeed be rich, a thing he had never been in all his life.

He couldn't wait to finish his breakfast. He clapped his pointed red hat on his head and hurried out of his front door. He crossed the road and saw that Pipkin was no longer in front of the tent. From inside came the sound of snores. Old Man Jog-About was still sound asleep. What was Pipkin doing?

Mister Busybody felt quite sure that the little servant was doing something wrong. He heard him whistling softly behind the tent, and he crept round to peep at him.

And oh, my goodness, what a shock Mister Busybody got! For Pipkin was putting on the magic shoes! Yes, before Busybody's very eyes he was slipping on a pair of bright red and yellow shoes, laced with green thongs!

"He's going to steal them!" thought Busybody with horror. "There! Didn't I think he was a good-for-nothing servant! Just as Old Man Jog-About is peacefully asleep off goes Pipkin the servant—and I'm sure he'll take all the money too!"

Sure enough, just at that very moment there came the sound of chinking and clinking, and Busybody saw the little servant tying the leather bag of money to the belt at his waist.

Busybody stared as if he couldn't believe his eyes. Pipkin took up a stick and set off round the tent, going at a good pace, whistling as he went. Busybody wondered what to do. Should he go after Pipkin? Should he wake up Jog-About? He would do both!

So he ran into the tent, leapt on to Old Man Jog-About's bed, shook him, and bawled loudly into his ear:

**"THIEVES! ROBBERS! WAKE UP!"**

Old Man Jog-About woke with a fearful jump and sat up in bed, his night-cap falling off his big white-haired head. He stared at Busybody in the greatest surprise.

"Get off my bed," he said, angrily. "What's the matter? Hie, Pipkin, Pipkin, come and throw this fellow out!"

"Pipkin's gone," said Busybody. "Ha, he's a bad fellow, that servant of yours—dirty, lazy, dishonest—and now he's gone off with the magic shoes and all your money!"

“Stuff and nonsense!” said Old Man Jog-About, putting on his night-cap again and glaring at Busybody.

“I tell you it’s true!” said Busybody. “I saw him with my own eyes, the rascal! He’s gone off down the road, and I’m going after him! I’ll soon bring back your money for you, *and* the shoes too! I’m a fine fellow, I am!”

“Fiddlesticks and rubbish!” said Old Man Jog-About, and he looked so fierce that Busybody was quite alarmed for a moment.

“Now don’t you get upset,” said Busybody pushing Jog-About back on his bed. “*I’ll* see to everything!”

Busybody ran to the door, turned back to nod and smile at Jog-About and then set off down the street. Jog-About leapt out of bed and went to the opening of his tent. He shouted after Busybody.

“Come back, you interfering fellow! Pipkin’s all right! He wouldn’t steal a thing from me! Come back, I say!”

Busybody heard the shouting and turned for a moment to wave his hand.

“Don’t worry, I’ll catch him if it takes me all day!” he yelled.

He looked for Pipkin and saw him far away in the distance. Busybody was a good runner, and he thought he would soon be able to catch up the little servant. But he had forgotten that Pipkin was wearing magic shoes. The witch-shoes took the servant along at a fine pace and Busybody was soon puffing and panting. He stopped once to cut himself a thick stick from the hedge, for he thought that when he *did* catch up with Pipkin there might be a fight. So it would be as well to have a strong stick.

Then on he went down the long, dusty country road, and as he drew near to Pipkin he began to yell and shout at the top of his voice:

“STOP! GIVE ME THAT MONEY AND THOSE SHOES! STOP!”

Pipkin heard the shouting and turned to see what it was. When he saw Busybody racing behind him, shouting and waving a stout stick, he was most alarmed.

“A thief!” he said to himself. “A robber! Oh my, oh my, hurry, witch-shoes, and take me away from him, for I am only a small fellow, and the robber yonder is large.”

The shoes hurried him on and soon Pipkin had turned a corner and was out of sight. He went on to Feefo Town, and made his way to a big old house

at the end. Here Witch Curious lived, and Pipkin banged at her door. The old dame opened it, and smiled at Pipkin, pleased to see him.

“A pound of peacock feathers, please, for my master, Old Man Jog-About,” said Pipkin. Witch Curious went indoors with Pipkin and weighed out a pound of beautiful blue-green peacock feathers. She put them into a bag, and Pipkin counted out the money for them. Then he threw the bag over his shoulder and went to the door.

“If you should see a thief in a curious red hat, and he should ask where I’ve gone, give him a drubbing for me!” said Pipkin, and he told the witch how someone had chased him that morning and frightened him.

Then he said good-bye and went on his way. Not long after he had gone Mister Busybody came panting up. He asked a small pixie if he had seen a little fellow in red and yellow shoes, and the pixie nodded his head.

“Yes, he went to Witch Curious,” he said. “I saw him.” He pointed to her house, and Mister Busybody hurried on.

“I’ve no doubt the little rascal went there to sell the magic shoes,” he thought. He banged at the witch’s door and the witch herself opened it. As soon as she saw Busybody she remembered what Pipkin had said, and she caught hold of him at once. She took off her slipper and gave the surprised little man the soundest smacking he had ever had!

“Smick-smack, smick-smack!” went the leather slipper, and Busybody howled dolefully. He wriggled away, rushed down the garden path yelling and went along the road, feeling very angry. Soon he met a brownie and he asked him if he had seen a little fellow in red and yellow shoes.

“Yes, he took the road to Tick-Tock Village,” said the brownie. So Busybody hurried on, quite determined to catch Pipkin if he walked all day!

Pipkin was in Tick-Tock Village. It was a strange place, for everyone there made clocks, so all day long you could hear the ticking, striking and chiming of clocks.

“Tick-tock, tick-tock,” went the clocks as Pipkin walked into the village. Just as he got there he looked round and saw to his horror, the figure of Busybody hurrying along in the distance.

“That horrid robber again!” thought Pipkin. “Oh dear! Well, I’d better do my business in Tick-Tock Village as quickly as I can, and get away.”

So he went to the head man’s house and spoke to him quickly.

“Please will you send a red chiming clock to Old Man Jog-About on Tuesday of next week? Thank you. And oh, I say, if a nasty fellow in a curious red hat comes your way, throw him into the pond, will you? He’s a robber and I’m sure he’s after my money!”

Off he went, and the head man of Tick-Tock Village watched Busybody coming nearer. “So he’s a robber, is he?” thought the head man. “Hie, folks! Come round! Do you see that fellow in the curious red hat? Pipkin says he’s a robber. We’ll throw him into the pond!”

So, as soon as Busybody got to the village and was asking politely if anyone had seen a little fellow with red and yellow shoes going by, he got the surprise of his life. For six of the Tick-Tock folk rushed at him, lifted him up, took him to the round village pond and threw him straight into it!

Splash! He fell right into the middle, sank down under the water, swallowed two mouthfuls and came up again, very angry and rather frightened.

“Get out of our village at once or we’ll throw you in again!” shouted the head man. “We don’t want robbers here!”

He looked so fierce that Busybody didn’t like to say anything at all, but hurried off, his wet clothes steaming in the hot sun. Aha! Just wait till he caught Pipkin! Wouldn’t he give him a sound beating!

Pipkin was far away in the distance. He had gone to a small cottage set high up on a hill. In it lived two dwarfs, Twiddle and Twaddle, both bad-tempered and very hard of hearing. Pipkin didn’t like them, but Old Man Jog-About often did business with them, and Pipkin took messages to their cottage about once a week. He knocked on the door and Twiddle opened it with a scowl.

“Good morning,” said Pipkin, politely, at the top of his voice, for Twiddle was very deaf indeed. “My master Jog-About, has sent me to ask you to gather him some white moly-flower by moonlight next month. He will pay you well for it.”

“Tell him we will,” said Twiddle, and he was just going to shut the door when Pipkin, turning to go, caught sight of Busybody at the bottom of the hill. Busybody had seen Pipkin going up the hill and was following him as fast as he could. Pipkin was frightened. He turned to Twiddle.

“PLEASE let me come in and go out by the back way!” he begged. “That’s a robber there, coming up the hill. He wants my money and these magic shoes. I’m afraid of him.”

Twiddle opened the door wide without a word and Pipkin rushed through, went to the back door, opened it and skipped off down the other side of the hill, pleased to have given Busybody the slip.

Busybody walked quickly up the hill, panting, and knocked at the door of the cottage. Twiddle opened it and scowled at him.

“Is there a fellow called Pipkin here?” asked Busybody.

“Nobody bellows here,” said Twiddle, who couldn’t hear properly what Busybody said. “Hie, Twaddle, come and help.”

Before Busybody knew what was happening another frowning dwarf appeared and the two of them caught hold of him roughly.

“HE’S A THIEF!” said Twiddle to Twaddle. “INTO THE NETTLES WITH HIM!”

Then, to Busybody’s great astonishment and fright the two of them swung him forward, threw him up into the air, and crash! He landed on hands and knees in a thick bed of nettles that were growing by the side of the house.

Ooh! How they stung! Busybody gave a howl and crawled out, being stung by fresh nettles all the time. His face, his knees and his hands were badly stung, and big tears came to his eyes.

“How horrible people are to-day, to be sure,” said poor Busybody. “I shall go home. I shan’t bother about following that robber of a Pipkin any more. Old Man Jog-About can lose his shoes and all his money too, for all I care!”

So he went sadly down the hill and began to make his way home—and to his great astonishment who should he see in front of him but Pipkin himself, also going back on the road home, whistling merrily!

It so happened that Pipkin looked behind him, and when he saw Busybody coming down the road too, he stopped his merry whistling and began to run as fast as he could.

“This robber is a dreadful fellow!” he said to himself. “He has followed me all the morning and I *can’t* get rid of him! Oh my, oh my, I’d better get back to Old Man Jog-About as quickly as I can.”

He raced back as fast as he could, and Busybody, seeing him run, began to run too, hopeful of catching him up at last.



On they ran, the two of them, on and on and on. The magic shoes that Pipkin had on helped him and he ran faster than Busybody. Soon he was out of sight, and at last he reached Jog-About's tent and rushed inside.

"Now, now, what's all the hurry?" asked Jog-About, startled. "Need you come into my tent like an earth-quake, Pipkin? Where are your manners, fellow?"

"Oh, sir, pardon me," panted Pipkin. "But all the morning I have been followed by a robber, a horrid fellow in a curious red hat. He has shouted at me and waved his stick at me, and I have been afraid he was going to rob me of these magic shoes and all your money."

"Well, well, well," said Jog-About, remembering how Busybody had waked him so suddenly that morning. "The fellow must be mad. Hark! Here he comes!"

Sure enough, there came the sound of running feet and Busybody burst into the tent. Pipkin at once dived under the table and sat there trembling. Busybody looked at Jog-About, who was frowning angrily.

"How dare you burst into my tent like that?" he roared. "That's twice to-day you've done it! You're a robber, I hear, a nasty, shouting thief! Well, *I'll* teach you to burst into my tent and chase my servant! *I'll . . .*"

"Listen to me," said Busybody. "This morning I saw Pipkin, your servant, put on those magic shoes you have, and, taking all your money, run off with it. I have chased him all day long for you. If he does not return, will you let *me* be your servant?"

Jog-About stared at Busybody in surprise, as he told his story. Then he began to laugh. How he laughed! He laughed so loudly that the folk of Dreamy Village came round to see what was the matter. They peeped in at the tent, staring in surprise.

"Oh, you silly fellow! Oh, you interfering busybody!" laughed the old magician. "So you thought poor little Pipkin was a thief, and had run off in my magic shoes with all my money? No no—he's my nephew and an honest fellow never lived! I told him to put on the magic shoes to-day, to take all my messages and do my shopping, for they take him faster than his own small feet. As for the money, he needed it to buy peacock feathers for me."

"But where is he, then?" said Busybody. "He hasn't come back, has he? That shows he is a robber!"

Pipkin crawled out from beneath the table and grinned at Busybody. “Here I am!” he said. “Ho ho! I’ve heard of you, Mister Busybody! For once in a way, you’ve been too busy! Ha ha! Who’s walked and run for miles today, all for nothing? Who’s had a sound drubbing from Witch Curious? Who’s been flung into a pond? Who’s been pitched into a bed of stinging nettles? Ho ho ho!”

Busybody grew very red. All the folk of Dreamy Village, who were listening by the tent, joined in the laughter.

“Ha ha! Ho ho! Busybody’s been too busy at last! What a joke!”

Busybody grew redder and redder. So he had rushed about all day for nothing! Pipkin wasn’t a thief after all. Why, oh why, had he tried to interfere? It wasn’t his business. Oh what a great big silly he had been!

He ran back home, sore with his smacking, wet with his ducking, and smarting from nettle-stings. Never, never again would he poke his nose into other people’s business!

Mister Busybody still lives in Dreamy Village but he isn’t a busybody any more. He has changed his name, too, so if you should ever want to see him, don’t ask for Mister Busybody. Ask for Mister Mind-Your-Own-Business!

# The Rat, The Dormouse and The Robin

**T**HERE was once a wicked rat who went about causing sadness and misery, and thought himself the cleverest animal in the world.

But he got caught in a trap! It was a cage-trap, and had an opening at one end. Inside the trap was a strong-smelling kipper. The rat sniffed round the trap and could not see how it might catch him. "If I go in at that door I can also go out of it," he thought to himself. "So here goes! I'll eat that kipper up in no time."

He slipped in at the open end—but no sooner did he pull at the kipper than the hook it was on jerked a little rod, and the rod neatly shut a door down at the open end! The rat was caught! He flashed round in a moment to try and get out—but it was too late.

He ran round and round the cage like a mad thing. To think that he, the cleverest rat in all the world, should be caught in a silly cage like this! He made such a noise that he woke up a dormouse who was sleeping in a hole near by.

"What's the matter?" asked the dormouse in astonishment, staring at the angry rat running round his cage.

"Matter enough!" said the rat. "Here am I in this cage and cannot get out! And oh, dormouse, my wife is ill, and my little ones are hungry. It is a sad, sad thing."

Now the rat had long ago run away from his wife, and he had eaten his own little ones. But he hoped to make the dormouse feel so sorry for him that he would open the cage. The dormouse was a kind-hearted little creature, and almost wept to hear the rat's story.

"If only I knew the way to free you, I would do so," said the dormouse. "I do feel so sorry for your hungry little ones."

"You are very kind," said the rat, grinning to himself. "If you would just lift up that rod there, I think I could force open the gate myself."

“Well,” said the dormouse doubtfully, “if I *do* set you free, rat, will you promise not to catch me? You have eaten dormice before, I know.”

“Never, never!” cried the untruthful rat. “I would not touch such a kind little thing as you, dormouse. Just lift up the rod, there’s a good creature.”

The dormouse believed the rat and lifted up the rod. The door swung free and the rat pushed it open. In a trice he pounced on the frightened dormouse and held him fast.

“A good dinner for me!” he squealed. The dormouse squeaked and struggled, but it was no use. The wicked rat held him tightly.

“You are a cruel, hateful creature,” cried the dormouse. “You show no kindness even to one who saved your life. Help! Help!”

The dormouse had a friend, a black-eyed robin. He was in the bushes and he flew down when he heard his friend squeaking. “Tirry-lee!” he cried to the rat. “What are you doing?”

The rat looked up and grinned. “Ah,” he said, “I’ve been very clever, robin. I was caught in that trap—but now I’m out, as you see, and I’ve caught the dormouse, who let me out of the trap.”

“Wait, wait!” said the robin, as if puzzled. “I can’t follow all that. You say the dormouse was in the trap, and you . . .”

“No, I was in the trap, and the dormouse came along . . .” said the rat.

“I see—and so you opened the cage and let out the dormouse,” sang the robin.

The rat frowned angrily. “Can’t you listen to what people say to you, robin? I said *I* was in the trap. . . .”

“*I* was in the trap,” repeated the robin.

“No, no, not you, *I*,” squealed the rat.

“And you came along and let me out and then caught the dormouse!” sang the robin merrily. “I see, I see, I see!”

“You don’t see at all!” cried the rat. “You weren’t in the trap at all, and you know you weren’t. And how could I let you out if *I* was in the trap?”

“Well, if you were not in the trap, who was then?” asked the robin slyly.

The rat grew angrier and angrier. “As you are so foolish, robin, I will *show* you what happened!” he said. “Now, hold the dormouse for me a

moment. That's right. Now see—I was in the trap like this . . . and . . .”

Click! The robin leant forward and jerked the rod. The door fell shut. The rat flashed round at once. The robin nodded his head at him. “Go on, go on,” he said. “You were in the trap—and the door shut . . . what happened next?”

“The dormouse came along and opened the trap,” said the rat. “I’ll show you—now where’s that dormouse? You said you would hold him for me.”

“No, I didn’t,” said the robin, flicking his tail cheekily.

“I can’t show you if the dormouse doesn’t come,” said the rat in a rage, and he shook the cage with his paws. “You come and lift up this rod as the dormouse did, and I’ll show you how I got out.”

“Yes—and you would show me how you caught the poor dormouse—and you would catch *me* instead!” carolled the robin. “No thank you, dear, clever rat!”

And off went the robin to visit his friend the dormouse, to tell him what had happened. How the two friends chuckled when they thought of the rat in the trap once more!

He stayed there till the next day, and then the farmer found him. That was the end of Mister Rat, and nobody was sorry. Cruelty and wickedness are no use in the world, are they!

# A Novel Easter Card

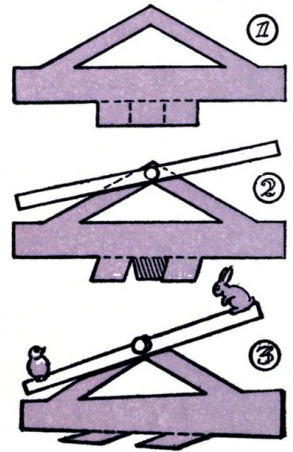
**H**AVE you any little brothers or sisters you would like to make this Easter card for? Make it for one of them, and they will love it.

Get some cardboard and cut it as I have shown you in Picture 1. Now we want the plank for the seesaw. That is easy. Just cut a strip of stiff coloured paper or thin cardboard, and fasten it to your Picture 1 cardboard stand, with a paper fastener. Mother will show you how to do that if you don't know how to.

Now we have the stand and the seesaw as you will see in Picture 2.

We will have an Easter rabbit and an Easter chicken having a seesaw, shall we? Draw and cut out a little yellow chick and a small rabbit. Paste them on the ends of your seesaw plank. Now you can move the plank up and down, and the rabbit and the chicken will have a seesaw! What a lovely Easter card!

You can make Christmas cards like this, too, of course, with little Father Christmases on each end. Your friends will like them very much.



# Little Mr. Woffles

BESSIE and Tom were playing ball as they went along through the wood. They had been to take some eggs to Mrs. Brown, and now they were going home to dinner. They threw the ball from one to the other, and tried to see how many times they could catch it without dropping.

Suddenly Bessie threw rather a high ball and it hit a tree-trunk, bounced up in the air, fell against a branch and disappeared into the middle of the tree.

“Bother!” cried Tom. “Now it’s fallen down a hollow tree. You are a silly, Bessie!”

“Sorry!” said Bessie. “But can’t you climb up and get the ball, Tom? I expect it’s quite easy to reach if you can climb up to that first branch there.”

Tom climbed up, but the branch swung down and he was afraid it would break with his heavy weight.

“I’m much lighter than you!” called Bessie. “Come down, Tom, and let *me* climb up! I’m good at climbing.”

So down Tom came and pushed Bessie up on the branch. She swung herself up it and came to the tree-trunk. She looked down and saw that the tree was hollow inside. The ball rested on a little ledge of bark just inside the tree. Bessie was sure she could reach it. She swung her legs down into the middle of the tree, and groped about for the ball.

Then, to her great surprise, she heard a cross voice say: “Who’s this? What are you kicking me on the head for?”

Bessie was so astonished that she lost her balance and fell right into the tree. Tom saw her fall and cried out to her.

“Bessie! Have you hurt yourself?”

But there was no answer. No answer at all! Tom was frightened and shouted again.

“Bessie! Are you hurt?”

Nobody answered. Tom listened, and the only thing he thought he heard was something that sounded rather like a far-away chuckle. But who could be laughing?

“I must climb up and see what has happened to Bessie,” he thought. So up he went. He climbed carefully along the branch, hoping it wouldn’t break. It held him and he came to the hollow trunk. He peeped down, expecting to see Bessie there—but the tree was empty! Nobody was there at all.

“Well, what’s happened?” said Tom, in astonishment and alarm. “Bessie slipped down there—and now she’s gone! There’s no way out of the tree except above, and I know she didn’t climb up again. Wherever can she be?”

There was nothing for it but to climb down into the hollow tree himself. It was a big tree, and there was plenty of room inside it. Tom slipped down and felt round it. To his great surprise he found a little bench set all round the tree! Then he saw a tiny cupboard high up, and found a little flap against the trunk, which, when set up, made a tiny table!

“Goodness!” said Tom, in surprise. “Someone has been using this tree as a house to live in! I wonder who it was! And have they taken Bessie away? If they have, I must follow her and rescue her. But where can she have gone?”

He looked everywhere in the tree but he couldn’t find a door of any sort. At last he looked down at his feet. There he saw what might be a little trap-door. He pulled at it and it opened up. Below he saw a flight of steps going down into the earth.

“Well!” said Tom, more and more astonished. “Of all the strange things! I’ll go down.”

So down he went into the darkness. He had to feel his way along, for it really was pitch dark. Then he suddenly remembered that he had his little torch in his pocket, so he took it out and switched it on. Good! Now he could see where he was going!

The steps went down for a long way. Then at last he came to level ground. The passage was narrow and winding. Soon it opened out and then came to a stop before two doors. Each door had a brass plate on it and by the light of his torch Tom read the names.

One brass plate shone very brightly, and the name on it said “Mr. WOFFLES.” The other plate was not quite so shiny, and said “Mr. GREENEYES GOBLIN.”

Tom knocked at the door belonging to Mr. Woffles. A voice cried out at once.



“Go away! Not to-day thank you! No lettuces wanted. No radishes required!”

“I’m not selling anything!” called Tom.

“Then go away!” said the voice.

So Tom knocked at the next door, Mr. Greeneyes the Goblin’s door. No answer came. He knocked again. Still no answer. Tom opened the door a little way and peeped inside. Nobody was there at all. There was a small round room inside, very untidy. A lamp hung from the ceiling and gave a dim light.

Suddenly Tom saw something blue on the floor and he picked it up at once. He knew what it was—Bessie’s little handkerchief! It had blue butterflies worked all over it. So Bessie had been in Mr. Greeneyes Goblin’s room! But where was she now? There was no door out of the room except the one that Tom had come in by. Where could Bessie be?

“Well, perhaps Bessie and Greeneyes the Goblin are in Mr. Woffles’ room,” he thought at last. “That’s about the only place they can be!”

So he knocked once more on Mr. Woffles’ door.

“Not to-day thank you!” came the voice again.

But Tom was not going to be put off any longer. He flung open the door and marched in. He quite expected to see two or three goblins there, holding Bessie prisoner, so he marched in with a fierce glare, and stamped his feet loudly.

“Ooh! Ooh!” squeaked a voice and Tom saw something dive under a little bed standing in the corner of the room. He darted to the bed and caught hold of a leg. He pulled out the owner—and to his great surprise found that he was holding a small, shivering brown rabbit, whose nose woffled up and down in terror.

The rabbit was dressed in blue trousers and a yellow coat and on his nose were very big glasses that shook as his nose woffled. He was very, very frightened.

“Ooh!” he kept saying. “Ooh!”

“Why, it’s a rabbit!” said Tom, astonished. “Where’s Mr. Woffles?”

“Ooh!” shivered the rabbit. “Ooh! I’m M-M-Mr. W-W-Woffles. Let me go. I haven’t done any harm.”

“I won’t hurt you,” said Tom, who was a kind-hearted boy, and very fond of rabbits. “I just want to know if you have seen Greeneyes and my sister.”

“Ooh!” said the rabbit, with a squeak, sitting down in a small rocking chair. “I haven’t seen Greeneyes to-day, and I don’t want to. Nasty, bad-tempered creature! What do you want him for? Are you a friend of his?”

“No,” said Tom. “But I’m sure he’s gone off with my sister Bessie, and I want to rescue her.”

“Well, I heard someone shouting out ‘Help!’ next door,” said Mr. Woffles, taking off his spectacles and rubbing them well. “I expect he’s taken her to help his wife mind all their children. He’s got fifteen boys and girls, all green-eyed little goblins like himself, and his wife is always asking him to get a nursemaid for her, but he can’t. So I expect he’s taken your sister.”

“But there’s nobody next door at all,” said Tom puzzled. “Anyway, I shouldn’t have thought fifteen children could have got into that little room!”

“Oh, that’s only his office where he does his work,” said Mr. Woffles. “He lives at the rainbow’s end, a long way from here.”

“How can I get there?” asked Tom.

“You can’t get there if you don’t know the way,” said Mr. Woffles. “Nobody can.”

“But I *must* go there!” cried Tom. “Poor Bessie! I can’t bear to think of her alone and frightened among all those goblin children.”

“Well, how will you get there?” asked the rabbit. “There’s only one person knows the way, and that’s Mother Simple, who lives on Puff Hill.”

“Would you take me to her?” asked Tom.

“Certainly, certainly,” said Mr. Woffles, suddenly beaming all over his furry little face. “I’d be delighted. Come on.”

He pressed a green knob on the wall of his room, and a hole appeared. Tom peeped down it. It looked steep, slippery and dark, and was certainly not big enough to stand in.

“Have I got to crawl down there?” he asked.

“No, no! That’s? the slippery slide to the foot of Puff Hill,” said Mr. Woffles. “Come on. Pick up a mat from the floor and we’ll slide down. It’s

great fun if you don't knock your head against the roof."

Mr. Woffles picked up a mat from the floor, put it inside the hole, sat on it and gave himself a push off. Away he went down into the darkness, and Tom heard him saying "Oooooooooo!" as he went.

Then it was Tom's turn. He put his mat into the hole and sat down on it. He pushed off and down he sped, faster and faster. He did hope he wouldn't bang his head against the roof!

Here and there small candles shone in candlesticks that stuck out from the wall. The slippery slide went down and down, faster and faster, and Tom quite lost his breath! Then at last his mat began to slow down and came to a stop just behind Mr. Woffles, who was getting off his mat. Tom's feet stuck into him as his mat stopped.

"Careful, careful!" said the rabbit, hopping off quickly. "Come on—up this passage!"

Up they went and came to a door. The rabbit opened it and Tom saw that they were at the bottom of a hill. Nearby stood a row of big birch brooms. Mr. Woffles went up to them and took one. He sat astride it.

"Come along!" he called to Tom. "It's too hot to walk all the way up Puff Hill. We'll fly!"

He smacked his broomstick and it rose up in the air. Tom took one and did the same thing. Up he flew, and held on to his broomstick in delight. But the ride was short, for they were soon at the top of the hill. There Tom saw a small cottage, set in a very flowery garden. In it was an old woman, watering her roses.

"Good morning, Mother Simple!" cried Mr. Woffles, landing just beside her.

"Lawks-a-mussy, how you made me jump!" said Mother Simple. "What do you want now, you mischievous little rabbit?"

"Which is the way to the rainbow's end?" asked Mr. Woffles.

"Find the beginning of it, climb up, and slide down the other side," answered Mother Simple.

"Well, where's the beginning?" asked Mr. Woffles.

"Use your eyes!" said Mother Simple, and she pointed her watering can to the left.

Tom and the rabbit looked, and they saw the shining arch of a rainbow half-ay down the other side of Puff Hill. They rushed down to it, afraid it would disappear. When they got there Tom saw that steps were cut in the shimmering rainbow. He felt sure they would not hold him, for the rainbow looked such a delicate thing—but to his surprise he found that although his feet shook the rainbow, it held him quite safely.

He and Mr. Woffles climbed up and up till they got to the top of the rainbow. They were very high up, and Mother Simple's cottage looked small and far-away when they looked down.

"Now for another slide!" said Mr. Woffles, and he sat down on the rainbow. "Whoooooooooosh!" Away he went at a terrific speed. Tom slid down after him. It was great fun. Bump! The two of them reached the bottom and went head-over-heels at once!

They sat up and looked round. Tom saw a curious house in the distance, all higgledy-piggledy, looking as if it might fall down at any moment. Playing round it was a crowd of little goblin children, all sizes, with bright green eyes and yellow shining hair. With them was—yes, really—Bessie! Tom was delighted to see her again.

"Bessie, Bessie!" he called. "Come to me! I've come to rescue you!"

"Sh! You silly stupid boy!" said Mr. Woffles, fiercely. "Why did you shout like that? You've warned the goblin and his wife that we're here now. They'll rush off with Bessie before we can get there!"

And sure enough, that is just what they did! As soon as they heard Tom's shouts, Mr. Greeneyes and his wife came rushing out of the house. They caught hold of Bessie, whistled to the children who ran up at once, and all of them bundled into a funny old car standing nearby. It was shaped like a swan in front, and Tom wondered however the goblin could see to guide it, for the swan's neck rose up just in front of the steering wheel!

Clatter-clatter-clank! Off went the car, and Tom and the rabbit were left to stare at it.

"Now what can we do?" groaned Tom.

"Come on! Let's catch a train!" said the rabbit, clutching his arm. "I can hear one coming."

"But where are the railway lines?" asked Tom, in surprise.

"There aren't any," said Mr. Woffles, impatiently. "Look, here comes the train!"

Tom looked, and to his amazement he saw a large wooden engine coming along, dragging behind it a row of red trucks. In the trucks were all kinds of little folk and animals. The last truck was empty and Mr. Woffles ran to it with Tom close behind. They clambered in and sat down.

The engine-driver looked round, and shouted to Mr. Woffles.

“Where do you want to go?”

“Follow Mr. Greeneyes!” yelled back the rabbit.

“Right!” said the engine-driver at once and drove his engine fast after the clanking car of the goblin, which was now far away in the distance.

“But what about all the other passengers?” asked Tom. “Don’t they want to go somewhere else?”

“Oh no,” said Mr. Woffles. “They are only out for a ride. They never know where the train will go to.”

Things seemed very queer to Tom, and he hoped he would soon be able to get Bessie and take her safely back home. The train went on and on, bumping about over the stones, and shaking everybody up thoroughly. It went faster than the goblin’s car and soon everyone began to get excited.

“We’re catching them up!” they cried to Tom, and a small pixie was so excited that he tumbled right out of his truck. The engine-driver wouldn’t wait for him to get in again, so he was left behind crying bitterly.

“We’re catching them up!” yelled the engine-driver, and he made his engine give a most piercing whistle.

“Oh look, the goblin is driving straight into that lake!” suddenly cried Tom, in alarm, as he watched the car in front rushing straight towards a big blue lake. “Oh, dear! Just look at that! They’ll all be drowned!”

But they weren’t, for the swan-shaped motor-car simply swam along beautifully, and the goblin yelled and made rude faces at them.

To Tom’s surprise, the engine-driver turned his engine towards the lake and ran straight into it! But as the train was wooden, the engine and the trucks floated very well, and nobody seemed to mind at all! Over the lake they went, trying to catch up the swan-shaped car. It was really very exciting.

Suddenly the swan-car spread out large white wings and flew up in the air! Then everyone in the train began to groan, for the engine had no wings.

But a small pixie in the next truck but one climbed hurriedly into Tom's truck and took two pairs of wings out of her bag.

"Let me fix them on you and the rabbit," she said. "They are quite strong. You can fly after the swan then."

In a trice Tom had wings on his back and so had the rabbit. Mr. Woffles was so pleased. He had never had wings before. He spread them and up in the air he went, as light as a feather. Tom followed him, crying out in delight as his wings beat through the air. It was a wonderful feeling.

The goblin in the flying swan had no idea that Tom and Mr. Woffles were flying after him. He didn't see them until Tom's head appeared over the edge of the swan. Then he gave a shout of rage and nearly fell out. Tom grabbed Bessie by the hand and took her out of her seat. He held her in his arms and flew away with her as fast as he could. Mr. Woffles held on to her feet in case she was too heavy. She was so surprised.

The goblin reached out after them, and overturned the swan! Then out all the goblins fell, Mr. Greeneyes, Mrs. Greeneyes, and all the fifteen children. Splash! They fell into the big lake below, and Mr. Woffles chuckled.

"That's the first bath they've had for a year!" he said. "Do them good! Look at their swan-car, too—it's gone flying on without them! It will probably fly to the moon and never come back again. They've lost it!"

"Oh, Tom, I'm so glad you've rescued me," said Bessie. "There was a horrid goblin in that hollow tree, and he took me away to a little room. He made a door come in the wall, and dragged me through it. He made the door vanish afterwards so that if you came after me you wouldn't know where I'd gone. He said I was to be nursemaid to his horrid, bad-tempered little children! But I knew you would rescue me!"

"Of course!" said Tom. "But I say, Bessie, you are getting heavy. I'd better fly down to the ground, or you might drop."

So down he flew—and when he sat down for a rest and looked round, he saw a most peculiar thing! He was sitting in the field just outside his garden! They were home!

"Isn't that strange!" said Tom, surprised. "I say, what's happening to my wings?"

His wings gently pulled themselves from his back and flew into the air alone. Tom turned to Mr. Woffles to tell him, but just then a dog began to

bark not far off. Mr. Woffles turned pale and his nose winked up and down.

“A dog!” he said, in a frightened voice. “I must go! Come and see me again some time, Tom!”

Off he went, and popped down a rabbit-hole in a twinkling.

“Good-bye and thank you for your help!” shouted Tom. “I’ll call on you again soon.”

The two children went home and told their mother all about it. She was so surprised to hear of such strange adventures, and promised to go with them to the hollow tree. But do you know, when they climbed down into the hollow tree again, the trap-door leading to the passage had gone! The bench round the tree, the tiny cupboard and the table had gone too. It was just like an ordinary tree.

“So we shall never be able to see dear little Mr. Woffles again!” said Tom. “What a pity!”

But they may do—you never know!

# Oh, Mister Crosspatch!

**M**ISTER CROSSPATCH was, as usual, in a bad temper. He stamped in at the park-gates with his newspaper, and looked for an empty seat.

“Of course! There isn’t one! There never is!” said Mister Crosspatch, frowning. “I’ll go to that one over there. It has only one man sitting on it.”

So he went to the seat by the tulips. But he didn’t see the brilliant tulips standing in rows in the bright sun. No, Mister Crosspatch never noticed things like that! He unfolded his newspaper.

There was a little old man on the other end of the seat, enjoying the sunshine and the tulips. Beside him was a paper parcel, and it was easy to see that it had sandwiches in it, and perhaps a cake or two. A small brown dog sat on the ground below the seat.

Mister Crosspatch took out a bar of chocolate and began to crunch it. The dog smelt the chocolate and got up. He went to Mister Crosspatch and put his nose into the man’s hand. Mister Crosspatch jerked it away at once.

“Go away!” he shouted. “Go away! Take your nasty cold nose away!”

The dog growled, and lay down. Crosspatch turned to the little old man at the other end of the seat and snapped at him. “Look after that dog of yours!” he said. “I don’t want him sniffing round me.”

“But he’s . . .” began the old man in a mild sort of voice.

“No excuse, please!” said Crosspatch. “Dogs are a nuisance anyhow, and even more so when people don’t look after them. Not a word more, please! I want to read!”

The old man looked at the tulips and said no more. The dog saw that Crosspatch had dropped a bit of chocolate under the seat and he got up to get it. He licked it up.

“Look at that!” cried Crosspatch in a rage. “Licked up that bit of chocolate before I could pick it up!”

“Well, it’s a bad thing to eat things picked up from the ground,” said the old man. “Probably the dog thought you had dropped the bit there for him.”



“I tell you, I won’t have your dog worrying me like this!” roared Crosspatch.

“Well, he’s” . . . began the old man again, but Crosspatch wouldn’t hear a word.

“I told you not to make excuses before,” he said. “I never listen to excuses. Go away, dog! Shoo!”

The dog didn’t like Crosspatch. He growled. Crosspatch looked down at him.

“What’s the matter with him?” he said. “He’s no right to come sniffing after my chocolate like this. Hasn’t he had any breakfast?”

“I really don’t know!” said the old man.

“There!” cried Crosspatch. “You don’t even know if he’s had breakfast! You’ve no right to keep a dog and starve it. No wonder he comes for my chocolate! Go away, dog! I say, go away—and stop growling at me!”

The dog didn’t like Crosspatch’s loud voice. “Grrrrrr!” he growled, and showed his teeth.

“I declare, this dog of yours is positively dangerous!” cried Crosspatch. “Take him away and give him some breakfast before he takes a bite out of somebody’s leg!”

“Oh, do be quiet,” said the old man.

“Ha! I like that!” said Crosspatch, and he lost his temper altogether. He caught up the parcel of dinner and threw it at the dog. “I’ll teach you to starve your dog! He can have your dinner! That’ll make you sit up!”

The dog darted at the dinner, tore the paper off at once with his sharp teeth and, before the old man could stop him, had gulped it all down! The dinner was gone.

“You shouldn’t do a thing like that,” said the old man.

“Bah!” said Crosspatch, thoroughly enjoying himself. “You’re a poor sort of creature anyway, letting me throw your dinner to the dog! I’d have thrown anyone out of the park-gates if they’d done that to me! Go away, dog, I tell you! Go away! What’s he coming again for? Go, go, go, you tiresome dog!”

“Well, you’ve just thrown him a very good dinner,” said the old man. “Perhaps he thinks you’ll give him another.”

The dog sniffed eagerly at Mister Crosspatch, and he hit it. It growled at him and Crosspatch became frightened. "Take your dog away," he said. "Go on, take it away. Take it right out of the park. If you don't, I'll complain to the park-keeper, and then you'll get into trouble."

"Well, complain to him now," said the old man. "Here he comes."

And sure enough, along came the big park-keeper, tall and burly in his uniform. Mister Crosspatch called him.

"Hie!" he said. "I want to make a complaint about this man and his dog."

"It isn't my dog," said the old man. "I kept trying to tell you but you wouldn't listen."

"Then whose dog is it?" cried Crosspatch angrily.

"It's mine," said the park-keeper. "I had to go and pick up a child who had hurt its knee. I left my dog here to guard my dinner, which I left on the seat."

"Your dinner?" said Mister Crosspatch in a small voice.

"Yes, MY DINNER!" said the park-keeper in a large voice. "Where is it?"

"He threw it to your dog," said the old man.

"Whatever for?" roared the keeper.

Mister Crosspatch turned pale.

"The old m-m-man said he d-d-didn't know if the d-d-dog had had b-b-breakfast," said Crosspatch. "So I gave him the dinner-packet. I thought it was the old m-m-man's dinner."

"Oh! You thought a poor old man wouldn't dare to make a fuss about his dinner!" said the keeper angrily. "And how could he know if *my* dog had had breakfast? He doesn't live in my dog's kennel, does he? And why should anybody's dinner be thrown to a dog?"

"I'm s-s-so s-s-sorry!" stammered Mister Crosspatch, feeling very frightened.

"Oh, you're going to feel much sorrier!" said the park-keeper. "I know people like you! Losing their tempers with people older or weaker than themselves, shouting at frightened children and old men! Ha! You won't do it again in a hurry! Give me a shilling, please. I shall have to buy myself a new dinner."

Crosspatch paid out a shilling at once.

“And now, out of my park you go!” roared the keeper. “And mind you behave yourself when you come into it next time!”

He took hold of Crosspatch, jerked him up from the seat, and ran him to the park-gates. Out went Crosspatch on his nose, and the little dog stood over him and barked in delight. The keeper laughed—and as for the little old man on the seat, well, he hadn’t been so amused for a very long time.

“He’ll be careful how he behaves next time,” said the keeper. “Throwing my dinner to the dog indeed! I’ll be on the watch for him next time!” But Mister Crosspatch won’t ever go to that park again. He’s much too frightened!

# How Clever You Are

HERE is a little number-trick, which will puzzle people and make them think you are very clever indeed.

Begin by saying something ridiculous. "I am a marvellous thought-reader! Did you know that?"

"No! What do you mean?"

"Well, I can tell you any number you think of!"

"Tell me then."

"All right. Think of a number! Have you thought of one? Good. Now multiply it by 3. Done it? Good. Now add one. Now multiply by 3 again. Now add the number you first thought of. Done that?"

"Yes, I've done it."

"Now tell me the number you have got to, and I will tell you the number you first thought of!"

Then your friend will tell you his total number, *which will always end in three*. Take off the 3, and the number left is the one he thought of. Marvellous!

Say he thought of the number 5; Multiply by 3, which makes 15; Add one, which makes 16; Multiply again by 3, making 48; Add the number first thought of (5) making 53. Strike off the 3, and you have 5 which is the number he thought of! Try it out and see how right you are every time. Always strike off the right-hand number, and the number that is left is the one first thought of.



## In the Heart of the Wood

“SCAMP! SCAMP! DO you want to go for a walk?” shouted Benny. “Sally, are you coming too?”

A black scottie flung himself on Benny, and darted round in delight, his tail wagging hard. A walk! That was just what he loved!

Benny’s sister came running downstairs, pulling on her coat. “Yes, I’m coming, Benny. Let’s go to the wood, and watch Scamp chasing the rabbits. They both have such fun. The rabbits know he can’t catch them, but Scamp always hopes he will!”

So off went the three of them to the wood. Scamp tore in front, for he had heard the magic word “rabbits”. Ah, one day he would catch one, he felt certain of it.

They came to the wood. It was a nice wood, but so deep and dark in the middle that the children had never walked right to the heart of it.

“Woof!” said Scamp, spying a rabbit cocking an ear at him behind a tree, and off he went. The rabbit tore off too, its white bobtail going up and down.

It went into a hole. “Scamp always thinks that’s not fair!” said Sally, with a laugh. Scamp looked up at her. He thought that rabbits should live in holes that were big enough for dogs to get down!

Another rabbit flashed by. Off went Scamp, and this time he disappeared behind the trees. The children walked on after him. They walked for some time, and didn’t see Scamp at all.

“We’ll have to turn back soon,” said Benny. “Scamp! Scamp! Come along now. Home, boy, home!”

Sally whistled. No Scamp came. Bother! Now they would have to look for him.

Into the wood they went, and then heard, in the distance, Scamp’s excited barks. But he took no notice at all of their calls. They hurried towards him, going deeper into the wood than ever before.

Scamp was chasing a rabbit round a tree—or was the rabbit chasing him? Sally laughed. Then the rabbit suddenly darted off, ran to the right, and disappeared at the foot of another tree.

But what a tree! The children stared in wonder at it. They had never seen a tree so big before. Scamp ran to it and sniffed about at the bottom, where there was a hole into which the rabbit had gone.

“Let’s come and look at that enormous tree,” said Sally. “My goodness—what a size it is round the trunk!”

Benny hit it hard, and then looked at Sally, his eyes shining. “It’s hollow!” he said. “Let’s climb up and look down into the hollow. Come on!”

So into the branches of the big tree they went, up and up. Then they looked down into the hollow. The heart of the trunk was empty and rotten—completely hollow. It was a wonder that the tree was still alive!

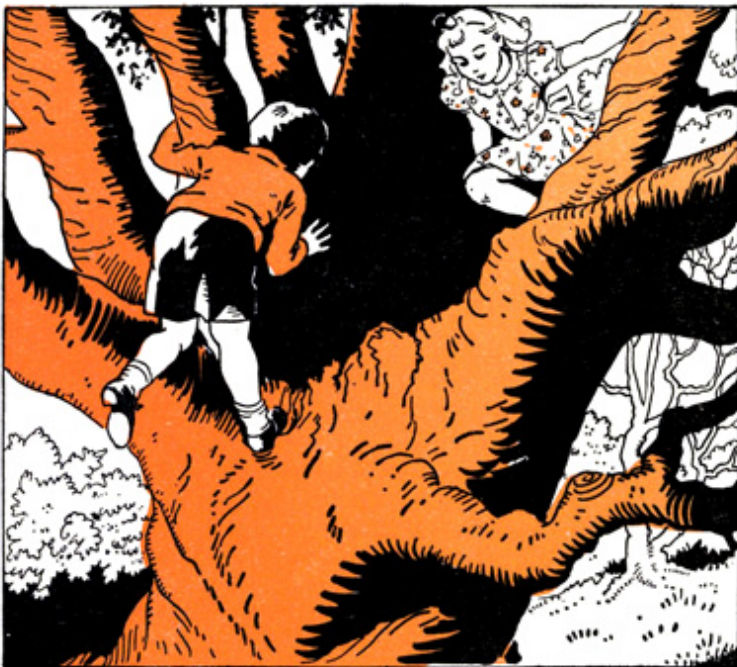
“Let’s get down into the hollow, Sally,” said Benny. “Do let’s!”

Sally looked down into the tree. “But Benny,” she said, “suppose we dropped down into the hollow and couldn’t climb up again. We’d have to stay there for ever. Nobody would hear our calls, you know.”

“We’d better get a rope,” said Benny, peering down into the vast empty heart of the tree. “Come on. Let’s go back and get it now. I feel excited! Why, the inside of that tree is almost big enough to play houses in!”

They climbed down again and rushed home, Scamp following them. He felt rather pleased with himself, because it was he who had shown them the tree they thought so wonderful!

They found a long, strong rope in the gardener’s shed, and went off with it again. Mother called them back. “You can’t go off now,” she said. “It’s tea-time.”



The heart of the trunk was empty and rotten—completely hollow.

“Oh well—we’ll have tea and go afterwards,” said Benny, who simply couldn’t give up the idea of getting down into the hollow tree as soon as possible.

So after tea off they went. Benny had the rope tied round his waist. Scamp tore along in front, looking out for rabbits again.

“Here’s the tree—golly, it really *is* enormous!” said Benny, and he undid the rope round his waist. “Come on, Sally. Up the tree we go.”

And up they went. They came to a good strong branch and Benny tied the rope firmly to it. Then he dropped the end down the middle of the tree. It fell into the dark hollow below.

“I wish we had a torch,” said Sally, peering down. “There might be a rat down there, and I don’t like rats.”

“I’ve brought a torch, and there won’t be rats,” said Benny. “Anyway, Scamp will soon send them away if there are.”

“You go first, Benny,” said Sally. He swung himself down on the rope—down and down, hand over hand, his legs twisting together round the rope.

He dropped with a thud into the hollow of the tree. It smelt musty.

“Come on, Sally,” he yelled, feeling for his torch. “My word, it’s like a small room inside this tree. It’s most exciting.”

Sally slid down the rope. She went too fast and her hands felt as if they were burning. She landed beside Benny, on to something soft. She wondered what it was.

“Do switch on your torch,” she said. “Quick!”

Benny switched it on—and the light shone around them in the curious tree-hollow. And then they noticed something very queer.

“Look,” said Benny, puzzled, “what’s that piled here and there? Sacks! Empty sacks! And look, here’s an empty cardboard box! Sally—whatever are they doing here?”

“Somebody has been using this tree for something!” said Sally. “Oh Benny—whose tree is it! We’d better find out!”

“You know, Sally, I think someone is using this hollow tree to hide things in,” said Benny. “Maybe a robber!”

“Gracious!” said Sally, scared. “Do you mean—a burglar, perhaps. There *have* been an awful lot of robberies lately, haven’t there? And the police have never found any of the stolen goods.”

“I say—I hope whoever uses this tree as a hiding-place doesn’t come whilst we’re here,” said Benny, suddenly feeling uncomfortable.

“Well, Scamp is outside the tree. I can hear him snuffling round,” said Sally. “He’d scare away any robbers!”

Scamp was scraping hard at a hole at the bottom of the hollow tree. Benny flashed his torch downwards and laughed. “Look—he’s got his head inside the tree—but he can’t get his body through. Poor old Scamp! Mind you don’t get stuck!”

“Let’s look at these sacks and see if they tell us anything!” said Sally. “There are so many of them—all empty too!”

“Wait a bit—here’s one with something in!” said Benny, and he picked it up. He opened the neck of the sack and flashed his torch inside.

“Sally, look—what’s that gleaming inside there?” he said. “Pull it out.”

Sally put in her hand and tugged. Out came a beautiful silver candlestick, with branching ends for candles. “Well!” said Sally. “Look at



that! This is a hiding-place for stolen goods!”

Scamp suddenly took his head out from the hole in the tree and began to bark loudly. Sally felt frightened.

“Benny! Scamp’s barking,” she said. “Do you think someone is coming? Oh, I do hope it isn’t the robbers!”

Scamp was barking his head off. “Woof, woof, woof! Woof, woof, woof! Grrrrrrrrrr!”

“Look at that dog!” said a man’s hoarse voice. “What’s he doing there? Do you think there’s anyone about in the wood this evening, Bill?”

“Might be,” said another voice, rather low. “Dump the sack in that bush over there, Alf—where it won’t be seen. Then we’ll sit down with our backs to the hollow tree and wait a bit to see if the owner of the dog comes along. Maybe the dog’s just rabbiting by himself.”

Sally clutched Benny’s hand as they heard this. Men with another sack! It *must* be the robbers! What would they say when they found the two children inside the tree!

“Sh!” said Benny, in Sally’s ear. “Don’t make a sound, Sally. Perhaps Scamp will send them off. Hark how he’s barking.”

The two men sat down with their backs against the tree. The children sat on the sacks, absolutely still. Scamp went on barking.

“He’s just rabbiting,” said one of the men at last. “Chuck a stone at him, Alf, and send him off!”

There was a piteous squeal from Scamp as a large stone struck him. Then the sound of scampering feet. “He’s gone,” said Alf. “Now to get to work!”

The two men got up. Benny felt Sally trembling. How he wished their dog Scamp had not run away. Poor Scamp—he must have been badly hurt by the stone the man threw at him.

The men began to climb up the tree. The children could hear them quite plainly. Then one of them found the rope that Benny had tied to a branch, so that he and Sally might get down easily.



Out came a beautiful silver candlestick.

“Hey—look at this!” said one of the men. “Someone’s been here! Our hiding-place is found. Someone’s been down in this hollow tree.”

“Did we leave anything there in the sacks?” asked the other man. “Yes, we did—that silver candlestick we couldn’t sell! Wonder if it was found. Alf, maybe a watch is being kept on this tree!”

“Yes. Better get the candlestick quick and go,” said Alf, and slithered down the rope!

He landed right on top of poor Benny. The boy gave a yell, and the man jumped in alarm.

“What’s up?” called down the other man.

“Two kids here!” answered Alf, and he gave the children such a look that they shivered. “Two—silly—stupid interfering kids! What are we going to do with them?”

“Ask them what they know,” called down Bill. “Maybe no one else knows of this tree but them.”

“We only found it a little while ago,” began Sally, in a trembling voice. “Nobody else knows anything about it. Please let us go.”

The men were very angry to think that their hiding-place had been found. Alf went up the tree and talked to Bill for a long time. Then he called to the children.

“Look out down there! There’s a sack coming. Mind your heads!”

Benny pushed Sally aside. A sack came down and landed with a thud. The children were astonished. Were the men going to go on using the tree then?

“We’re coming back at midnight to fetch the things,” called down Alf. “And you’re going to stay down there in the tree, see, so that you can’t go and tell anyone. If you’re good children maybe we’ll let you out then—if you’re not we’ll leave you down in the hollow!”

Sally gave a squeal. “Oh don’t leave us here now. It’s getting dark. Do, do let us go home. We won’t say a word.”



The men began to climb up the tree.

The men pulled up the rope that hung down into the hollow. Without that to help them up the children could not possibly get out of the tree. Whatever were they to do?

The men slithered down the tree and jumped to the ground. The children heard them going through the wood. Sally was very frightened.

“Oh Benny—can’t we get out? Have we got to stay here till midnight? What will Mother say?”

“Cheer up. We’ll have to stay,” said Benny. “Curl up on the sacks, Sally, I’ll look after you. I expect they’ll set us free at midnight!”

The two children settled down on the sacks inside the tree. It was very dark now. Benny felt worried. He had always been taught to look after his sister, and he didn't know how to put things right. How *could* they escape from the hollow tree when their rope was gone? It was quite impossible.

The children sat there in silence. Benny switched his torch on at times, just to cheer them up. He didn't like to leave it on all the time in case the battery wore out. He put his arm round Sally.

"Never mind, Sal," he said. "It's an adventure, you know!"

"Well, I don't like it," said Sally. "Oh, Benny, I hope those men really *will* come back. Suppose they left us here for ever?"

"Silly!" said Benny. "Of course they wouldn't." But all the same he felt very anxious too.

Suddenly there was a rustling sound outside the tree. Sally clutched at Benny's hand in fright. Whatever was it now? A robber creeping back? A rat? Oh dear!

There came a curious snuffling sound and then a little whine. Sally gave a cry of joy.

"Scamp! It's old Scamp! Dear old dog, he's come back to find us!"

"Woof," said Scamp, cautiously, and stuck his head through the hole at the bottom of the tree. He couldn't get any further. He blinked up at them.

"Scamp, can't you rescue us?" said Benny. "No, I don't see how you can. Look at that place on his head, Sally—that must have been where the robber's stone hit him."

"Poor old boy," said Sally.

Suddenly Benny gave a cry and made Sally jump. "Sally! Sally, *I* know what we can do! We can write a note, and tie it to Scamp's collar, and send him home with it! Can't we?"



Sally clutched at Benny's hand in fright.

“Oh *yes*,” said Sally, joyfully. “Of course. Have you got a bit of paper, Benny? I’ve got a pencil.”

Benny wrote on the paper. “Mother, we are prisoners in a hollow tree in the wood. It’s a hiding-place for stolen goods. The robbers came whilst we were in the tree and they have taken our rope so that we can’t get out. They are coming back at midnight to get their goods. Please rescue us. Scamp will show you where we are, if you follow him. Love from Benny and Sally.”

“Mother *will* be surprised to get a note like that,” said Benny, and tied it firmly to the back of Scamp’s collar. It stood up plainly. Then he rubbed Scamp’s nose.

“Home, old boy,” he said. “You go home with that note and find Mother. Home, old boy!”

Scamp was a clever dog. He understood. He pulled his head from the hole, and backed away. Then the children heard his feet pattering through the wood.

“He’s gone. Now we’ll have to hope Mother sees the note and does something to save us,” said Benny. “Cheer up, Sally. Things don’t look so black after all!”

The wood was very dark and quiet, except when an owl hooted, or some small animal rustled here and there. The children sat and waited in silence, hidden deep inside the old hollow tree.



Scamp had a beautiful blue collar.

Benny looked at his watch.

“Oh dear—it’s half-past eleven already,” he said. “I wonder if Mother has found the note on Scamp’s collar. Surely she would have been here by now if she had.”

“Sh! I can hear something!” whispered Sally. “Oh—it’s Scamp again, surely! And somebody with him!”

It was! The children heard his eager snuffing, and then heard many footsteps. Quite a lot of people seemed to be following Scamp.

“Here’s the tree,” said their father’s voice. “What an enormous one! Benny, Sally, are you there?”

“Oh yes, Daddy!” cried both children. “We’re still here. We thought you were never coming. Is Mother there?”

“Yes,” said their mother’s anxious voice. “I’ve been so worried about you. Listen, we told the police about your note and they are here too, planning to catch the robbers. Have they been back again?”

“Not yet. They said midnight,” said Benny. “Is that the police we can hear all round?”

“Yes,” said a deep voice. “This is Inspector Jenks here. We’re going to get you out of that tree first, both of you. Then we’re going to hide in the bushes round and completely surround the tree, to wait for the men to come back. We’ve got a rope to haul you up. But we’ll have to be quick about it!”

Someone climbed the tree, and soon after a rope came slithering down into the hollow. The children climbed out thankfully, dropped down the tree and ran to their parents. Scamp licked their legs from knee to ankle, he was so pleased to have them again!

“Now—you’d better get into the bushes too,” said the Inspector. “There’s no time to take you back home. Not another sound please! Hold the dog, one of you children.”

Then there was silence, whilst everybody waited. Scamp began to whine softly. That meant that someone was coming. Benny quietened him. “There’s someone coming,” he whispered to the Inspector, who was close by him.

So there was! It was the two robbers coming back through the wood to the enormous hollow tree. They didn’t know anyone was lying in wait. They didn’t even lower their voices as they came!

They climbed the tree. They called down to the children who they thought were still down in the tree. There was no answer, of course. Then down they jumped into the hollow—to find no one there!

The rest was easy. The police moved up and the tree was surrounded. The burglars were caught, their goods were taken from them, and they were marched away to the police station!

“Oh, wasn’t it exciting!” said Benny, as he and Sally and Scamp went home with their parents. “I did love it!”

“*Too* exciting!” said his mother. “Don’t do that sort of thing too often, Benny.”

That wasn’t quite the end of the story. The police sent Benny and Sally a lovely watch each for their help in catching the robbers—and Scamp had a beautiful blue collar with his name on it.

But he did deserve it, didn’t he?

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*Answers to puzzles on page 248*

1. Oat; goat; goal; foal.
2. Beech; pine; larch; yew; ash; poplar; maple.
3. Umbrella!
4. Because he has plenty of pages.
5. A hole!

# The Christmas Tree Pig

ONCE there was a sugar pig who was hung up on a Christmas-tree, with a great many other toys and ornaments. He was quite happy there until the little black doll next to him began to talk.

“Hallo, there, sugar pig! You’d better be careful when the candles are lighted on this tree. That one just below you will melt you, as sure as anything!”

The sugar pig looked down below him in alarm. Sure enough, there was a green candle just beneath him. Goodness, he would certainly melt when that was lighted!

It was a horrid thought for the little sugar pig. He spoke anxiously to the black doll. “Can you reach up and untie the bit of string that binds me to this branch? I must get away from this candle.”

The black doll could just reach, and very soon the sugar pig was free. He slipped down from branch to branch until he came to the floor. His legs were stiff, but he soon managed to make them run.

“I shall run right away from this horrid place,” said the sugar pig to himself. So he ran out of the room. But almost at once he met the big tabby-cat who lived in the house, and she shot after him.

“Come here, pink mouse!” she mewed. “I’d like to have you for dinner!”

The sugar pig fled into a mouse-hole, and when he was sure he was safe he poked his pink snout out in a rage. “Hie, you cat!” he squeaked, “I’m a pig, not a mouse. I’m a pink sugar pig!”

“Better still!” said the cat, and tried to scoop him from the hole with her paw. “I love sugar animals!”

The sugar pig ran down the hole and soon came to a bigger hole leading into the kitchen. He peeped out. No one was about. He ran out and looked for a safe place to hide.

But just then Bobby, the brown dog, came sniffing into the kitchen. He had smelt that sugar pig, and had come to find him. He soon saw him and scampered after him.



“Come here, pink mouse! I’ll have you for my dinner!”

The sugar pig ran out of the door in a fright. The wind banged the door after him and shut the dog into the kitchen. The pig was safe! How pleased he was!

“The big world seems just as dangerous as the Christmas-tree!” he said to himself as he wandered down the garden path. “Oh! Ooooh! Eeeeeee!”

No wonder he squealed! A big blackbird had spied him running down the path and had come to peck him, thinking he was a large pink caterpillar!

“Come here, pink caterpillar! I’d like you for my dinner!” said the blackbird. “Peck, peck!”

He dug two sugary bits out of the poor sugar pig and liked them very much. If the sugar pig hadn’t run under the hen-house, he would have been pecked to bits!

But, dear me, that is what very nearly did happen to him the minute after! For the hens found under their house, and how they chased him to peck him!

“Come here, pink spider!” they clucked. “We’d like you for our dinner!”

“I’m not a spider, nor a caterpillar, nor a mouse!” squealed the sugar pig. “Leave me alone. I’m just a little sugar pig!”

He ran out of the hen-yard and hurried down a path. And there something nearly ran him over! It was a small girl on a tricycle. When she saw the pink pig lying on his side, all the breath knocked out of his fat sugary body, she was most surprised.

She got off her tricycle and picked him up. “Why, it’s a pink sugar pig,” she said. “How did you come to be here, sugar pig?”

“Oh, I escaped from a very dangerous place, little girl,” panted the sugar pig. “And first a cat wanted me for her dinner, and I escaped down a mouse-hole. Then a dog wanted to eat me, and I ran into the yard. Then a blackbird wanted to gobble me up, and I hid under the hen-house—and then the hens tried to peck me to bits. Oh, I tell you I’ve had a very dangerous and worrying time.”

“Poor little sugar pig,” said the little girl. “I should think you would like to be put into some safe place, wouldn’t you?”

“Yes, I would,” said the pink pig.

“Well, I’ll take you indoors to my mother,” said the little girl. “She will know what to do with you.”

So she took the sugar pig indoors and told her mother all about him.

“What a queer story!” said Mother. “I know a very safe place to put him, so don’t worry, darling.” She picked up the little sugar pig and took him into another room. And there stood the big Christmas-tree.

“I’ll put him on this tree,” said Mother. “He will be quite safe there.” So she tied him to a branch with a bit of string and left him.

And will you believe it, when the pink sugar pig looked around him, he saw the little black doll nearby and the green candle just below him!

“Ho, ho!” said the black doll. “So you’ve come back again, have you! Well, well, well!”

But the sugar pig needn’t worry! Nobody will let the candles burn the toys, and he will be quite safe. He had had all his adventures for nothing.

“I’m back where I started!” squealed the sugar pig. “But here I’m staying now, so don’t you say another word to me, black doll!”

And there he is still, unless the children have had the Christmas-tree. Where do you suppose he will be if they have had it?

# Rain in Toytown

ONCE upon a time there was a big toy duck who sat on a shelf in the toyshop, and was never sold.

He had been pushed behind a big box, and no one knew he was there.

He was really a fine duck. He was made of celluloid, and if only he had been put into a bath full of water then you would have seen how beautifully he could float! But ever since he had been in the shop he had sat up on the dark shelf and had never moved from there—he did not even know that he could float!

He had no legs, so he could not get up and walk about at night as the other toys did. All he could do was to poke his big orange beak out from behind the box, and watch the other toys dancing, shouting and playing together on the floor below.

So you can guess he led a very dull life and was always longing for a little excitement, which never came.

And then one day a doll with a barrow was put up on the shelf near the duck! The wheel of the barrow had broken, so the doll could not be sold. It went by clockwork and when it was wound up it walked along, holding the barrow and pushing it. It was lovely to watch it. But now that the wheel was broken, the doll was no use either.

“Hallo!” said the duck, in great surprise. “I haven’t seen anyone up on this shelf for years! How did you get here?”

“I’ve been put up here out of the way,” said the doll sadly. “I expect I shall be here for years, too, getting older and dustier each day!”

“I am dusty too,” said the duck. “You would not think that my back was really a bright blue, green and red, would you? Well, it is! But there is so much dust on me that I look grey. I have kept my beak a nice bright orange by rubbing it against the back of this box. Oh, doll, it is so exciting to have someone to talk to!”

“Do you suppose everyone will forget about me, as they have forgotten about you?” asked the doll, with tears in her blue eyes. She was a dear little

doll, dressed in a gardening overall. Her hair was brown and curly, and she wore no hat, but a ribbon tied up her curls. Her hands held the handles of the barrow tightly.

“I expect we shall stay here till we fall to pieces,” said the duck, with a sigh.

“Well, I don’t see why we should!” said the doll, tossing back her hair fiercely. “Surely we can think of a way to escape from this shelf.”

“But where should we go if we did?” said the duck. “You would be put back on the shelf, if the shopkeeper found you again, I am sure.”

“If only I could mend my wheel, I could wheel my barrow away, and go to Toytown,” sighed the doll. “I know the way quite well.”

“Let me have a look at the wheel,” begged the duck. “Perhaps I can think of a way of mending it!”

The doll pulled the barrow round so that the duck could see it. The wheel was broken quite in half. There was no mending it, that was certain!

“I believe I know what you could do!” said the duck, in excitement. “Why not take out that wheel, and slip in something else instead—a cotton-reel, for instance. That would make a very strong wheel!”

“I didn’t think of that!” cried the doll. “Oh, duck, that would be just the thing! To-night I will see what I can do!” So that night the doll tried to get out the broken wheel. The duck helped her by pecking hard, and at last out came the wheel!

“Good!” cried the duck. “Now climb down to the work-basket on that chair, doll. You are sure to find an empty reel there.”

The doll climbed down. The basket belonged to the shopgirl, and in it she had full reels, half-used ones, and two empty ones. The doll chose the bigger one of the two, and climbed back to the shelf with it. The duck helped her to fit it into the barrow—and hey presto, she could wheel it along beautifully! The reel went round and round just as well as the wheel had done.

“And now I shall go to Toytown,” said the doll happily, taking hold of the handles of the barrow.

“Well, good-bye,” said the duck sadly. “I am glad you are able to go, but I am sorry to lose you.”

“Oh, but you are coming with me!” said the doll, laughing.

“How can I do that!” cried the duck. “I have no legs, and cannot walk, and my wings are only painted. They will not fly.”

“Ah, but I shall put you into my barrow and wheel you along with me!” said the kind little doll. “You have helped me, duck, and now I will help you. You are not heavy, and though you will not fit very well into my barrow, still, I think I can manage!”

The duck was too excited to answer! The doll picked him up in her arms, for he was very light, though quite big. She put him on her barrow—he would not go right in for he was too big—but she managed to balance him quite well. Then she wheeled him to the end of the shelf.

Just below the shelf stood a big dolls’ house. The doll cleverly wheeled the barrow from the shelf to the roof of the house, then down the roof to a balcony that jutted out from a bedroom. Then she called to a big teddy bear, and asked him to help her.

“Will you lift down this duck for me, and my barrow?” she asked. “I can quite well climb down myself.”

The big bear was a good-natured fellow, and he lifted down the duck gently, and then the barrow. The cotton-reel fell out, and the bear pushed it in again. The doll quickly climbed down from the balcony, and put the duck in the barrow. They called thank-you and good-bye to the teddy bear, and then off they went on the way to Toytown, the doll wheeling the duck in the barrow.

They journeyed for two nights and a day, and at last they came to Toytown. At the gates stood a wooden policeman.

“What do you want in Toytown?” he asked. “It is very full just now. Unless you have some work to do, doll and duck, I cannot let you in.”

“I’m a gardener doll,” said the little doll. “Can’t you see my barrow and my overall. I’m a very good gardener. I shall soon find work to do.”

“But what about the duck?” asked the policeman. “What work will *he* do?”

“Oh, he’ll find something!” said the doll. “Do let me in, please, for I am very tired.”

So, grumbling a little, the toy policeman let them go through the gates, and the wheelbarrow rumbled down the neat streets of Toytown. Dolls’ houses stood on every side, and toy-shops sold their wares. Little farms,

with wooden animals and trees were here and there. The doll stopped at the gate of one.

“I think I’ll go in and ask the farmer here if he will let me be his gardener,” said the doll. “I can see one or two trees that have fallen over. I can do a good many jobs here! And I believe I can see a pond that you could float on!”

So she wheeled her barrow, and the duck as well, through the farm gate and went up to the farmer. He was made of wood, but he had very sharp little eyes.

“Oh, so you want to be a gardener here, do you?” he said. “Well, I can do with one. I have too much work to do. Can you feed the chickens and the ducks too, and look after the pigs as well?”

“Oh, yes,” said the doll. “I can do anything. Will you please let the duck in my barrow float on your pond till he too finds some work to do?”

“Very well,” said the farmer. “Take him over there.”

So the duck was taken to a small pond and he floated there in great delight. The pond was very tiny, and the duck almost filled it all. When he floated very hard he made big waves at the edge of the pond, and then all the tiny ducks nearby quacked with fright.

The doll set to work. She was a good gardener, and she did her best to see to the chickens, ducks and pigs too. She enjoyed working in the sunshine, but when it began to rain, and her hair and overall got soaked, she did not like it so much.

“My feet get stuck in the mud,” she complained to the duck. “It is horrid!”

The duck liked the rain. For one thing it made his pond bigger, and that gave him more room. He liked to feel the raindrops, too—but he was sorry for the little doll.

“Have you found me any work to do yet?” he asked the doll.

“No,” said the doll, with a sigh. “It seems very difficult to get work for someone who cannot walk or fly. I am worried about you, duck. The policeman said yesterday that the little ducklings here had complained that you take up all the room on their pond. He said that you will have to leave Toytown next week if you cannot get any work.”

“Oh dear!” said the duck, in dismay. “That means I shall have to go back to that horrid shelf for the rest of my life!”

“I don’t want you to do that,” said the doll, with tears in her eyes. “I am so fond of you now. And you do look so beautiful since I cleaned you up.”

The duck certainly looked splendid now! The doll had rubbed off all the dirt and dust, and his back shone blue, green and red. He was a fine sight to see. But what was the use of that if he had to go back to his dark shelf again! It was too bad.

“If only this rain would stop!” said the doll, squeezing the water out of her overall. “I am always wet and always cold now. A-tishoo! A-tishoo!”

“Oh, don’t get a cold!” begged the duck in alarm. “If you have to go to bed, what will become of me? The Policeman will turn me out, I am sure.”

“A-tishoo!” sneezed the little doll. “Oh dear, I can’t stop sneezing. A-tishoo!”

Well, that very night the doll was put to bed in the farmhouse by the farmer’s wife, for she really had a shocking cold. The duck swam sadly by himself on the pond, keeping a look-out in case the policeman came along. And sure enough, he did! The duck saw him wading across the field to the pond, looking as black as thunder because he was getting so wet and muddy.

“Haven’t you got some work to do yet?” he shouted to the frightened duck. “You great lazy thing! Here you are all day long, floating about doing nothing! You can leave Toytown on Saturday! Do you hear me?”

“Yes,” said the duck unhappily. The policeman waded off, wishing that the rain would stop. But it didn’t. It went on and on and on, and soon the duck pond was so big that the duck could take a really good swim. The whole field was under water, and all the hens fled to their house at the end of the meadow, whilst the pigs and goats stood huddled together near the farmhouse.

“I suppose the doll is in bed,” thought the duck. “Poor thing! She will be sad when she knows I must leave her. I will try and see her before I go on Saturday. Perhaps she will be up by then.”

Each day the duck looked out for the doll to come, but she didn’t appear. She was still in bed. The rain went on pouring down, and soon people began to say that there would be floods in Toytown. Such a thing had never happened before!

The river overflowed and joined the pond on which the duck swam. Then what a great stretch of water there was for the duck to swim on! The water spread right up to the farmhouse, and the farmer's wife rushed upstairs in fright, for it poured in at her kitchen door!

"We shall have to live in the bedrooms!" she cried. "Oh dear, oh dear! What a dreadful thing! All my kitchen chairs are floating about!"

The duck knew that it was Saturday, and he thought he would swim up to the farmhouse and look in at the bedroom windows until he found the room where his friend the doll lay. Then he would say good-bye. So up he swam.

The floods were very bad now, and the water was right up to the bedroom windows! The duck swam round the farmhouse, peeping in at each window.

Then he found the doll, sitting up in bed, looking very miserable and unhappy. The duck pecked on the glass with his beak, and the little doll jumped out of bed at once.

"Oh, duck, I'm so glad you've come!" she said. "We are in a dreadful fix here. The farmer's wife hasn't any tea, or sugar, or bread, and we don't know how to get it, because of the floods. We can't go out, for the water is right over our heads! Do you think you could float off to the butcher's and get some meat for us, and go to the grocer's and get some tea and sugar?"

"Of course!" said the duck in delight. "I'll do anything I can! You know that, doll! I'll go now!"

So off he floated at top speed. He went into Toytown, which was also flooded, though not quite so badly as the houses just outside. He swam to the butcher's, grocer's, baker's and milkman, and asked them for meat, tea, sugar, bread and milk, and loaded everything on to his big broad back! Then back he swam very carefully.

On the way he passed many other flooded houses. There were people at the windows, looking out very miserable. When they saw the duck going by with all the parcels on his back, they began to shout excitedly to one another.

"See! There's a duck with groceries! Hi, duck! Will you get some for *me*? Ho there, duck! When next you go to the butcher's buy some chops for me! I say, duck, I'll give you sixpence if you'll go and fetch me some nice fresh fish from the fishmonger's."



The duck listened to all the shouts and calls, and a marvellous idea came into his head! He would do all the shopping for the people in the flooded houses! What fun! That would really be hard work, and he would be so pleased to do it! He called out that he would soon be back, and then he floated at top speed to the farmhouse. He tapped on the window, and the doll opened it. She cried out in delight when she saw how well the duck had done the shopping. She lifted in the parcels, and as she took them the duck quacked out to her all the news.

“The houses nearby are all flooded too,” he said. “The people want me to go and do their shopping for them. If I go and do it, doll, I shall earn money, and then that policeman can’t turn me out!”

“Oh, splendid!” cried the doll. “To-morrow I will come with you. My cold is nearly better. I will ask the people to give me written shopping lists, and then we will go together and buy everything.”

So the next day the doll sat on the duck’s back, and he swam with her round to all the flooded houses. Everyone handed her a shopping list, and the duck and the doll hurried to the shops to get what was wanted. Then, when the duck’s back was quite loaded, back they floated to the houses and handed in the goods at the windows. They were paid sixpence each time they went shopping, and soon the little bag that the doll kept the money in, jingled and clinked as she shopped. What a lot of money they were making!

“I shall be quite sorry when the rain stops,” said the little doll. She had bought herself a mackintosh and sou’wester, and also a pair of Wellington boots. So she was quite all right. Everyone looked out for the little couple each morning now, and called to them from the top windows.

One day, when the doll and duck were floating past the police station, on their way to the shops, a window was flung open, and the toy policeman called to them.

“Hey!” he said. “Come here!”

“Oh dear! Do you suppose he wants to turn me out now?” said the poor duck, trembling so much that the doll was nearly shaken off his back. “I shan’t go to him. I shall just pretend I don’t see him.”

“Oh, we’d better go,” said the doll. “It isn’t good to be cowardly. Let’s be brave and go.”

So they floated across to him. To their great surprise he beamed at them, and said: “Well, you certainly have made yourselves useful, you two! Now

look, here is my shopping list. Will you do my shopping for me too? I cannot get out of the police station.”

So they went to do the policeman’s shopping as well, and weren’t they pleased to put his sixpence into their bag!

In three weeks’ time the rain stopped and the floods began to go down. Little by little all the water drained away, and people were able to go in and out of the doors of their houses. The field round the farmhouse dried up and the little pond was itself again. The farmer came to the gate and called to the doll.

“What about coming back to be my gardener again?” he shouted. “The duck can have the use of my pond, if he wishes!”

“Oh dear!” groaned the duck. “What a dull life that will be, after this exciting three weeks!”

“Don’t worry, duck,” said the doll, hugging him hard round the neck. “I’ve got such a lovely idea!”

The duck was on the river, and the doll stepped off and ran to the farmer. “I’m sorry I can’t come back,” she said, “but I’ve bought a little house by the river, and I and the duck are going to live there, and do all the fetching and carrying for the folk who live on the riverside!”

The duck nearly fell over on the water when he heard this. Live with the doll in a little house—and work for her! Oh, could anything be better!

It was quite true. The doll had spent her sixpences well. She swam off with the duck, and took him to a tiny house on the riverside. It had curtains at the windows, and a tiny landing-stage.

“There you are!” she said. “That’s our house! And all the folk who live nearby have promised that they will call you whenever they want to be taken from one side of the river to the other, duck—and if they want any shopping done, we can go and get their shopping lists, and you can float with me down the river, till we come to the town. Then I shall jump off and do the shopping, and you can wait for me. I’ll come back and put the parcels on your back, and off we’ll go up the river once more. Isn’t that lovely!”

So that’s what they do now. And in the evening, when the work is done, the doll carries the duck into her little house, and they sit on chairs opposite one another and drink hot cocoa together.

Ah, they have a fine life together! But they did work hard for it, didn’t they?



ONCE upon a time a bit of paper blew into Gobby's garden. Gobby was a pixie, and he ran to pick up the paper, for he didn't like rubbish in his garden.

But it wasn't rubbish. It was a page of notepaper, with writing on it.

"Good gracious!" said Gobby. "It's Witch Heyho's writing! I'll read it."

Now Gobby should not have read it. He should have taken it straight back to Witch Heyho, who was writing busily in her garden a little way away. But Gobby was very curious to see what was written on the bit of paper, so he read it all.

And he found it was a spell to make something grow. There should have been two pages to the spell, but Gobby thought the one page told him quite enough to use the magic. It was to make something black grow well.

"Now let's see," thought Gobby, frowning till his eyes were almost shut. "Something black—why, that must be black currants of course! Witch Heyho has plenty of black-currant bushes in her garden, and she wants them to have lots of fruit this year. Aha! This is part of the spell she has written here! What fun! Now I can make black currants grow too."

He read the bit of paper again. "To make them grow big and black in crowds, get a pint of soot, a pint of moonlit dew, and stir up together with a peacock's feather," he read. "Add six petals of a wallflower, and the shine off a black stone. Say the four magic words, 'Quilla, coona, dalla, ho,' as

quickly as you can, five times. Now choose the place where you want the magic to grow, and paint it carefully with the mixture.”

Gobby rubbed his hands in excitement. Ah, he would make crowds of black currants grow—he would have black-currant pie every day! How lovely!

He wondered where to grow them. “I’d better not grow them in the garden,” he thought. “If I do, Witch Heyho will see me. I’d better grow them indoors. I can easily pick some sprays of black-currant bush, and paint them with the magic indoors. Then the black currants will grow on the sprays, and I can pick them and make them into beautiful pies!”

Gobby thought he would tell his friend Peterkin about the spell he had found. Peterkin would help him to make the pastry for the pies.

So he took the paper to Peterkin, and told him all about how he had found it flying into his garden.

“But how do you know this spell will make black currants?” said Peterkin, in surprise. “It doesn’t say so. It just says, ‘To make them grow big and black in crowds’ but it doesn’t say *what!*”

“Ah, but I happen to know that Witch Heyho is very fond of black-currant pie,” said Gobby impatiently. “And I’m sure she was writing out this spell to make the fruit grow well on her bushes. Will you come along and help me to make the pastry for our pies now? Then we’ll grow the black currants, and use them whilst they are nice and fresh and juicy. A good black-currant tart is a perfectly delicious meal to have.”

Peterkin put on his hat and went back with Gobby to his house. Gobby picked twenty sprays of black-currant bush from his garden. He set them in twenty little jars of water in the kitchen. Then he began to make the spell.

“There’s some soot we can have out of the kitchen chimney,” he said, “and I’ve plenty of moonlit dew. Now for the six wallflower petals. Go and see if you can find some on that late wallflower at the bottom of the garden, Peterkin. And you might bring in a nice shiny black stone with you too.”

Peterkin went out and soon came back with some velvety wallflower petals and a large black stone. Very solemnly and carefully the two made the magic mixture, and stirred it with the peacock’s feather that Gobby always kept handy for the making of spells. He scraped the shine off the black stone and it fell into the black mixture and made it fizz like sherbert. It was very queer.



Very solemnly and carefully the two made the magic mixture.

“Quilla, coona, dalla, ho!” chanted Gobby, as he stirred and stirred. “Quilla, coona, dalla, ho!”

When the spell was finished, Gobby and Peterkin painted the black-currant sprays with it in great glee. “The currants will take a little time to grow,” said Gobby. “We will make the pastry for the pies whilst we are waiting.”

But, you know, that spell wasn’t meant to make black currants, but black beetles! Fancy that! So it wasn’t long before nice large shiny black beetles began to grow on the black-currant sprays. They didn’t stay there very long though—they ran down the stalks and hurried about the kitchen floor, looking for something to eat.

Suddenly Gobby saw them. Now Gobby, like a great many people, was afraid of black beetles, though they could do him no harm. So he gave a loud yell, and almost scared Peterkin out of his skin.

“Ooooh! Ow! Look! What are all these beetles in here for?”

Peterkin wasn’t afraid of beetles, and he looked at them in astonishment. “How queer!” he said. “I didn’t know you had beetles in your kitchen, Gobby.”

“I *haven’t*!” squealed Gobby. “Where are they coming from—oh, where are they coming from?”

Peterkin looked—and saw that they were streaming down the stalks of the black-currant sprays in dozens. He began to look scared.

“Gobby! Look! They are growing on those sprays! I don’t believe that was a spell for black currants after all—I believe it was for black beetles. Oh, goodness, whatever shall we do?”

Gobby stared in horror, and saw that what Peterkin had said was right. He had grown black beetles instead of black currants! How dreadful!

“Oh, take those sprays into the garden, quick, and burn them!” he begged Peterkin. But Peterkin wouldn’t touch them. He suddenly opened the door and ran home. He didn’t like being mixed up with strange spells that went wrong. You never knew what might happen next.

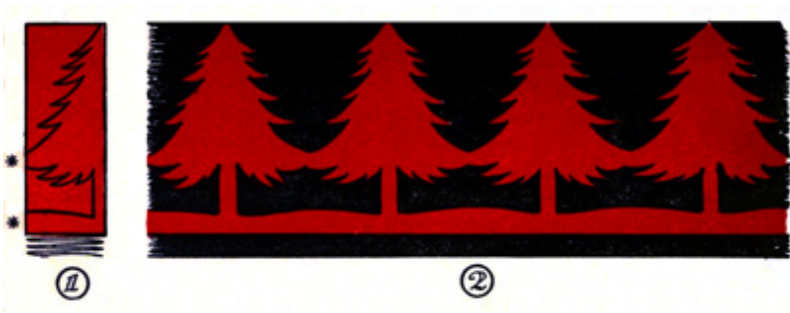
Gobby began to cry. He rushed out and went to Witch Heyho’s. He told her what had happened, and begged her to make a spell to get rid of all the black beetles.

At first Witch Heyho looked stern when she heard how Gobby had picked up her bit of magic paper and had read it and used it—but then, as she caught sight of the black beetles wandering out of Gobby’s kitchen door into the garden, she began to laugh.

“Oh dear, dear me!” she laughed; “what a shock for you to get black beetles instead of black currants! Never mind, Gobby, I won’t punish you—but I really don’t in the least know how to stop the spell. You’ll just have to put up with the beetles.”

And that was all the comfort poor Gobby got from the witch. But she told him that hedgehogs love a good meal of beetles, so he is going to buy one from the pet-shop, and keep him in the kitchen. Then perhaps he won’t have them eating the food out of the larder, and sleeping in his bed, and crawling into his shoes. Poor Gobby!

It’s always best to make sure of a spell before you use it—so do be careful of magic, won’t you, just in case you make a mistake like Gobby!



## A Frieze of Christmas Trees

**I**N the Christmas holidays we'll do all kinds of things. Shall we make a frieze of pine trees to go round our walls? It's so easy.

Get a long strip of paper, green if possible. If you can't get green, colour a strip of white paper with green paint or chalks.

Now fold your strip of paper over and over and over. Now look at Picture 1. That shows the paper folded over, with the outline of half a pine-tree drawn on the top fold. You can draw that easily. Do it exactly as it is done in the picture.

Now take your scissors and cut round the outline of the pine-tree, through *all* the folds of paper, but be very careful not to cut where I have marked the drawing with little stars. If you cut it there, you will spoil everything.

Now—have you cut out the half pine-tree? Good! Unfold your paper and see what you have—a lovely frieze of pine-trees (Picture 2). If you paste them on to a strip of black or brown paper, they will make a beautiful Christmassy frieze.

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*Answer to Riddle-me-ree, page 113.*

Holiday Book.







## Pinkity's Party Frock

**P**INKITY was a pixie who loved to go to parties. She went to the rabbits' parties, and to the mouse picnics. She loved going to the fairies' parties, and dear me, what a treat it was to go to a party at the palace.

Pinkity lived in Jenny's garden—but Jenny didn't know! Pinkity had a tiny house under the old lilac bush. All the mice knew it well and so did the two rabbits who lived at the end of the garden. One of the hens knew it too, for she had gone under the bush to lay an egg. But Jenny didn't know, though she had played round the bush a dozen times a day!

Jenny played with her doll Rosebud. She loved her very much, for Rosebud was a pretty, cuddlesome doll, whose eyes shut to go to sleep, and who could say "Ma-ma" in a very baby-like voice. Rosebud had two lots of dresses—a pink silk one with a white sash, and a blue cotton one for mornings.

Pinkity often used to watch Jenny playing with Rosebud. One day, as Pinkity was peeping through the leaves at Jenny, the postman came with a letter for the pixie. The postman was a little mouse. Pinkity took the letter in excitement.

"I hope it's a party invitation!" she cried. And it was! It was from the Fairy Goldywings, and the party was to be the next day, Monday, a picnic party on Breezy Hill.

"Oh, what fun!" cried Pinkity. "I shall make myself a dress and hat of pink rose-petals. I *shall* look fine!"

That night she went to collect the pink rose-petals from Jenny's garden. She came across old Shellyback, Jenny's tortoise, lying asleep in the grass. Pinkity laughed.

"I shall use you for a stool to sit on!" she said. So she sat down on the tortoise's back, and began to make her pink frock and hat. First she made the hat and fitted it on her head. Really, it looked very pretty, all made of silky petals. Then she began to make the frock.

She worked till dawn, and then she had to go and fetch some more pink thread from her little house. So she dropped the little frock lightly on to the ground by the tortoise and ran off.

When she came back, whatever do you think had happened? Why, the old tortoise had awakened, and put his head out of his shell. He had seen the rose-petal frock—and had begun to eat it up!

You see, rose-petals were a great treat to him. He loved a feast of them and didn't often get them. So when he saw the rose-petal frock, he began to gobble it up in delight!

Well, poor Pinkity sat down and cried and cried when she saw what was happening! "You horrid unkind thing!" she sobbed. "Here I've spent all night long making my new frock—and you eat it in about two minutes!"

"Sorry!" said Shellyback. "I didn't know it was a frock. I thought it was just rose-petals and I'm very fond of them."

"It's Monday morning now and there won't be time to make myself a frock again," sobbed Pinkity. "I shan't be able to go to the picnic this afternoon!"

"I'm very sorry," said Shellyback again. He did wish he could do something!

Pinkity slipped back to her house under the bush, still crying. Shellyback pulled at the grass and waited for Jenny to come out to play.

When she came out she looked very important. It was Monday—and she was going to have a washing-day just like Mother! She had washed Rosebud's pink silk frock, and her white petticoat and vest, and had washed her pram-cover and pillow-case too. Now Mother had put her up a little clothes line in the garden to hang the things on to dry!

The tortoise watched Jenny pegging up all the clothes. He wished he could tell her about Pinkity, but he had only a hiss for a voice and Jenny wouldn't understand.



The tortoise watched Jenny pegging up all the clothes.

Jenny went indoors then to get her hat and coat for a walk. Shellyback watched the clothes flying on the line and went on eating.

The wind blew hard. It blew the little clothes on the little line and it blew Mother's big clothes on the big line. It blew so hard that it blew the pink silk frock off the line altogether, and it flew off and wrapped itself round the tortoise's head!

He *was* surprised! He put his head into his shell at once. Then he poked it out again to see what it was that had dropped on him.

It was Rosebud's best pink silk frock—and the tortoise stared at it in excitement. Just the thing for Pinkity to wear at the picnic! If only it would fit her!

Shellyback picked the frock up in his mouth and crawled under the lilac bush with it. Pinkity was there, still crying. How she stared when she saw the tortoise bringing the pink silk frock!

"Oh! Oh! Where did you get it from?" she cried. "What a beautiful dress—and I believe it will just fit me—and will match my new rose-petal bonnet beautifully." She slipped the frock over her head and tied the white sash round. How sweet she looked!

"Oh, thank you!" she said to Shellyback, kissing his little blunt nose. "I'll wear it to the picnic!"



“Oh, thank you,” she said to Shellyback.

She ironed it out, and then put it on for the picnic with her pretty pink bonnet. Off she went, as happy as could be—and how every one admired her in her pretty silk frock!

Poor Jenny *was* upset when she came in from her walk and found the pink silk frock had been blown off the line. She hunted and hunted for it—but, of course, she couldn’t find it! Then it was *her* turn to weep!

The tortoise heard her crying and soon knew why. How uncomfortable he felt! First he had eaten Pinkity’s rose-petal frock and made *her* cry—and now he had taken away Jenny’s doll’s frock and made *her* cry. He went to the lilac bush and waited for Pinkity to

come home.

When she came he told her how upset Jenny was. “Oh dear!” said Pinkity, “what a shame! Well, I’ll soon wash and iron this frock, Shellyback, and then I’ll give it back to Jenny for Rosebud. And I’ll give her my rose-petal bonnet too. It should fit the doll nicely.”

So that evening Pinkity washed and ironed the pink frock, and then packed it up in a little box, with the pink bonnet too. She flew up to the nursery window, slipped in at the top, and left the box on the table.

When Jenny found it and opened it the next morning, she could hardly believe her eyes! “Oh, look!” she said, “here’s my doll’s frock back—and a lovely rose-petal bonnet too! It will just fit Rosebud.”

So it did, and she wears it every time she goes out. Jenny would so love to know who made it. Shellyback has told her heaps of times, but she doesn’t understand his hisses. I wish *I* could tell her, don’t you?

# Shadows on the Wall

**W**HEN people make shadows of ducks or rabbits or faces on the wall, we all think they are very clever indeed.



Well, let's make some ourselves! All you want is a wall for the shadows, a bright light behind your hands—and your hands themselves. Now, are we ready? Then let's make a duck with just one hand.



Isn't it easy? Just touch your thumb with the tip of your bent first finger, bend down the middle finger out of the way, and let the other two fingers stand up, as in the picture. Hey presto, there's a duck! Its beak is open, it is quacking. (But it is really you who are quacking.)



Now a rabbit. Two hands for this, please, and put them exactly as I have drawn for you in the picture. That's right—and here's the shadow rabbit, ears and all. Good, isn't he?

Now we'll have a butterfly with fluttering wings. Can you make it? Of course you can!

And now a funny face, with a pointed nose! Do you see how to put your hands? You do—and there's the shadow-face on the wall, nose and all!

You'll have to practise a bit before you can do the shadows really well. It's fun, isn't it?



ONCE upon a time, not so very long ago, a crowd of little brownies had to leave their home hurriedly.

They lived in Bluebell Wood, and one day it was sold to a builder. Alas for the brownies and the rabbits, the birds and the little mice—they all had to leave when the trees were chopped down, and the wood made ready for houses to be built all over it!

The birds flew to another wood. The rabbits fled to the hillside a mile away. The little mice held a meeting, and decided to hide somewhere till the houses were built, and then become house-mice and live on food in the larders of the houses.

The brownies, too, held a meeting. They were very tiny folk, these brownies, so small that you could easily hold six in your hand together. They were small enough to use a violet leaf for an umbrella, so you can guess how tiny they were.

“We will go to our cousins, who live in the Wishing Wood,” said the chief brownie, Chippy. “I know the way quite well. You go through the wood—down the lane—across the river—and up the hill. On the other side is the Wishing Wood. It is a big place and there will be plenty of room for us to live there with our cousins.”

So one night they set off. They ran through their own spoilt wood. They went down the lane, which seemed simply enormous to them. Then they came to the river.

But here they had to stop in dismay. They hadn't thought at all how they were to cross it! Now what were they to do?

"We haven't wings, so we can't fly," said Chippy.

"And there are no boats about," said Tiggy.

"Not even a leaf or two we could use as a raft," said Snippy.

"What shall we do?" said every one together. "We *must* get across tonight!"

A rabbit popped his head out of a nearby hole. "What's the matter?" he said.

"Oh, can you help us?" asked the brownies, and they told the rabbit their trouble.

"No, *I* can't help you," said the rabbit, shaking his whiskery head. "But I know a very, very kind little boy called Billy, who lives in that house over there. He is very clever and *he* might help you. He once got me out of a trap. Go and knock at his window. He'll wake and do his best for you."

It was moonlight and the brownies could see the window that the rabbit pointed to. It had bars across, for it was a nursery window. They thanked the rabbit and ran to the garden hedge, crept through it and ran to the house. They climbed up the thick ivy, and stood on Billy's window-ill. By the moonlight that shone into the room they could quite well see Billy, fast asleep in his small bed.

Chippy tapped at the window. Billy stirred. Chippy tapped again. Billy sat up, wide awake. When he saw the brownies at the window he was too astonished to speak. Then he jumped out of bed and ran to let them in.

"Oh!" he said, "you dear little tiny creatures! I've always longed to see the little folk—and now I really have. I do hope I'm awake and not dreaming!"

"Oh, you're awake all right," said Chippy. "Listen, Billy! A rabbit told us you were clever and kind. Do you think you could help us?"

"I can try," said Billy, at once. "What do you want me to do?"

"Well," said Chippy, "we have to leave our home and we want to get to Wishing Wood, which is across the river and over the hill. We haven't wings to fly over the river, and we haven't boats. Could you tell us how to get across, please, Billy?"

Billy thought hard for a moment. “Let me see,” he said. “It’s no use lending you my ship—it’s far too big. And I’ve lost the oars of my little boat. And paper boats would soak with water and sink half-way across. Oh! I know! I know! I’ve thought of just the right thing for you!”

“What? What?” cried the brownies excitedly.

“I’ll make you walnut-shell boats!” said Billy. “They’ll be just the right size for you. One of you will go nicely into each. They float beautifully—and I can make you tiny sails so that the wind will blow you across!”



As soon as the brownies saw how the boats were made, they began to help.

Billy ran downstairs. He had counted the brownies and there were eleven of them. He took six walnuts from the dish of nuts on the dining-room sideboard.

He ran upstairs again. He carefully slit each walnut into its two half-shells and took out the nut. He and the brownies chewed the nuts between them as Billy worked.

“Now, there you are!” said Billy, when he had the six shells empty, standing neatly in their halves. “Twelve little boats! Good! Now I’ll make the masts and the sails.”



He got out a box in which he kept all sorts of odds and ends. In it were a lot of dead matches. Billy was not allowed to touch proper matches, only ones that had already been struck, but he had quite a lot of these.

He took a dead match and made holes in a small piece of white paper so that he could slip the bit of paper on the match for a sail! The match was the mast, you see. When he had got the sail nicely fixed, he looked for his tube of seccotine.

“What’s that?” asked the brownies in surprise, as they saw Billy squeezing a tiny, sticky sort of worm out of the tube on to the end of the match.

“It’s seccotine—sticky stuff that sticks things together,” said Billy. “This drop of seccotine will stick the end of the match to the bottom of the walnut shell, you see, brownies—and then you will have a nice straight mast, with a dear little sail to catch the wind!”

The brownies were simply amazed to see Billy making them the dear little walnut-shell boats. Billy was so quick and so clever!

He stuck the match into the bottom of a shell. He arranged the bit of paper for a sail. The boat was ready!

“One boat done,” he said. “Now for the next!”

As soon as the brownies saw how the boats were made, they began to help. Tiggy got in a bit of a mess with the seccotine, which stuck to his hands, and then everything seemed to stick to *him*! Poor Tiggy!

It was not long before there were twelve boats finished. “You only need eleven,” said Billy, “but it would be quite a good idea to let the twelfth boat carry your bits of luggage. I can tie it on to one of the other boats.”

Soon Billy and the brownies were creeping quietly down the garden to the river. Billy carried all the boats on a tiny tray, for fear of spoiling them. When he came to the river, he set the tray down on the ground.

He launched one tiny boat, and it bobbed up and down beautifully on the ripples. The wind pulled at the tiny sail. Billy carefully put a brownie in the boat, and away it went, bobbing merrily over the river. Then another boat followed it—and another—and another—till the whole fleet was sailing away, looking perfectly lovely on the moonlit water.

The last but one had the twelfth luggage boat tied to the back of it. The two little boats bobbed safely away, the brownie in the first one waving good-bye. Billy stood and watched his fleet of walnut-shell boats sailing

across to the other side, the wind blowing hard on the little paper sails. Not one boat sank.

“I do feel proud and pleased,” said Billy to himself. “I’ve really done something to-night. I’ll go to Wishing Wood some day and see if I can find those brownies again!”

He hasn’t been yet, but I expect he will go soon. Would you like to make a fleet of walnut-shell boats like Billy? You can, easily. Sail them in the bath and they will look fine!



The whole fleet was sailing away.



ONCE upon a time there were nine little elves who lived in a small mushroom house on the edge of Cuckoo Wood. It was a fine house, and suited the elves well.

But one day a most annoying thing happened—a farmer came that way, saw the large mushroom, and picked it! He put it into his coat-pocket, with fairies and all in it—though he didn't know they were there, of course.

The elves had a terrible shock. They squeezed out of the door of the mushroom house, and found themselves in the dark pocket. They found their way to the opening of the pocket and peeped out. In a trice they had spread their cobwebby wings and had flown to the ground.

“My goodness!” said Goldie-wings, “that was a narrow escape!”

“We've lost our lovely house!” said Gossamer, beginning to cry.

“It will be cooked,” said Tippytoe.

“Never mind,” said Twinkles. “We'll find another.”

“But we haven't any furniture now,” said Tiptap.

They flew over the fields till they came to where a family of rabbits was nibbling the grass.

“Good morning!” said Goldie-wings. “I suppose you couldn't tell us of any good house to be sold? Ours has just been picked by a farmer, and will be cooked. So we want another.”

“No,” said the father-rabbit, thinking so hard that his ears went crooked. “No—I don’t know of any.”

“I do, though!” said one of the little rabbits. “You know our cousin, who lives in the hutch in the garden over there, don’t you? Well, he told me about a beautiful little house, with windows and doors and furniture and everything, in the children’s nursery there. Why don’t the fairies see if that is for sale?”

“That’s a good idea,” said Gossamer. “But wait a minute! It would never do for the children or any one to see us. Why, we might be caught and put in a cage or something!”

“Oh, you needn’t be afraid of that,” said the father-rabbit at once. “The nursery belongs to Jonathan and Lucy, two children who don’t believe in fairies. So you’ll be quite safe, because, as you know perfectly well, people who don’t believe in fairies can’t see them even if they are under their noses.”

“Oh, that’s good,” said Tiptap. “Come along you others—we’ll go and find this lovely house.”

The nine elves all trooped off, and soon came to the house. They knew which was the nursery window because it had bars across. Up they flew, and stood on the window-sill to peep in. Nobody was in the nursery at all.

The window was open at the bottom. The elves slipped in and flew down to the nursery floor. They looked round. Where was this wonderful house that the rabbits had told them about?

“There it is! Over there in the corner!” squealed Goldie-wings in delight. So it was—a beautiful dolls’ house with a blue front door, a tiny brass knocker, a letter-box, nice casement windows, and blue curtains! Marvellous!

The nine elves ran up to it, squeaking with joy.

“I wonder if any one lives here,” said Twinkles, and she knocked at the door. The elves heard footsteps coming and the door opened. A little doll, not much bigger than themselves, looked at them in astonishment.

“Oh,” said Tiptap, “we thought perhaps this house was empty.”

“No, I live here,” said the small doll, who was dressed like a little girl. “But it’s terribly lonely living here all by myself. I *was* surprised to hear some one knocking at my door.”



“Oh, we thought the house was empty.”

“We really came to see if the house was for sale,” said Goldie-wings. “Our house was picked today—it was a large mushroom, you see—so we are looking for another.”

“This house isn’t for sale,” said the tiny doll. “It belongs to Jonathan and Lucy, two children. But do come in. I’d love you to live with me, if only you think there is enough room.”

All the elves went in at the little door. They shouted with joy to see the beautiful rooms and dainty furniture everywhere. There were three bedrooms, a drawing-room with a piano, a dining-room, and a fine kitchen with a little stove.

“It’s perfect—it’s perfect!” cried the elves. “There are quite enough beds for us, for there are two beds in each room—that’s six. We can get two in a bed easily, so there are more than enough beds, counting one for you too, little doll.”

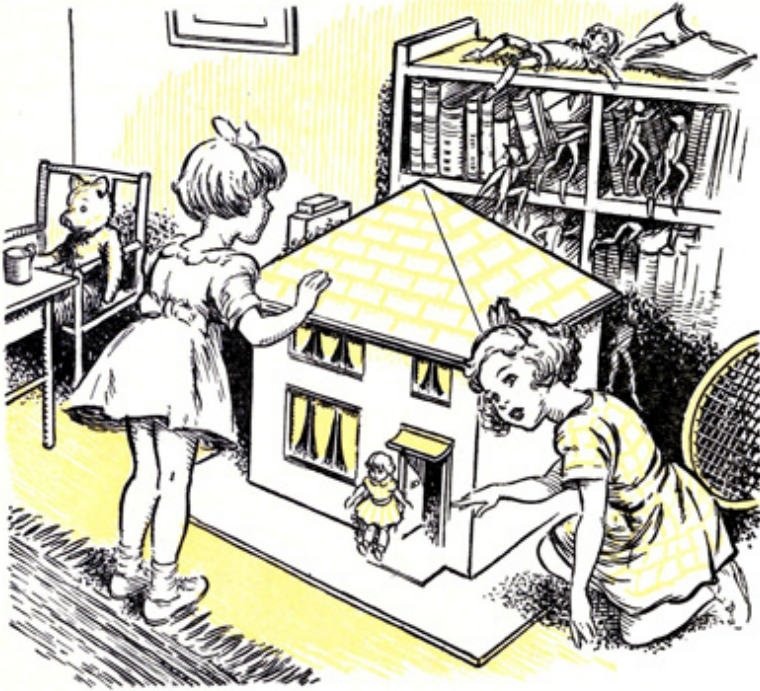
“My name is Belinda,” said the doll. “Do come and live here. Think of the fun we can have together—the cookings on the stove—the games of snap and snakes and ladders in the evening when the children are in bed—the fun we’ll have cleaning the house together—the parties we’ll give to all the toys!”

“We’ll come!” said the elves, and they solemnly shook hands with Belinda, whose eyes were shining with joy.

“You needn’t be afraid of being seen,” said Belinda, “because, although there are two children here, they don’t believe in fairies. Isn’t that lucky! They can’t see you if they don’t believe in you, as you know.”

Well, it didn’t take long for the nine elves to settle down in the dolls’ house with Belinda. The fun they had choosing and making their little beds! They opened every drawer in the chests and chose which one each of them would have. They tried cooking toffee on the tiny kitchen stove, and it smelt

so good that the golliwog, the teddy-bear, and the clockwork mouse all came knocking at the front door to see if they might have a taste.



They slipped out of the back door and popped into the bookcase.

Belinda was very happy. She had been so lonely before, but now she had company all day and all night. The elves were always about, going in and out, knocking at the front door, cooking, making beds, cleaning, having a party, or playing tricks on one another.

At first Belinda had been half afraid the two children *would* see the elves, when they had come into the nursery to play. Belinda had sat down stiffly in her chair as soon as Jonathan had come in, and when Lucy opened the door of the dolls' house and looked in, she had seen Belinda sitting still just as usual.

But she didn't see the nine elves busy about the house. She didn't see Goldie-wings scrubbing the kitchen floor. She didn't see Gossamer playing the piano in the little drawing-room. She didn't see Twinkles and Tiptap having a game of hide-and-seek in the bedrooms.

Ah, but Lucy was astonished at *some* things she saw! She couldn't think who had been polishing the stove till it shone. She couldn't think who had

washed the curtains at the windows. She couldn't think who had set the little clock going on the wall. It was all most mysterious.

And then one day some one came to tea. It was a friend of Lucy's, called Mirabel. She believed in fairies—and as soon as Lucy opened the front of the dolls' house, Mirabel saw the elves!

“Oh!” she cried, “fairies! You've got fairies living in your dolls' house with Belinda! Look!”

But even as Lucy tried to see them, they hid themselves away, and soon not even Mirabel could see them either. They had slipped out of the back door and had popped into the bookshelf behind, hiding themselves among the books.

“You are a story-teller, Mirabel!” said Lucy. “I'll believe there are fairies there if you catch one for me and show me one. I don't believe in fairies at all.”

“Well, it's no good my catching you one then, for you wouldn't see it if I did,” said Mirabel, and she didn't say a single word more, though she couldn't help wondering where the nine little elves had gone.

They are all living in the dolls' house still, and Belinda doesn't know what she would do without them now. As for Jonathan and Lucy, they haven't seen one of them and they never will; but if you happen to go and play with Lucy, open her dolls' house and peep inside. You *will* be surprised to see those tiny, bright-eyed elves!

# SUMMER HOLIDAYS



SUMMER holidays at last!  
Now's the time for fun,  
Happy days are slipping past  
In the wind and sun.

Splashing in the curling waves,  
Racing on the sand,  
Playing smugglers in the caves,  
Holidays are grand!  
Building castles, digging moats,  
Prawning in the pool,  
Sailing little ships and boats,  
No such thing as school!  
Shouting, laughing, here we go,  
Splashing gaily past,  
It's summer holidays you know,  
Yes, they've come at last!





# The Tale of Chuckle and Pip

CHUCKLE and Pip were two small pixies with pointed ears, twinkling eyes, and merry voices. They made sunshades, umbrellas, and parachutes, and were really very clever.

They had a shop just outside the King's palace walls, and they made the prettiest frilly sunshades, the gayest umbrellas, and the strongest parachutes that ever were seen. The tiny money-spiders bought the parachutes and used them when they wanted to leave their homes and go somewhere else. They swung the parachute into the air, caught hold of it, and away they floated on the wind.

The fairies bought the sunshades and the umbrellas—but trade was very bad at the moment. The sun had not really been strong enough for sunshades, the spiders were quite content to stay at home, and there had been no rain for weeks.

“We haven't sold a single umbrella, sunshade or parachute for ages,” said Chuckle gloomily.

“I know!” said Pip. “I really don't know what we are going to do about it. If only the sun would shine all day long we could sell our stock of sunshades—or if only it would rain we could sell our umbrellas!”

“There's a party at the palace to-morrow,” said Chuckle. “That means that every one will pass our shop. Just suppose it poured with rain; Pip, when every one was going by in their best! What a lot of umbrellas we should sell!”

Pip sat and thought. Yes—if only it would rain! If only they could *make* it rain! An idea came into his head—a very naughty one. He laughed.

“Chuckle, I've got a plan!” he said. “What about me climbing that big tree by the palace gate—with two or three watering-cans full of water!”

“Are you mad, Pip?” asked Chuckle, puzzled.

“No,” said Pip. “Don't you see the idea, Chuckle? As people go by in their best party-frocks I'll water them with my watering-can—and they'll think it's raining and go off in a great hurry to buy an umbrella from *you!*”

“Ooooooh! That *is* a fine idea!” said naughty Chuckle, and he laughed till he cried. “Can’t *I* be the one to sit in the tree and water people, Pip?”

“No,” said Pip firmly. “It’s *my* idea and I shall do the watering. We’ll put the cans of water up the tree to-night when no one is looking.”

“But how can we climb a tree with a can of water in our hand?” said Chuckle.

“We shan’t,” said Pip. “*I* shall climb up the tree, and let down a rope. You will tie the watering-can carefully to the rope and I will haul it up and put it safely on that big broad branch on the west side of the tree.”

“You *are* clever at ideas, Pip,” said Chuckle. “I’m longing for to-night!”

Well, that night the two naughty pixies carried out their plan. Pip climbed the tree and let down the rope. Chuckle tied a full watering-can on to it. Pip hauled it up and hid it safely. Then he let down the rope again. He hauled up two big watering-cans, one small one, and three hot-water cans as well, which he said he could use to fill the watering-cans with when they were empty. Naughty Pip!

They went to bed. The next day was cloudy with no sun. But the clouds were too high for rain. Pip chuckled when he thought of how he was going to make rainy weather for all the palace guests that afternoon!

Chuckle put out all his prettiest umbrellas. Pip climbed the tree at three o’clock and waited patiently for the first person to come along.

It was Dame Thump, in her very best blue silk dress with the red bows. Just as she walked beneath the tree Pip tipped up one of his watering-cans.

“Pitter-patter, pitter-patter!” The water splashed down on Dame Thump. What a state she was in!

“Oh, my best frock! Oh, will it be spoilt before I get to the palace! Now who would have thought it would rain like this! If only I had an umbrella!” she said. Then she remembered that Chuckle’s shop was just nearby, and she hurried to buy a blue umbrella to match her frock. Chuckle was delighted.

Pip laughed so much that he nearly fell out of the tree. He just managed to save himself in time to give Dame Thump a gentle splashing as she passed by with her new umbrella held over her head.

Then came Mr. and Mrs. Spink with all their four children. They were very smart indeed. Mr. Spink had on a yellow silk suit with hat and feather

to match. Mrs. Spink had on a frock as bright as the sun. All the children were dressed alike in red frocks and tunics.

Pip grinned. He tipped up his watering-can. First he watered Mr. Spink and his yellow hat. Then he watered Mrs. Spink and her glittering frock. Then he watered all the little Spinks, who cried out in dismay.

“Mother! Father! It’s raining on our new dresses! Didn’t you bring an umbrella?”

“No,” said Mr. Spink, looking up at the sky. “Dear, dear! Well, I think it’s stopping now. Let’s stand under this tree, dears, and we shall keep dry.” But it was no place to stand if they wanted to keep dry! Pip nearly burst himself with trying not to laugh, and he at once emptied a whole canful over the Spink family!

“Oh, the rain is simply pouring down!” said poor Mrs. Spink. “It’s even soaking through the tree. Look! There is an umbrella shop, Mr. Spink. We must certainly buy umbrellas, or we shall be soaked through before we arrive, and we don’t want the dear King to think we are a family of drowned rats!”

They hurried to Chuckle’s shop. They bought one big umbrella to share between Mr. and Mrs. Spink, and four tiny umbrellas, one for each child. Then they set off happily to the palace, holding them over their heads.

Pip laughed loudly, and Chuckle poked his head out of the shop-door and laughed too. Then he caught sight of two or three more people coming along. “Sh!” he said. “Here are Fairy Trip, Pixie Tiptoe, and Brownie Longbeard.”

Well, as soon as they passed under Pip’s tree, Trip, Tiptoe, and Longbeard got a good watering. How disgusted they were!

“Raining!” said Longbeard, shaking the drops out of his beautiful silvery beard. “What bad luck!”

“And I left my umbrella at home!” said Fairy Trip.

“I shall be soaked!” said Tiptoe, who had on a very thin dress of spider’s thread.

“What shall we do?” said Longbeard. Pip helped them to think by watering them again. They caught sight of Chuckle’s shop. “Look! He sells umbrellas!” they cried. “Let’s get some! We’ll be all right then!”

Off they went and bought three expensive umbrellas. Then they set off to the palace once more, rather puzzled because the rain seemed to have completely stopped!

Pip was having a glorious time. He could hardly sit still in his hiding-place, he was so excited. To think that his idea was acting so well!

Other guests came along and Pip watered them all. As every one was in best clothes they all rushed to get umbrellas. Soon Chuckle hadn't a single umbrella left and he began to sell his sunshades as umbrellas. He was doing very well indeed—though his customers were rather puzzled by his giggles! But as his name was Chuckle, they thought he couldn't help giggling a bit.

Now when every one arrived at the palace, complete with umbrellas, complaining of the rain, the King was most astonished.

“Raining!” he said. “Impossible!”

“Not at all impossible, Your Majesty!” said Longbeard. “Look at my beard. It's soaked!”

“But I made a special bit of magic to-day to keep the rain off,” said the King. “It can't possibly rain to-day.”

“Well, Your Majesty, it *did*,” said Fairy Trip. “Just as we came to the gate it poured down!”

“Yes—by that big tree,” said Mr. Spink. “We had to go and buy umbrellas.”

“It was raining as *we* passed under that tree too,” said some one else.

“And it started just as *I* got there too,” said Dame Thump. “But it didn't seem to be raining anywhere else.”

The King looked more and more surprised. “Well,” he said, “this is astonishing. First of all, I say that it could *not* rain to-day, because I made a spell against rain. And then you say that it only rained under that tree—when, as every one knows, it rains all around if it rains at all, not just in one small place! This is puzzling! I must inquire into it!”

The King sent the Lord High Chamberlain down to see into the matter. The Chamberlain, who was a very rich and grand man, most beautifully dressed in cloth of gold, stepped down the palace drive to the gate. Then he walked haughtily to the big tree that stood by the gate.

Pip was still there. He saw the Lord High Chamberlain and grinned. My goodness, if only he could make *him* buy an umbrella or a sunshade—he

would buy the finest one in the whole shop!

He tipped up a watering-can—pitter-patter, down went the water! The Chamberlain was most astonished and annoyed. Could it be raining after all? He looked up at the tree.

And he saw Pip's naughty, cheeky face peeping there! He knew at once what had been happening. He commanded the frightened pixie to come down and he fetched Chuckle too. Holding them by their big pointed ears he took them back to the palace with him.

“These pixies watered every one who passed by, so that they would go and buy umbrellas,” said the Lord High Chamberlain in an awful voice.

“Is that so?” said the King, also in a very stern voice. “Then I make a law in future that nobody in the whole of Fairyland shall buy anything from these two bad pixies. You may go, pixies.”

They went, crying bitterly. They knew that they would have hard work to make a living now, for nobody would buy from them. Poor Pip and Chuckle!

But they soon found a job with the dandelions, who were very good to them. Do you know what they do? Guess! Yes—they make those beautiful little parachutes that are fitted to every dandelion-seed! Find a dandelion-clock and take the seeds into your hand. You will see that you have dozens of little parachutes there, made of the finest hair. Blow them into the air and see how well they fly!

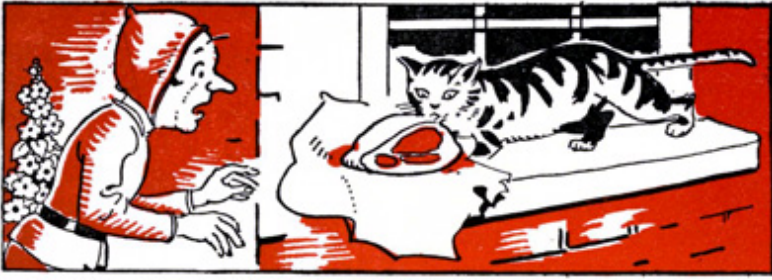
# WHAT IS THE ANSWER?



1. I am a small grain growing in a field; add a head to me and I am an animal that can easily jump up and down a mountain-side; now change my tail and you can kick as many of me as you like; now change my head, and my last will love to eat my first!
2. Can you find the hidden trees in these sentences?
  - a. Look, there's a bee, Christine. Be careful!
  - b. I found a wasp in every apple.
  - c. That old house has a most beautiful archway.
  - d. The stray ewes came back to-day.
  - e. I wish we could have a shower soon, the garden is dry.
  - f. When the balloon goes pop, Larry jumps like anything!
  - g. We haven't a map; let's buy one before we lose our way.
3. *An Old Riddle.* What goes up when the rain comes down?  
(Everyone over five years of age must answer *that* one!)
4. *Another Easy One.* Why is a king like a book?
5. I have an empty stocking, and yet there is something in it. What is it?

Answers on page 204





## Big-Hands and Nobbly

ONCE upon a time Nobbly the Goblin quarrelled with Big-Hands the Gnome. They lived next door to one another and had always been good friends till this quarrel.

It was a very silly quarrel, really. It happened that Tip-tap the butcher had called at Nobbly's with his meat, and Nobbly was out. So the butcher had left it on the window-sill—and when Nobbly came home he saw Big-Hands' cat licking the meat!

He rushed in to Big-Hands' Cottage in a furious rage.

“That cat of yours has licked my meat!” he cried. “Smack it, Big-Hands, smack it!”

“Certainly not,” said Big-Hands, who was very fond of his cat. “How can you expect a cat not to lick meat if it is left on a window-sill. You should go and scold the butcher for doing such a foolish thing. Why, any other cat but mine would have stolen the meat and taken it away to eat it! I think my cat should be praised, not punished for only just licking the meat. It must very badly have wanted to steal it altogether!”

Just at that moment the cat came in, licking its lips. Nobbly flew at it, and gave it a hard smack, so that it mewed in dismay and fled to a corner.

Big-Hands was very angry. He rushed at Nobbly and shook him—but Nobbly was a bony person to shake. He had great bony feet and long skinny arms and a nobbly head. Big-Hands soon let him go—and then Nobbly fled to his cottage crying “I'll pay you out for this, so I will!”

And he did too. He really was very naughty indeed. He threw all his rubbish over the wall into Big-Hands' garden. He lighted his bonfire when the wind was blowing towards Big-Hands' cottage, so the poor gnome had his kitchen filled with smoke all day long. And he put his gramophone on very loudly indeed when he knew that Big-Hands was having his afternoon nap!

This made the gnome very angry. He ran up the path to Nobbly's front-door and banged on the knocker. Nobbly wouldn't open the door, so Big-Hands stood on the doorstep and yelled at him.

"I'm going to punish you for all these unkind things! Yes, you look out, Nobbly! You'll be sorry for yourself, you will! I'll just show you what I can do! Grrrrrr!"

Big-Hands sounded so very fierce that Nobbly really felt rather frightened. Big-Hands did not usually lose his temper, for he was a good-natured fellow, but when he did people knew about it!

Nobbly looked at Big-Hands going down the path, from behind the curtain. He saw him doubling up his big hands into fists, and shaking them, muttering angrily all the time.

"Oooh!" thought Nobbly. "I'd better be careful. There's really no knowing what he might do!"

So that day Nobbly didn't throw any more rubbish over the wall, and didn't set his gramophone going. He went to bed early that night, read a book for a little while and then fell fast asleep.

When he woke up, the moon was shining outside his window. And, to Nobbly's great fright and horror, he suddenly saw what looked like two enormous hands sticking up at the end of his bed, looking for all the world as if they belonged to someone crouching behind the foot of the bed, ready to pounce out!

Nobbly turned pale and shivered so that the bed shook very much indeed. His hair stood up on end.

"It's Big-Hands the Gnome come to scare me!" he groaned to himself. "Oh my, oh my, look at those awful great hands sticking up there, ready to come at me if I so much as speak a word."

Now, Nobbly had made a very great mistake. What he thought were hands were not hands at all—but simply his own great bony feet sticking up



out of the bed-clothes! Nobbly was so bony that the clothes found it difficult to keep on him, and were for ever slipping off!



Nobbly lay and looked at his feet.

Nobbly lay and looked at his feet, thinking all the time that they were hands, and wondering what in the world he could do to frighten away Big-Hands, whom he thought was hiding at the end of the bed. Then suddenly the moon went behind a cloud and the room became dark. Nobbly decided to creep out of bed and light his candle.

He crept out, and went to the table by the wall where his candle stood. He lighted it and then held it up to see Big-Hands—but, of course, there was no one at the end of the bed at all! No—not a sign of Big-Hands the gnome! It was most puzzling!

“He’s gone!” said Nobbly, pleased. “Oh, what a fright he gave me, the horrid creature! What shall I do if he comes again to-morrow night? I shan’t dare to go to bed! I shall go and complain to Mister Stick, the policeman.”

So, the next morning Nobbly went to the cottage where Mister Stick the policeman lived. He was just finishing his morning cup of cocoa, and he listened in surprise when Nobbly told him what he had seen the night before.

“Yes, I tell you,” said Nobbly, all excited. “That nasty, unkind gnome came into my room in the middle of the night, hid himself at the end of my bed, and then, when I woke up, I saw his big hands sticking up ready to come at me! Think of that, now! Don’t you think you ought to go and take Big-Hands to prison?”



Nobbly went to the cottage where the policeman lived.

“Well, no, I don’t,” said Mister Stick. “You see, you might have made a mistake, Nobbly. After all, you didn’t see Big-Hands’ face, did you? It might have been anyone else.”

“Pooh!” said Nobbly, scornfully. “It couldn’t have been anyone else! No one else has such enormous hands as Big-Hands. I *know* they must have been his hands.”

“Well, wait and see if he comes again,” said Mister Stick. “I’ll wait outside to-night, and if you give a call I’ll come in and take Mister Big-Hands off to prison, if it really *is* him.”

“But suppose he escapes before you come?” said Nobbly. “How shall I get hold of him? He is such a big fellow.”

“Well,” said Mister Stick, thinking hard, “you might take a piece of rope and make a loop in it, Nobbly. Then, if Big-Hands does come again and scares you by sticking up his great hands at the end of the bed, you just throw the loop of rope round them, draw it tight—and you’ll have got him prisoner all ready for me to march off!”

“Ooh, that’s a *good* idea!” said Nobbly, very pleased. He went home and got a piece of rope. He carefully made a loop in it and put it beside his bed, ready for the night. When his bed time came he undressed, got into bed, and put the loop of rope under his pillow. Aha, Mister Big-Hands, just wait!

He fell asleep—and woke again with a jump just after midnight. And dear me, bless us all, there were his great bony feet sticking up again in the moonlight, looking Like enormous hands!

“Oh, it’s you, Big-Hands, again, is it!” cried Nobbly, and he fished under the pillow for his loop of rope. In a trice he had it out and threw it neatly over what he thought were the hands at the foot of the bed—but of course they were his own feet! He pulled the loop tight, and then gave a scream.

“Oh, oh, let go my feet, Big-Hands! Oh you wicked gnome, you’ve got my feet!”

As the rope pulled tightly and bound his feet together poor Nobbly rolled about in the bed. He thought he had got hold of Big-Hands with the rope, so he pulled and pulled—and the more he pulled the more tightly the rope cut into his nobbly feet!

“Ow! Ow! Help! Help!” yelled the goblin, and rolled off the bed with a bump. He tried to get up, but of course his feet were tied together, and he fell over each time he tried. He was really dreadfully frightened.

“Mister Stick, Mister Stick, come and help me!” he called. “Big-Hands has got me by the feet and won’t let go!”

Now Mister Stick had been hiding in the garden, as he promised—but he had fallen asleep. He woke up in a hurry when he heard such a yelling and shouting going on. He jumped up—and at the same moment Big-Hands who had been awakened by the dreadful yells and shouts from Nobbly, rushed out of his cottage.

“What’s the matter, what’s the matter?” called Big-Hands, running up the path and bumping into Mister Stick the policeman, who was most surprised to see him for he quite thought he must be inside Nobbly’s cottage, frightening him!

The two of them opened the door and ran to the stairs. Nobbly was still shouting and yelling, rolling about on the floor with his feet tied tightly together by the loop of rope.

“Come on, quick, someone’s hurting poor Nobbly!” cried Big-Hands, all his quarrel with the goblin quite forgotten. Up the stairs they rushed, both of

them, and flung open the bedroom door. It was quite dark in the bedroom, and Mister Stick shone his lantern round.

Nobbly was panting on the floor, pulling with all his might at his rope! Mister Stick set his lantern down on a table and lifted Nobbly to his feet.

“Someone’s tied your feet together,” said Big-Hands in astonishment, as he saw the loop of rope tightly round the goblin’s bony feet. “Whoever did that?”

“Why, wasn’t it *you*?” said Nobbly in amazement, staring at Big-Hands.

“No, indeed it wasn’t,” answered Big-Hands at once. “I wouldn’t do such a horrid thing! You ought to know that. Besides, Mister Stick the policeman will tell you I came rushing up the stairs with him—I wasn’t in your bedroom at all. I do wonder who it was. Let’s hunt round a bit and see if we can see any robber, shall we, Mister Stick?”

They untied poor Nobbly’s feet and then, taking the lantern, they all hunted round the cottage—but, of course there was no one there at all! They couldn’t understand it.

“I’m so frightened!” wept Nobbly. “I can’t make it out. Who is this person with great, enormous hands who keeps coming to frighten me? Oh, dear Big-Hands, do please stay with me for the rest of the night and sleep here so that I shan’t be alone. Then, if the person comes again, you will be able to scare him away for me. You are so brave.”

“Very well,” promised Big-Hands. So they said goodnight to Mister Stick, and off he went home. Big-Hands and Nobbly settled down to sleep in the bed—it was rather a tight fit for two people—and soon nothing was to be heard but gentle snores from Nobbly and enormously loud ones from Big-Hands.

Well, Big-Hands suddenly gave such a tremendous snore that Nobbly woke up with a jump—and goodness me, there were his feet again, sticking up in the moonlight just like big hands coming to get him.

“Ooh! Ow!” yelled Nobbly, in a fright. “Wake up, Big-Hands! Look! Look!”

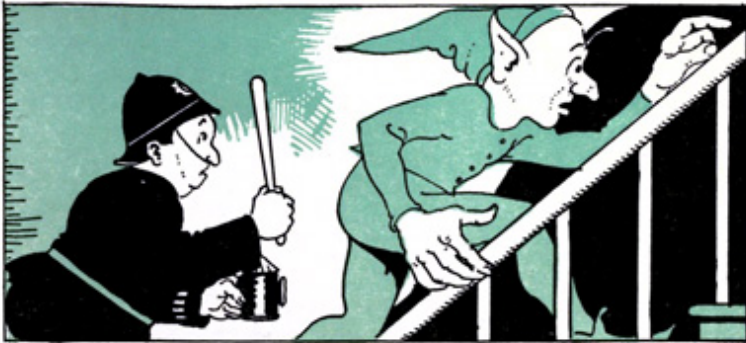
Big-Hands woke up with a jump and sat up in the moonlight. He saw at once what Nobbly was looking at—but he was wiser than the foolish goblin, and he knew that what Nobbly thought were hands, were really his own bony feet with the bed-clothes off! He began to laugh. How he laughed!

He rolled over and over in the bed, dragging all the clothes from Nobbly and making him shiver with cold.

“Ho ho ho, ha ha ha, he he he!” yelled Big-Hands, the tears pouring down his cheeks. “Oh, Nobbly, you’ll be the death of me, really you will! It’s your own silly big feet looking at you, not a robber’s hands at all! Oh my, oh my, I’ve such a stitch in my side! Whatever will you do next?”

Well, when Nobbly looked a little closer, and waggled his toes about to see if the hands really were his feet, he found that Big-Hands was right—and he went as red as a cooked beetroot! You should have seen him. He did feel so ashamed of himself. Whatever would Mister Stick say? And what would all the village say too, when it heard the tale of how Nobbly had been scared of his own feet—and had even tied them up in a loop of rope, and rolled about the floor! Oh dear! What a dreadful silly he was, to be sure.

“Oh, Nobbly, you’ll be the joke of the town to-morrow!” laughed Big-Hands, wiping the tears of laughter from his eyes.



Up the stairs they rushed, both of them.

“Big-Hands, don’t tell anyone,” said Nobbly, in a small voice. “Please be friends with me again—and don’t tell anybody about this. I do hate to be laughed at.”

“Well, you deserve to be,” said Big-Hands. “You have been very unkind lately, Nobbly—smacking my cat, and throwing rubbish into my garden, and letting your bonfire smoke come into my kitchen, and playing your gramophone when I am trying to have a nap. You don’t deserve any kindness from me. No—I think everyone must hear this funny story about you. It’s *such* a joke!”

“Oh please, Big-Hands, I know I’ve been unkind and horrid,” wept the goblin. “But I won’t be again. I do want to be friends with you. You were so kind to stay with me to-night. I will buy your cat a nice fresh fish from the fishman each day for a fortnight if you will forgive me, and promise not to tell anyone at all.”

“Well, that’s a kind thought of yours,” said Big-Hands, who was always pleased when anyone was good to his cat. “I’ll forgive you and be friends again, then, Nobbly. But you won’t mind if I have a good laugh now and again, will you, when I think about to-night? For really it was very, very funny!”

So now the two are great friends once more, and Big-Hands’ cat can’t understand her good luck when she is given a fish each day by Nobbly the goblin!

And, sometimes, when Nobbly is a bit silly and does foolish things, Big-Hands looks at him with a twinkle in his eye, and begins to laugh. “Do you remember when you caught your own feet instead of a robber?” he chuckles. Then Nobbly goes red, and stops being silly. He does so hate to be reminded of the night when he thought his feet were hands!



# Let's Make Some Lanterns for Xmas!

HOW can we make one? I'll tell you!

Get a piece of coloured paper, and make it 9 inches wide and 12 inches long by measuring it and then cutting it the right size.

Now fold it as I have shown you in Picture A. Done that? Now cut up from the folded edge in strips about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wide. Look at Picture B to see what I mean.

Now you have cut the paper. Straighten it out: Bend it round and paste the edges together, and lo and behold you have a pretty little coloured lantern, like the one shown in Picture C. You can make the handle by pasting a strip of paper to the top.

Now make one of another shape. Look at Picture D and fold the paper like that. Cut the strips as before. Do you see the little extra fold, which gives the second lantern (Picture E) its pretty middle bit?

You can easily make these little lanterns for Christmas decorations. Hang them on a string, and see how pretty they all look together!





# Joey's Lost Key

THE children were playing out in the fields. They had a ball, a doll's pram, and Joey, a little clockwork clown who danced round and round and clashed a little pair of cymbals when he was wound up.

The clockwork clown belonged to Robin. He was very proud of his dancing clown, and wound him up a hundred times a day to show the others how he danced.

Every one was excited that morning. It was Saturday, and a circus had come to the field beyond Farmer Lane's farm. The children were going to it that afternoon, and how they longed for the time to come!

"There is a wonderful chimpanzee!" said Katie.

"And a great big elephant," said Lucy.

"And a man that can walk the tight-rope!" said Bobby.

"And four dancing bears!" said Harry.

"But I'm sure they won't dance as well as my clockwork clown!" said Robin, winding him up again, and making him dance in the grass.

"You and your clockwork clown!" said Katie. "I wonder you don't wear that key out, winding him up so much!"

Robin put the key into his pocket. He was sure it wouldn't wear out. Keys never did. He watched his little clown dancing, and then he went to see an ant-hill that Harry had found. They watched the busy little ants for a long time, and then Bobby looked at his watch. He was very proud of it, for it always told the right time.

"Half-past two," he said. "It's time we all went home, and got ready for the circus. Come along!"

"I must wind up my clockwork clown to dance for the last time," said Robin, and he felt in his pocket for the key.

It wasn't there! He felt a hole in his pocket—and he knew that the key must have dropped out of it. Now the little clown wouldn't be able to dance any more!

Robin was only six, and he was dreadfully upset. He opened his mouth and howled. Lucy ran up to him, thinking that he had hurt himself.

“I’ve lost my clown’s key! I’ve lost his key!” wept Robin. “I won’t go home till I’ve found it.”

“But you must!” said Lucy. “Why, it’s almost time to set off for the circus, Robin—and you *must* wash your face and hands first, and let your mother brush your hair.”

“I won’t go to the circus!” wept Robin. “I’ll stay here all afternoon by myself and look for my clown’s key.”

“You’re silly, Robin,” said Harry. “Come on, every one. Leave Robin. He’ll come along soon enough when he finds we’re gone.”

So Harry, Bobby, and Katie ran off, but Lucy didn’t really like to leave poor Robin when he was so unhappy. She was a kind little girl.

“Don’t cry any more, Robin,” she said. “I’ll help you to look for your key. Hurry up and help me.”

So the two of them began to hunt in the grass, but, dear me, it seemed as if that key was nowhere to be found! Lucy began to be worried, for the time was slipping on, and she knew that she couldn’t go to the circus if she was much later.

“Robin, let’s go now,” she said. “Come along. We shall be too late for the circus in a minute.”

But Robin wouldn’t go. He stood there, clutching his clockwork clown in one hand and wiping his eyes with the other. He didn’t care about anything except finding his lost key.

“Oh, well!” said Lucy. “If you won’t come I’ll stay with you—but I do hope we find the key soon!”

In a little while the other children ran out of their houses down the lane, waved to Lucy, and went off to the circus. Tears came into the little girl’s eyes. Now she was too late to go! She went down on her hands and knees again and looked carefully for that tiresome key.

And what do you think she found? She found a four-leaved clover! Now, as you know, a four-leaved clover is supposed to be very lucky indeed, for it has magic in it! Lucy and the other children had often hunted for one, and had never found one—and now here was a fine one, with four green leaves, a really-and-truly four-leaved clover!

“Look, Robin!” said Lucy joyfully. “I’ve found a four-leaved clover! Now I shall have some luck!”

“It’s too late to be lucky,” said Robin. “We’ve missed the circus now—and haven’t found my key.”

“Why, here’s the key, under this dandelion!” cried Lucy. And so it was! “My four-leaved clover has brought us luck already!”

“But it’s too late for the circus,” said Robin again.

“Hurry, and we’ll see!” said Lucy. So they hurried. Robin went to his home and Lucy went to hers. And it *was* too late for Lucy; but do you know, when Robin told his father how kind Lucy had been to him, he jumped up and said:

“Well, that kind little girl *shan’t* miss the circus! I’ll get out the van and run both of you along to the circus straightaway. Then you’ll be in time.”

So he got out the van in which he took his fruit to the market, called for Lucy, popped her in with Robin and tore down the lane to the circus. He paid for Lucy’s ticket as well as Robin’s, and they were given two good seats. They sat down *just* as the circus began! Wasn’t that lucky?

It was a lovely circus, and when the clown came in to give away balloons, who do you suppose got the biggest? Yes, Lucy! And when the big chimpanzee went round shaking hands with the children, who do you suppose he gave a hug to? Yes, Lucy! Didn’t she feel proud!

“My four-leaved clover really is bringing me luck,” said the little girl happily. “I’m glad I stayed behind to help Robin.”

On the way home Lucy found a silver sixpence! Wasn’t that good luck! And when she got home, there was her Uncle Jim, her very favourite uncle, come to take her out to tea with him in his motor-car.

“Oh, Uncle Jim! This is all because of my four-leaved clover!” said Lucy happily. “Where are we going?”

“We’re going to the town to have tea and ice-creams,” said Uncle Jim. “And then we’re going to an old man I know who has a dear little puppy for sale, and I want to buy it for a nice little girl called Lucy.”

“Uncle!” squealed Lucy, who wanted a puppy more than anything else in the world. “Uncle! You dear kind uncle!”

Well, she had a lovely tea and two ice-creams, and then they went to fetch the puppy. It was a little black spaniel, with long, drooping ears, the

dearest little thing Lucy had ever seen.

“What will you call her?” asked Uncle Jim as they drove back in his car, with Lucy cuddling the puppy, feeling very sleepy and very happy.

Lucy had a name for her, of course. Can you guess what it was? It was Clover! Lucy thought it would be such a lucky name.

Didn't she have a lot of luck? Do you want some as well? Well, just hunt about for a four-leaved clover and maybe you'll have some too.



ONCE there was a humming top who was very proud indeed of humming and spinning. He spun himself round all day long till the other toys got quite giddy with watching him. He hummed all the time, too. “Zoouoooooooooom!” he sang. “Zoouoooooooooom!”

“Do stop,” said the baby doll. “I’m tired of hearing you.”

“Yes, lie down and have a rest,” said the wooden soldier. “You make me tired.”

“You are jealous of me because I can spin and hum and none of you can do the same!” sang the top, zooming even more loudly. “I shall run away from you. You are selfish, stupid toys! I shall go out into the big world and hum and spin all I like.”

“Go then,” said the wooden soldier. “You’ll be sorry. It isn’t often that toys have a beautiful nursery like this to live in, and a kind little girl like Katie to play with us.”

The top spun round quickly. “Zoouooooooooom!” it said. “There are better things than this! Good-bye!”

It spun itself out of the nursery—and down the stairs—and out of the back door—and down the garden path—and into the road! “Zoouoooooooooom!” it went.

It met a duck waddling along. The duck stared in surprise. “Zoouooooooooom!” said the top. “I’m a wonder, I am! See me spin! Hear me hum! Zoouooooooooom! Can you do that, duck?”

“Quack!” said the duck. “No, I’ve never seen any one like you before. I don’t like you.” The duck pecked at the top and it almost lost its balance and fell. It zoomed angrily and spun away down the lane. Soon it met a kitten chasing a piece of paper.

“Zoouooooooooom!” said the top. “I’m a wonder, I am! See me spin! Hear me hum! Zoouooooooooom! Can you do that?”

“Miaow!” said the kitten in alarm. “No, I can’t go round like that—it’s silly. And why should I hum if I can mew? Get off my piece of paper. I’m playing with it.”

The top spun round on the paper and wouldn’t get off. The kitten crouched and sprang. Her claws scratched the shining top and made marks on it. The top spun crooked and zoomed crossly. It spun away from the kitten and went on its way.



Then it met a big cow.

Then it met a big cow and spun between its feet.

“Zoouooooooooom!” said the top. “I’m a wonder, I am! See me spin! Hear me hum! Zoouoom! Can you do that?”

“Moo!” said the cow in surprise. “Of course not. What do you suppose the farmer would say if I began to spin round on one leg and make a noise like a young aeroplane? Get away from my feet. You’ll trip me up.”

The top wouldn’t get away. It went proudly spinning and zooming. The cow kicked it. What a shock for the top! It almost stopped spinning and very nearly fell over. But it just saved itself and then went on down the lane, still zooming at the top of its voice.

The next creature it met was a worm, and the top spun right up to it.

“Zoouoom!” said the top. “I’m a wonder, I am! See me spin! Hear me hum! Zoouoom! Can you do that?”

“No,” said the worm in fright. “And I don’t want to either. If I spun round like that, all the birds of the air would see me and come flying down to get me. And no worm would make a terrible noise like that! Ooooooh! Don’t spin on me, top—you’re hurting me!”

The top was most unkindly spinning on the worm’s tail. The worm wriggled free, and shot down its hole at top speed. The top was pleased. My, what a grand time it was having, spinning and frightening every one out in the big world!

Soon the top came to where a large spider was talking to a bumble-bee.

“Zoouooooooooom!” said the top. “I’m a wonder, I am. See me spin! Hear me hum! Zoouoom! Can you do that?”

“I can hum,” said the bumble-bee quietly.

“And I can spin,” said the spider, looking at the top with her eight eyes. “Don’t spoil my web, top.”

But the top did spoil it. It spun into it and broke it. The spider said nothing. “You are not telling the truth,” said the top rudely. “You cannot spin! No one but a humming-top can spin! I’m a wonder, I am.”

“Stay here for the night and I will show you how I and my family can spin,” said the spider. “Bumble-bee, go and fetch all my family—the biggest you can find.”

The bumble-bee flew off, zooming through the air just like a big humming-top. Soon he was back—and hurrying over the ground below him came twenty big garden-spiders.

“Now we will show you how we spin,” said the spider. “Bumble-bee, sing us a tune—for very soon the top will cease to hum. Sisters, begin your work! Spin well!”

The top hummed angrily and more loudly than ever as it spun round and round among the long-legged spiders. Quietly they began to spin out their silken threads. The wind took the threads into the air and wound them round the spinning top. More and more threads floated out from the spiders’ bodies. More and more quickly they spun them. Soon hundreds of strong silky threads were fastened around the top.

It began to find it difficult to spin so fast. The threads pulled against it. The top spun slowly and more slowly—and yet more slowly! Its voice became fainter. The bee’s loud hum could be heard above its own faint zoom.

“What are you doing—what are you doing?” hummed the top faintly.

“We are spinning, spinning, spinning,” said the spider. “Not quite your kind of spinning, perhaps—but spinning all the same. We are spinning threads that will stop *your* spinning, proud and haughty top! Ah! Others can spin and hum, you see!”

The top wobbled—and wobbled—and stopped. It fell over on its side. It could not spin any longer, for the spiders’ threads held it too tightly. The bumble-bee hummed in joy.



Soon hundreds of strong silky threads were fastened around the top.

The spiders laughed among themselves and hurried away to spin big webs to catch flies for their dinner. The bumble-bee flew off to his hole in the bank. The top was left on the ground alone.



It began to rain. The pelting raindrops washed some of the bright paint off the top. It groaned to itself. "I shall get rusty now! Oh, why did I leave the nursery? Why was I so vain? I wish I was back! I wish I was back!"

Well—the top got its wish—for not long after that, who should come by but Katie herself, going home after school. She saw her top lying in the rain, and she picked it up in surprise. The rain had washed the webs away. Katie did not know that the top had been fastened down by them. She could not understand how the top had got there.

"Who took you out here, poor old top?" she said. "The rain will spoil you. I will take you in."



"Who took you out here, poor old top?"

So the top got back to its own nursery—and the toys stared in astonishment. The top lay down in the cupboard quite quietly. It didn't spin. It didn't hum.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the baby doll.

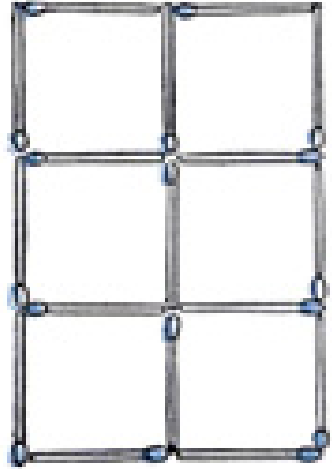
"Oh, I met other people in the big world who could spin and hum better than I could," said the top. "That's all."

The toys never knew who the top had met. I expect you wonder how *I* know. Well, perhaps I heard the bumble-bee telling the foxgloves in my garden.

# Can You Do These?

HERE'S a little puzzle for you. See if you can do it. Take seventeen matches (dead ones are best) and arrange them to make six squares, as I have shown you in this picture.

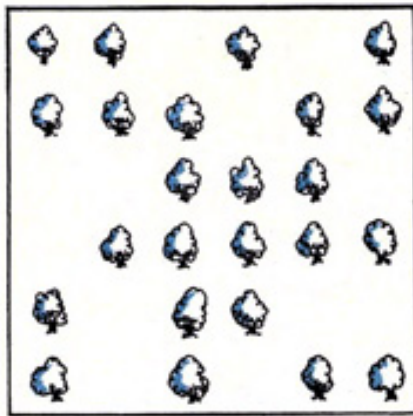
Now I want you to take away five matches and leave three perfect squares. Can you do it?



## *Here's Another Puzzle:*

There was once a man who had four children. In a square orchard he had twenty-four cherry-trees growing. He told his children they could divide the orchard into four equal pieces, each having six trees. They managed to do it—but how?

Here is the orchard with the trees growing in it. With a pencil see if you can lightly divide it up into equal parts—but remember that each part must have six cherry-trees in it!



*(You will find the answers on page 273.)*

# The Christmas-tree Fairy

ONCE upon a time old Dame Trit-trot went to market and bought a big spray of holly berries to make her house pretty. And when she got home, what did she find fast asleep in the middle of the prickly spray, but a small fairy, wrapped in a cobweb blanket!

Now Dame Trit-trot did not believe in fairies at all, so, of course, she did not think this was a fairy.

“It’s a doll!” she said. “How queer! Well, I never saw such a dainty little doll before! It will do for my grand-daughter Jane.”

So she wrapped the fairy in white tissue-paper and put her in a cardboard box. She took it to Jane the next day, and Jane opened the box and unwrapped the tissue-paper.

Jane’s mother peeped into the box and saw the sleeping fairy there. “Oh!” she cried, “what a beautiful little doll! It has wings like a fairy.”

“It *is* a fairy,” said Jane, who believed in fairies, and knew one when she saw one.

“Don’t be silly, darling,” said her mother. “There are no such things as fairies!”

“But, Mother, this is a real live one!” cried Jane. “It is, it is! Look at her wings! Look at her tiny little nails!”

“What funny things children say!” said Granny Trit-trot. So Jane said no more. But she knew quite well that the doll was a real live fairy, fast asleep.

She carried the box away to her nursery and took out the sleeping fairy very carefully. She put her into her doll’s bed and covered her up well. How lovely the fairy looked, lying in the tiny bed, her golden hair fluffed out on the little pillow, and one of her small hands outside the sheet. Jane was so happy and excited. When would the fairy wake up?

“Jane, Jane! Here’s John come to see you!” Mother called up the stairs—and Jane heard John running up. She ran to meet him, her face red with excitement.

“John! Come here! I’ve got a real live fairy asleep in my doll’s bed! Look!”

She took John to the bed and he looked down at the sleeping fairy. Then he laughed. “That’s only a doll!” he said. “I don’t believe in fairies, Jane. That’s a doll—you can’t make me believe it’s a fairy!”

“But look at her silvery wings peeping out of the bed-clothes!” said Jane. “Look at her beautiful hair! Besides, she is alive. Don’t you see her pink cheeks?”

“It’s just a Christmas-tree fairy doll,” said John. “I tell you, I don’t believe in fairies!”

Jane said no more. She knew that Angela, her friend, believed in fairies, so that afternoon she made Angela come in from her walk and see the doll.

“Jane! It’s a real live fairy!” said Angela, in delight. “Oh, Jane, how lucky you are! How lucky!”

“Isn’t it funny, Angela, people who don’t believe in fairies think she’s just a doll,” said Jane. “So they only see a doll lying there—but you and I, who do believe in fairies, can see quite well that she is really a sleeping fairy! Oh, I do wonder when she will wake up!”

Every day Jane went to the doll’s bed to see if the fairy had awakened—but not until the day of the Christmas party came did the little fairy open her eyes! She had had such a long sleep! How surprised she was to find herself tucked up cosily in a soft little bed!

“Oh!” cried Jane, when she saw the fairy sit up and rub her eyes. “I knew you were a fairy, and not a doll!”

The two talked together, and Jane told the fairy that her mother had said it would be nice to put the fairy at the top of the Christmas-tree that evening. “You see, Mother thinks you are only a fairy doll,” said Jane. “She doesn’t believe in fairies. Will you mind standing at the top of the tree, fairy?”

“Not a bit,” said the fairy. “And I’ll give each child who believes in me a wish to wish—one that will come true! So you must tell all those who don’t believe in fairies to go out of the room, Jane—and I will fly down and hear every child’s wish. And then, dear Jane, I must fly away. This is a dear soft little bed, but I have my own home, you know. I will often come and see you again.”

“Sh!” said Jane. “Here comes Mother.”

Jane's mother carried the fairy doll to the Christmas-tree and put her at the top. How pretty she looked there!

"It's the loveliest fairy doll I've ever seen!" said Mother.

In the middle of the party, when the Christmas-tree was shining with candles, Jane clapped her hands and made every one quiet.

"Please, will you do something for me?" she said. "Will every one who doesn't believe in fairies go out of the room—and all those who *do* believe in them stay here with me? I have a secret to show to them!"

All the grown-ups except Aunt Susan and Mary, the little housemaid, went out. Two little girls and three boys went out too. Alan, Mollie, Angela, Trixie, Jack, and Jane were left.

"I know your secret!" cried Jack. "It's the doll up there! She's a Christmas-tree fairy—a real live one! I saw her smiling at us just now!"

"Yes—that's my secret," said Jane. "She is going to fly down to each of you and give you a wish. Keep still and think hard what you would like most!"

Each child stood still—and the little fairy flew down on her silvery wings. She listened to every child's wish and nodded her golden head. "It will come true!" she said.

And then she flew out of the window and disappeared into the dark night. "She has gone back to her home," said Jane.

When the other children and grown-ups came back, they were surprised to see no doll at the top of the Christmas-tree! "Where *is* she?" they cried.

"She has flown out of the window!" said Jane.

But, you know, they didn't believe her. Do tell me—would you have been *outside* the door—or *inside*—if you had been at Jane's Christmas party?

# A Little Weather Girl

Do you know how to make a weather girl who will tell you if the weather is going to be wet or fine?

You want a fir-cone, a nice round oak-apple, a flat bit of cork, an acorn-cup, and a few short twigs.

Now look at my picture. Can you make a girl like that! Her body is the fir-cone, and the frills of her dress are the scales of the cone.



Her head is an oak-apple. You must draw her face yourself. Her hat is your acorn-cup. If you want her to have hair, get some wool from Mother, and cut it into a lot of short pieces. Glue them on her head and pop the hat on top. She will look very funny.

The twigs are for arms and legs. You may have to make holes to push the twigs into, but if you sharpen the ends of the twigs, it will be easy.

Now run the leg-twigs into a flat cork, for a stand. (Sharpen the ends first.) There's your weather-girl!

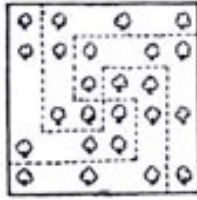
She will expand or ruffle out her skirts if the weather is fine, but will close up the ruffles if it is wet. Isn't she clever?



*Answers to puzzles on page 268*



Take away 5 matches



Divide field as shown  
by dotted lines

*Answers to puzzles on page 268*

Take away 5 matches

Divide field as shown by dotted lines

# The Tiresome Brownie

EVERY year the brownies of Heyho Village held a meeting to decide all kinds of things—whether a new lamp-post was needed in the village—if they should build a new village-hall—and what to give the policeman when he had finished his twenty years of looking after Heyho.

“This year there are such a lot of things to talk about,” said Bron, the chief brownie. “It’s a pity that that tiresome old brownie, Mister Slowcoach, should have to come. He takes about an hour to look at even one paper, and it makes the meeting *so* long!”

“Last year we didn’t get home till midnight,” said Fiddle. “All because Mister Slowcoach kept asking the silliest questions all the time.”

“Well, this year we shan’t get home at all, it seems to me,” said Bron, looking at the things they had to talk about at the meeting. “It will take Slowcoach quite twelve hours to think about everything.”

“Need we have him at the meeting?” asked Jinks impatiently.

“I’m afraid we must,” said Bron. “He’s always been, and he always expects to come.”

Fiddle thought it was a great nuisance. He went away and thought about it—and by and by a grin came over his merry face. He had thought of an idea!

It was Fiddle’s job to choose the meeting-place somewhere out-of-doors, and find comfortable rocks or stones to sit on, or grow a ring of mushrooms. This year he went to a grassy dell he knew, where many big rounded stones lay that would make good seats. Fiddle arranged them in a neat ring.

But there was one gap in the ring! Fiddle grinned to himself and went to call on Crawler the Tortoise, who lived by himself at the bottom of a hollow tree.

“Crawler,” he said, “will you do something for me? Pretend that you are a nice rock at our meeting. Then, when old Slowcoach, who will be sitting on you, begins to read a paper to himself, just walk quietly off with him, will you? We can finish our meeting without him then, and get home early.”



Crawler chuckled. "I'll do it!" he said. So when the evening came for the meeting, the tortoise set himself down in the ring of stones and lay there with his head well-tucked into his shell, waiting.

Fiddle showed the brownies to their seats when the meeting began. He made quite sure that Mister Slowcoach sat on the tortoise. How he smiled when he thought of what would happen!

The meeting began. Bron stood up and talked about all that had happened in Heyho the last year, and papers were given out for every one to look at. Mister Slowcoach took his, and put his big spectacles on. He opened his paper.

"Go on, Crawler," whispered Fiddle. "It's a good time now, when every one is reading!"

Carefully the tortoise began to crawl out of the ring. He went so slowly that Mister Slowcoach didn't even feel any movement. When Bron the chief brownie looked up, he was *most* surprised to see that Mister Slowcoach was right outside the ring, reading his paper with his nose deep in the sheets.

"Dear me," said Bron in surprise and displeasure, "I suppose Mister Slowcoach doesn't like being in the ring with us! He's gone to sit on another stone outside. I suppose he thinks we might interrupt his reading."

All the brownies snorted. They were vexed.

"Never mind old Slowcoach," said naughty Fiddle. "He's quite happy there. Don't disturb him."

So nobody said a word to him, and the meeting went on, whilst old Slowcoach still sat and read the paper slowly. Crawler the tortoise waited till the brownies were eagerly talking about a new seat they meant to put at the end of the village, and then he walked off a few more steps and stopped again.

Soon Bron noticed that Mister Slowcoach was even farther away, and he was still more vexed.

"I suppose the noise of our talking disturbed him and he went to sit on a stone much farther off," he said, annoyed. "Well, let him! Get on with the meeting!"

So they held the rest of the meeting without Slowcoach, and little by little the tortoise took him away until at last, when Slowcoach had finished his paper, he looked up to find himself in the middle of the wood!

“Oh!” he cried in a rage, “what is this? Here I’ve been sitting still and studying the papers, and all the brownies have crept away from me to hold their meeting somewhere else! The rascals! The rogues! I will never go to their meeting again, or help them with my advice!”

So he didn’t—and every one was pleased. But nobody could imagine why Slowcoach kept saying that the brownies had run away and left him alone.

“It was *you* that went away from *us*!” said Bron. “Every time we looked at you, you had gone a little farther away!”

“Indeed I hadn’t!” grumbled Slowcoach. “I was sitting on a stone—and stones don’t walk, do they?”

“No!” whispered naughty Fiddle to Crawler; “stones don’t walk—but tortoises do!”

# The Poor Old Teddy

THERE was once a poor old Teddy Bear who belonged to a little girl called Joan. She didn't treat him very well, for she had pulled out an eye, and made one of his arms loose. She often left him out in the rain, so he looked very dirty, and always had a cold.

The other toys thought him a dirty, sniffy old creature, and they wouldn't let him live in the toy cupboard with them.

"No, get away, Teddy," said the big doll, pushing him out. "We shall catch your cold."

So the teddy meekly sat by the window alone and wished he had a handkerchief. The baby doll had one in her pocket, but he knew she wouldn't lend it to him.

Now one autumn day Joan took her toys out into the garden and sat them on the seat. She played school with them, and pretended that the teddy was very naughty indeed.

"You are the only toy that is not listening to your lessons!" she said to him. "You are very naughty. Go into the corner."

So the teddy had to stand down and turn his face to the bushes in the corner. He didn't really mind much, because, you see, he knew it was pretending. But what he did mind a great deal was being forgotten afterwards!

When the time came for Joan to take in her toys she forgot all about the teddy. She gathered up the toys on the seat, and took them indoors into the warmth and brightness of the nursery. But poor old Teddy was left standing out there in the dark and cold. He was very lonely and miserable.

He stood there until he was almost frozen. The frost came and pinched his toes. He shivered and shook, and began to sneeze.

"A-tishoo! A-tishoo!"

Nobody was about. Nobody heard him. He shook himself, and walked about to get warm. It was very dark, and as he only had one eye to see with, he kept bumping into things. So altogether he was very miserable. He did

wish he could meet a kind-hearted fairy, but as Joan didn't believe in fairies, there were none in her garden at all.

Teddy wandered about, and at last bumped into something hard and wooden. It was the dog's kennel! Sandy was inside, keeping himself warm in the straw. He woke up when he heard Teddy bumping into his kennel, and growled. Teddy trembled, and kept quite still.

Sandy ran out and sniffed around. He found the teddy and smelt him all over. He was puzzled.

"You are not a real animal," he said. "Are you a toy? If you are, why are you not in the nursery? Why are you wandering about alone like this in the garden?"

"I *am* a toy," said the teddy. "I belong to Joan, but she left me out when she took the others in. I was so cold that I was walking about to get myself warm. I'm sorry I woke you up."

"Oh, so you belong to Joan, do you?" said Sandy. "Well, so do I, and I don't like it. Do you know, she sometimes forgets to give me fresh water in the morning? And look at my water now! Frozen hard! *She* won't notice in the morning that my water is frozen, and maybe I'll have nothing to drink to-morrow. Sometimes she forgets to give me biscuits, too, and often I don't get off my chain in the morning for a run if she's playing with her toys, and doesn't want to bother to take me for a walk."

"A-tishoo!" said the bear. "I'm very sorry to hear what you . . . a-tishoo, a-tishoo—what you have to . . . a-tishoo! Do excuse me, I can't seem to stop sneezing, a-tishoo!"

"What a dreadful cold you have," said Sandy. "Come into my kennel and get warm."

"Oh, thank you so much," said the teddy gratefully. He crept into the kennel and snuggled down in the straw. How warm it was! He cuddled up against Sandy. The dog liked it. It was nice to feel the teddy's little body snuggling into him.

"When I'm warm I'll fetch you some fresh water from the tap, if you like," said Teddy. "I know where the garden tap is, and I can just reach it."

"That's very good of you," said Sandy. "But don't bother to-night; I'm not at all thirsty."

Teddy fell asleep. He slept peacefully, for he was warm and cosy. Sandy slept too. Neither of them awoke until the morning. Then Teddy sat up,

rubbed his one eye, and looked around him in surprise. Wherever was he?

“Oh, of course, I’m in Sandy’s kennel!” he said to himself. “And how much better my cold is! This warm kennel has almost sent it away.”

“Hallo, Teddy!” said Sandy. “So you are still there! I wondered if I had dreamt you.”

“No, it was real,” said Teddy. “Well, Sandy, thank you very much for letting me sleep with you. I suppose I’d better go back into the garden now and hope that Joan will remember me, and fetch me in.”

“I don’t see why you should go back to Joan at all,” said Sandy. “Why not live with me here, in my kennel? There is plenty of room for both of us. I could keep you warm and play with you, and you could fetch me water or biscuits if Joan forgets them.”

“Yes, and I could undo your chain at night so that you could go for a run, if Joan doesn’t take you out for a walk each day!” said the teddy, in excitement. “I could help you a lot, Sandy!”

“Well, let’s do it then,” said Sandy, giving the bear a lick on his nose. “I’d love to have you living with me. You’re a nice little bear. Joan can’t want you or love you if she leaves you out in the garden. She can just go without you!”

So the bear stayed in the kennel and didn’t go out into the garden at all. Joan didn’t remember him, so no one looked for him. When night came, the bear made his way out of the kennel, and said, “Sandy, Joan didn’t give you fresh water, so I am going to get you some. You must be very thirsty. This has been frozen all day. You have had nothing to drink.”

The teddy took a stone and cracked the ice in the drinking bowl. Then he emptied it all out and carried the bowl to the tap. It was heavy for him, but he managed it. He turned on the tap, and let some water run into the bowl. Then he turned off the tap and carried the bowl back carefully to the kennel. How glad Sandy was to have a good long drink! He had plenty of biscuits and a bone, for Joan had remembered those; but she hadn’t taken him for a run, and he was longing to stretch his legs.

“I’ll undo your chain now,” said Teddy. He found it hard to undo at first, for he didn’t know how to, but at last he managed it, and off went Sandy into the night, racing round and round the garden in delight. It was good to stretch his legs when he had been still all day!

Sandy raced back to the kennel. “Get on my back, and I’ll give you a ride,” he said. So the teddy climbed up, and held on tightly to Sandy’s collar. Off they went, the bear grunting in delight. He had never in his life had such an exciting time before!

The two slept together peacefully. Teddy cuddled between Sandy’s front paws, and Sandy rested his head on the bear’s chest. They were very good friends indeed.

Joan did look for Teddy, but she couldn’t find him! She didn’t think of looking in Sandy’s kennel, of course! And anyway, Sandy said he would lie on top of Teddy and hide him if Joan did think of peeping in!

They still live together, and Teddy gives Sandy biscuits and water when Joan forgets, and undoes his chain every night. As for Teddy, he never has a cold now, and he is as happy as can be because somebody loves him and wants him. I’d love to see him peeping out of Sandy’s kennel, wouldn’t you? He hopes you won’t tell Joan his secret if you know her!



## Chocolate Nuts

Nuts and chocolate go very well indeed together, don't they? Perhaps Mother will let you make some Chocolate Nuts, if you ask her, and tell her exactly how you mean to do it.

First you must get your nuts. Go to the hazel woods in the autumn, one fine Saturday, and look for nuts. Pick some and take them home. Shell them, and set them ready. Put a sheet of grease-proof paper just nearby.

Now get a bar of plain chocolate and cut it up into small pieces. Is that done? Ask Mother for an earthenware jam-jar. Put the chocolate into it. (See that the jar is quite clean.) Now stand the jar, very carefully so as not to scald yourself, in a saucepan of boiling water.

You will see the chocolate beginning to melt. Stir it well with a spoon, and ask Mother please to lift the saucepan to the kitchen table for you.

Now, with a hat-pin, spear a hazel nut and dip it quickly into the chocolate, turn it about a little, and then lift out. It will come out covered with the liquid chocolate, which will harden very fast. Pop the chocolate-covered nut on to the grease-proof paper, then dip in another nut, speared on the end of the hat-pin.

You will soon have a dish of most delicious home-made-nut-chocolates! But *do* be careful not to scald yourself, won't you?



# The Twiddley-Hen's Egg

ONCE upon a time Sneaky the gnome found a twiddley-hen's egg. A twiddley-hen is a curious bird that wanders about and lays eggs in strange places. It is like a brown hen, but has a green beak, and six long green feathers in its tail.

Now, whoever eats the egg of a twiddley-hen turns green in the face—so you can guess that twiddley-eggs are not sold in the shops. The twiddley-hen always warns people of her eggs by marking them with a little green star at one end. Then people know they are her eggs and don't eat them.

Now when Sneaky found the egg of a twiddley-hen he was pleased. He knew it was a twiddley-egg because he saw the green star marked at one end. Sneaky put the egg into his pocket. Except for the green star it was just exactly like the egg of an ordinary hen, but a bit larger.

"I'll rub the green star off, and then give the egg to Dame Slap," thought Sneaky to himself. "She slapped me twice last week, and I'd like to pay her back, the mean old thing! Ho, ho! Won't it be funny to see her turn green in the face!"

When he got home he rubbed off the green star, wrapped the egg up carefully in tissue paper, and took it to Dame Slap's house. He sent it in to her with his best wishes. Then he went home, grinning all over his horrid little face.

Dame Slap was surprised to have an egg from Sneaky. "Dear me!" she said. "He must be nicer than I thought. What a nice large egg, too! It must be an extra special one, laid by his hens. What a pity I have so many eggs to-day."

She put it in her larder. Presently old Mister Snooks came to the door and brought her a bunch of flowers from his garden. Dame Slap wondered what to give him in return. She remembered the egg that Sneaky had given her.

"I'll let old Snooks have it," she said. "It will make him a nice breakfast—and, really, I've so many eggs to-day I can well spare him that one."



So she gave the twiddley-egg to Mister Snooks and he thanked her and went off. On the way he called to see how the pixie Little-toes was, because she had been ill. The small brown mouse who came to the door said that Little-toes was much better.

Mister Snooks was sorry he had no flowers to send in to Little-toes. But he suddenly remembered the big brown egg that Dame Slap had given him. That would be just the thing for the pixie's breakfast. So he gave it to the mouse and went off home.

Little-toes thought it was very sweet of old Mister Snooks to send her an egg. "But, oh dear, what a pity, the doctor says I mustn't have eggs for a week," she said. "So what shall I do with it, brown mouse?"

"Why not send it to Mrs. Chinks," said the mouse. "She might be very glad of it. She is baking to-morrow, I know, and could use the egg in a cake."

"Oh, that's a good idea!" said Little-toes, pleased. "Take it in this afternoon when you go home, brown mouse."

So the brown mouse slipped in at Mrs. Chink's on her way home. "You can use it in your baking to-morrow," she said. Mrs. Chinks thanked her very much.

Now Mrs. Chinks was Sneaky's aunt. She wasn't very fond of Sneaky, for she thought him a mean and deceitful gnome. But she always remembered him at Christmas-time and Easter-time and on his birthday, too.

"To-morrow is Sneaky's birthday," she thought suddenly. "And, dear me, I haven't bought him a present. What shall I do? Oh—I know! I'll make him a little chocolate birthday-cake of his own, with his name on it in white sugar. He'll like that."

So the next day Mrs. Chinks made Sneaky's birthday-cake, and she used the twiddley-egg in it. She didn't know it was a twiddley-egg, of course. She wrote Sneaky's name on the cake in white sugar and it looked fine. Then she sent it to Sneaky with her love.

Sneaky loved chocolate cakes. When he saw the nice one that his aunt, Mrs. Chinks, had sent him, he was simply delighted. "I shall eat it all up myself," he said. "I shan't waste it on any one else at all."

Well, he did eat it all himself—and, as soon as he had eaten it the twiddley-egg that had gone to make the cake began to work inside him. And it turned his face bright green.

My goodness me, what a shock Sneaky got when he saw himself in the glass! He stared and he stared—and he shouted in rage:

“There was a twiddley-egg in that cake! There was, there was! Oh, I’ll give my aunt such a talking-to for using a twiddley-egg in her cake! Look what it’s done to my face! It’s as green as a cucumber.”

Sneaky rushed off to Mrs. Chinks in a fine temper. How she stared when she saw his face! It looked really dreadful.

“You used a twiddley-egg in the birthday-cake you sent me!” shouted Sneaky. “You wicked woman!”

“I didn’t know it was a twiddley-egg, Sneaky,” said Mrs. Chinks. “The brown mouse that keeps house for Little-toes the pixie, gave me the egg.”

“I’ll tell Little-toes a few things!” roared Sneaky in a rage. “You come along and hear what I say to her!”

He dragged Mrs. Chinks to Little-toes’ house and began to shout at the pixie through the window. Little-toes was surprised.

“I didn’t know it was a twiddley-egg,” she said. “It was given to me by kind old Mister Snooks.”

So Sneaky rushed off to old Mister Snooks, still dragging his poor aunt with him. Mister Snooks was amazed to see Sneaky’s angry green face at his door when he opened it.

“I didn’t know that egg was a twiddley-egg when I sent it in to Little-toes,” he said. “How dreadful you look, Sneaky!”

“Where did you get that twiddley-egg from?” shouted Sneaky.

“Well, Dame Slap gave it to me most kindly,” said Mister Snooks. “But she’s such a dear old lady, I’m sure she wouldn’t give me a twiddley-egg if she knew it was one.”

“Dame Slap’s a horrid creature,” said Sneaky. “She’s slapped me many a time.”

“Then I’ve no doubt you deserved it,” said Mister Snooks, who couldn’t bear Sneaky. “I’ll come straight along with you now and ask Dame Slap about it.”

So Mrs. Chinks, Sneaky, and Mister Snooks went to see Dame Slap. How the old woman shrieked when she opened her door and saw Sneaky’s green face!

“Oh, you’ve eaten a twiddley-egg!” she cried. “How silly of you! But I know how to get rid of the greenness, so don’t worry.”

“It was *you* that gave the twiddley-egg to Mister Snooks,” said Sneaky fiercely. “And he gave it to Little-toes—and she gave it to my aunt, Mrs. Chinks—and she put it into a birthday-cake she was making for me—and I ate it all up. How dare you give Mister Snooks a twiddley-egg!”

“I didn’t know it was a twiddley-egg,” said Dame Slap. “It had the green star rubbed off—I wonder why!”

“Where did you get the egg, Dame Slap?” asked Mrs. Chinks suddenly.

“Why—Sneaky gave it to me himself!” said Dame Slap, remembering. “Oh, Sneaky! How funny! You gave me the very egg that has turned your own face green. Where did you get it from?”

Then Sneaky went red all over his green face—and the others guessed at once what he had been up to.

“*You* found the egg, Sneaky—and *you* rubbed the green star off it—and *you* gave it to Dame Slap to pay her out for slapping you last week!” cried Mrs. Chinks. “Yes—and it’s come back to you in a cake—and your face has gone green. Ha, ha! It serves you right.”

“Please, Dame Slap, tell me how to get the green out of my face,” said Sneaky in a small voice.

“Not I!” said Dame Slap. “You can keep that green face for ever. And every time you look in the glass it will remind you not to be mean and deceitful. Here’s something to help you home, though.”

And Dame Slap lifted up her hand and gave Sneaky such a hard slap that he shot half-way down the garden path. How the others laughed! You should have heard them.

As for Sneaky, his face is still green. He really does look funny.

THE END

## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Misspelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

[The end of *The Enid Blyton Holiday Book* by Enid Blyton]