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The  
Other Side of the Sun  
*Fairy Stories*



BY EVELYN SHARP

*Illustrated*

BY NELLIE SYRETT

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1899

NOT FOR SALE

*TO*  
ALL THE CHILDREN I KNOW  
ON  
THIS SIDE OF THE SUN



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The  
Weird Witch of the Willow-Herb





## The Weird Witch of the Willow-Herb

**T**HE Weird Witch of the Willow-Herb lived in a pink cottage on the top of a hill. She was merry and beautiful and wise and kind; and she was all dressed in pink and green, and she had great eyes that were sometimes filled with laughter and sometimes filled with tears, and her round soft mouth looked as though it had done nothing but smile for hundreds and hundreds of years. Her pink cottage was the most charming place in the world to live in; the walls were made of the flower of the willow-herb, and the roof was made of the green leaves, and the floors were made of the white down; and all the little lattice windows were cobwebs, spun by the spiders who live in Fairyland and make the windows for the Fairy Queen's own palace. And no one but a wymp or a fairy could have said how long the Weird Witch of the Willow-Herb had been living in her cottage on the top of the hill.

Now, any one might think that this wonderful Witch was so sweet and so wise that all sorts of people would be coming, all day long, to ask her to help them; for, of course, that is what a witch is for. But this particular Witch, who lived in her pink cottage on the top of the hill, had not been living there all that time for nothing.

“If I did not keep a few spells lying about at the bottom of the hill, I should never have a moment’s peace,” chuckled the Witch of the Willow-Herb. And that is why most of the people who came to ask her for spells never got so far as the pink cottage at all, for they found what they wanted at the bottom of the hill; and no doubt that saved everybody a great deal of trouble.

“Poor people!” said the Weird Witch, with her voice full of kindness; “why should I make them climb up all this way, just to see me?”

Sometimes, however, it did happen that somebody got to the top of the hill; or else it is clear that this story would never have been written. For, one day, as the Witch sat on the doorstep of her pink cottage, looking out over the world with her great eyes that saw everything, the little Princess Win-

some came running up the white path that twisted round and round and up and up until it reached the cottage at the top; and she did not stop running until she stood in front of the Weird Witch herself. She looked as though she must have come along in a great hurry, for she had lost one of her shoes on the way and there was quite an important scratch on her dimpled chin; but, of course, it is difficult to walk sedately when one is going to call on a witch.

"I am Princess Winsome," she announced, as soon as she had breath enough to speak.

"To be sure you are," smiled the Weird Witch, who knew that before; "and you have run away from home because —"

"Because I want to find the bravest boy in the world," interrupted the Princess, who never liked to let anybody else do the talking.

"Are they all cowards in your country, then?" asked the Witch.

"Oh no," answered Princess Winsome; "the boys in my country are so brave that it is no fun playing with them. They stop all the games by fighting about nothing at all; and it's dreadfully dull when you're a girl, is n't it?"

"Perhaps it is," smiled the Witch. "Then

why are you looking for the bravest boy of all?"

"Ah," said the little Princess, wisely, "the bravest boy of all would never fight unless there was a reason, you see; and so we should have lots of time to play. But how am I to find him?"

"The only way to find him is to let him find you," said the Weird Witch; "and the best thing I can do for you is to shut you up in the middle of an enchanted forest, where no one but the bravest boy in the world would ever come to find any one. Now, make haste, or you won't get there in time!"

And the Princess with the scratch on her chin must certainly have made haste, for she had quite disappeared by the time the Witch's next visitor came up the winding white path; and that happened the very next minute. This time it was a boy who came along, — a tall, strong, jolly-looking boy, with his hands in his pockets and his cap at the back of his head, whistling a strange wild tune that was made up of all the songs of all the birds in the air, so that, as he whistled it, every bird for miles round stopped to listen.

"I am Kit the Coward," he said, pulling off his cap to the Witch.

"To be sure you are," smiled the Weird Witch, who knew that too; "and you have run away from home because the other boys called you a coward, and you want to show them that you are as brave as they are, only you won't fight without a reason. Isn't that it?" ✓

"Of course it is," answered Kit, who liked to have *his* talking done for him; "but how shall I find something worth fighting about?"

"That is not difficult," said the Weird Witch. "All you have to do is to go to the court of King Hurlyburly, and ask him to give you something brave to do. The King is always going to war about something, so you will soon have as much fighting as you want. Now, be off with you, or else someone will get there before you!"

"All right," said Kit. "Which is the way?"

"Any way you like," laughed the Weird Witch.

"But in what direction?" asked Kit.

"It doesn't matter," laughed the Weird Witch.

So Kit made her another bow and marched away again down the hill-side, whistling the same tune as before; and all the birds of the air came flying along when they heard it,

and they flew in front of him to show him the way, and he followed them over meadows and streams and orchards and cornfields, until they brought him to the walls of King Hurlyburly's city. And they would not have left him then, if he had not pointed out to them, most politely, that although it was very obliging of them to have come so far with him, he would find it a little inconvenient to travel any further with so many companions. So they flew away again; and Kit marched into the city and up to the gates of the King's palace.

"I have come to fight for the King," said Kit, when the guards came out and asked him what he wanted. And he looked such a fine strong fellow, that they took him at once to the King.

"You have come in the very nick of time," said King Hurlyburly, "for the Commander-in-Chief of the royal forces has overslept himself so often that I had him beheaded this morning before he was awake. The army is in consequence without a head as well as the Commander-in-Chief; so if you will become their General and invade the country of my neighbour King Topsyturvy, I shall be much obliged to you."

"Why have I got to invade the country of King Topsyturvy?" demanded Kit.

The King pushed his crown on one side, which he always did when he felt puzzled. "Now you come to mention it," he said, "I believe there *was* a reason, but for the life of me I can't remember what it was. However, the reason is of no importance —"

"Oh yes, it is," interrupted Kit. "I can't possibly fight without a reason, you know."

"That's awkward," said King Hurlyburly. "Perhaps the army will know." And he sent a message round to the barracks to ask the soldiers why they were going to war. But although the soldiers were all ready to begin fighting, they had not the least idea what the war was about. So the King's crown became more crooked than before. ✓

"Won't it do if you invent a reason?" he asked Kit, for he could not help thinking how nice it would be to stay at home while his soldiers were being led to war by someone else. "You may marry the Princess Winsome if you come back victorious," he added as an afterthought.

But Kit only shook his head. He had never heard of the Princess Winsome, and he was not going to fight anybody without a very good reason for it.

Then King Hurlyburly had a brilliant idea. "Go and declare war on the enemy, to begin with," he said; "and perhaps *they* will remember the reason."

There was certainly no harm in declaring war; so Kit rode off at once on one of the King's fastest horses, and arrived the next morning at the court of King Topsyturvy, just as his Majesty was sitting down to breakfast.

"I have come from King Hurlyburly to declare war," said Kit, who always went straight to the point.

"What for?" asked King Topsyturvy.

"I don't know," said Kit. "That's what I want you to tell me."

The King ate two eggs before he replied.

"Well," he said presently, "I believe I said Hurlyburly was a shocking old muddler. I suppose that's it. All right! When do you want to begin?"

"I don't want to begin at all," answered Kit. "Why did you say he was a muddler?"

"Oh, just to make conversation," said King Topsyturvy, helping himself to marmalade.

"Then you don't really think he is an old muddler?" asked Kit.

"Dear me, no," said King Topsyturvy. "I never think."



"Then write that down on a piece of paper, and there need n't be a war at all!" cried Kit.

The King stroked his beard. "Perhaps there need n't," he agreed. "But I never write."

"I do, though," said Kit, who had learned to write while all the other boys were making catapults; "you've only got to sign your name here."

King Topsyturvy stopped eating his breakfast, just long enough to sign the beautiful apology Kit had written on a sheet of note-paper; and then Kit jumped on his horse again and rode back to the palace of King Hurlyburly.

"Well," said his Majesty, "did you discover the reason?"

"There wasn't a reason, and there isn't going to be a war," answered Kit; and he held out the beautifully written apology from King Topsyturvy.

"What!" cried his Majesty, in alarm. "Do you mean to say you've stopped the war?"

"Of course I have," said Kit. "And I have come back victorious, as you see. Did n't you say something about a Princess?"

"But," stammered the King, "how am I to

appease the army? The army has set its heart on a war."

"So had I," answered Kit, sadly; "but I never can find anything worth fighting about. Meanwhile, where is the Princess?"

"You have not won the Princess," said King Hurlyburly, who was now thoroughly cross. "I believe you are a miserable coward!"

"That is what the other boys say," answered Kit, smiling. "It is not my fault that there is nothing to fight about. Will you please send for the Princess?"

"The Princess has run away from home, so I can't send for her," said the King, irritably. "She is shut up in an enchanted forest, and surrounded with wild beasts and magic spells and giants. It is not at all a nice place for a Princess to be in, but how am I to get her away?"

"Why," exclaimed Kit, laughing, "here is something for your army to do. Let it go and rescue the Princess."

"Nothing would induce the army to go near the place," explained the King, sorrowfully; "the army is too much afraid of being bewitched."

"Hurrah!" shouted Kit, laughing more than ever. "At last I have found something

brave to do! *I* will go and rescue the Princess."

So Kit the Coward started out on his travels once more; and no sooner did he get outside the city gates than he began to whistle his wonderful tune, and down swept all the birds of the air in hundreds, and they flew in front of him as before and led him to the very edge of the enchanted forest. There they left him, for no one can help anybody to go through an enchanted forest, and Kit knew fast enough that he must find the Princess by himself. He was not a bit afraid, though, and he plunged straight into the wood without looking back.

He had not taken two steps before he had completely lost himself. The trees were so thick overhead that not a streak of sunshine was able to get through, and the forest was so full of wild beasts that it was impossible to walk five yards without tumbling over a lion or a bear. But this did not frighten Kit at all, for he had learned to talk the language of the woods all the time that the other boys were knocking one another on the head; and so he soon made friends with every animal in the forest, and they told him the best places to find apples and nuts and blackberries, and the bees brought him the very best honey they

could make, and he grew so happy and so contented that he quite forgot he was enchanted and could not escape if he wanted to.

But it is impossible to be happy for long when one is bewitched; and, one day, Kit found himself in a part of the forest that was more horrible and more frightening than any dark passage that was ever invented on the way to any nursery. It was not only dark, but it was strangely silent as well; and a curious feeling of gloom and unhappiness suddenly crept over Kit. If it had been a nice sort of silence, the sort we find when we get away from the other boys and girls into a place where it is quiet enough to hear the real sounds of the air, Kit would still have been quite happy; but here there was nothing to be heard at all, not even the brushing of the leaves, nor the blooming of the flowers, nor the growing of the grass. But the most frightening thing of all was when he clapped his hands together and stamped as hard as he could on the ground, for not a sound did he make; and when he tried to speak, he found he could only whisper; and when he burst out laughing, he made no more noise than if he had been smiling. Still, he kept his wits about him, for, of course, there was the Prin-

cess to be rescued, and at last he thought of trying to whistle. At first he could not make a note sound in the stillness, but he went on trying until the wonderful tune he had learned long ago from the birds themselves began to echo once more through the silent forest.

He did not get an answer at once, for really nice birds cannot be expected to go out of their way to a place where there is no sunshine and the flowers cannot enter into conversation with them; but after a while a very fat blackbird, who certainly had impudence enough for anything, came hopping along from branch to branch until he landed on Kit's shoulder, and with him came sunshine and sound and merriment into the very heart of the melancholy forest, for none of these things are ever far off when a blackbird is near. Kit gave a shout of joy and hastened after the blackbird, who was hopping along the ground in front of him; and the next minute he found himself standing in a blaze of sunlight in front of a high stone wall. Beyond the wall he could see the tall towers of a great castle; but he did not trouble himself much about the other side of the wall, for on the top of it, with the sunshine pouring all over her, sat the most charming little girl he had ever seen.

She had lost one of her shoes, and there was the faintest sign of a scratch on her round, dimpled chin, and her long black hair flowed round her shoulders in a way that some people might have called untidy; but Kit was sure, directly he saw her, that she had come straight out of Fairyland, and he was too amazed even to make her a bow.

“Dear me! What are you doing here?” asked the girl, in a tone of great surprise.

Kit took a step nearer the wall, and pulled off his cap. Her voice reminded him that, although she belonged to Fairyland, she was still a little girl and would expect him to remember his manners. “I have come to rescue the Princess,” he said. “Can you tell me where she is?”

“She lives in the castle over there,” answered the girl. “What are you going to do when you have rescued her?”

“Well, I suppose I shall ask her to marry me,” said Kit. “Do you think she will?”

“Ah,” she replied gravely, “that depends on whether you have *my* permission. Tell me who you are, to begin with.”

“I am Kit the Coward,” he said simply; and he stared when she broke into the merriest peal of laughter imaginable.

“What nonsense!” she cried. “If you were a coward, you would never have got here at all.”

“Is that true?” asked Kit eagerly. “Then do you think the Princess *will* marry me?”

The girl looked down at him for a moment, with her untidy little head on one side. Then she bent and held out her two hands to him. “I think, perhaps, the Princess will,” she said softly. “If you will help me down from this enormous high wall, we will go and ask her.”

So Kit lifted her down from the wall, which was quite an easy matter, for it was in reality no higher than he was and the little girl was certainly the lightest weight he had ever held in his arms. “What are you looking for?” he asked, when he had set her on the ground, for she was kneeling down and turning over the dry leaves in a most distressed manner.

“I am looking for my crown, of course,” she said with a pout; “it tumbled off my head just before you came, and I was too frightened to jump all that long way to find it.”

“Here it is,” said Kit; and he picked up the little glittering crown and set it gently on the top of her beautiful, ruffled hair. Then he started back in surprise. “You are the Princess!” he shouted.

"Of course I am," laughed Princess Winsome, putting her hand in his; "*I* knew that, all the time! Shall we go home now?"

Kit did not reply immediately, for no one can do two things at once, and it took him quite a long time to kiss the small soft hand that lay in his own big one. And as for going home, when they did start they did not get very far; for it must not be forgotten that they were still in an enchanted forest, and it is easier to get into an enchanted forest than to get out of it again. However, as they had everything in the world to talk about, they would probably have been most annoyed if they had found their way instead of losing it; so they just went on losing it as happily as possible, until they could not walk another step because an immense giant was occupying the whole of the roadway. There he sat, smoking a great pipe that looked like a chimney-pot that wanted sweeping; and when the Princess saw him, she was so frightened that she hid herself behind Kit and peeped under his arm to see what was going to happen.

"Hullo!" said the giant, in a huge voice that made the grass stand on end with fright, just as it does after a hoar-frost; "what's this? You're running away with the Princess!"



“To be sure I am,” said Kit; “and if you don’t let me pass, I shall have to kill you.”

“Oh, dear,” sighed the giant, raising a wind that made the trees shiver for miles round. “They all say that, and there’s no peace for a poor giant now-a-days. When I was a boy, the Prince was always put under a spell as well as the Princess. However, I suppose I must make an end of you, if you are determined to fight.”

And he laid down his pipe and rose most unwillingly to his feet.

Kit laughed out loud with gladness, for at last he had found a good reason for a fight, and no one would be able to call him a coward any more. But before there was time to strike a single blow, the giant gave a loud howl of alarm, took to his heels, and in another moment was completely out of sight. Kit turned in amazement to his little Princess; and then he saw what had frightened the giant, for all the animals of the forest, all the lions and the tigers and the bears and the wolves, stood there in rows, waiting to help him. So there is no doubt that that giant would have been killed by somebody if he had not run away.

“Is n’t it wonderful?” said the little Princess, in a whisper.

But Kit covered his face with his hands. "It is no use," he said in a disappointed tone; "the other boys will never believe that I am not a coward."

Princess Winsome came and pulled his hands away and laughed softly. "*I* think you are the bravest boy in the world," she said.

"Of course he is!" chuckled a voice somewhere near. "How stupid some people are, to be sure!" And there sat the Weird Witch under a tree, all in her pink and green gown, with her great eyes brimful of fun and non-sense. And as the boy and girl stood hand in hand before her and caught the glance of her beautiful witch's eyes, all sorts of muddles fell out of their heads, and they began to understand everything that had been puzzling them for years and years and years. That only shows what a witch can do when she is the right sort of witch!

"Dear little Princess," cried Kit, "it does n't matter whether the other boys believe me or not, so long as *you* know I am not a coward."

"Besides," added Princess Winsome, "we are not going to try to make anybody believe anything. I think we'll stay here, instead, for ever and ever and always."

"A very good idea," smiled the Weird Witch

of the Willow-Herb, as she nodded at them both. "Always remain enchanted if you can."

So they had the nicest and the funniest wedding possible, on the spot; and there was no time wasted in sending out invitations, for all the guests were already waiting there in rows — with the exception of the singing-birds; and Kit very soon summoned them by whistling a few notes of his wonderful tune. The Princess laid her own wedding-breakfast under the trees, and the wedding-guests helped her by bringing her everything that was nice to eat in the forest, such as roasted chestnuts and preserved fruits and truffles and barley-sugar-cane, and lots of dewdrops and honey-drops and pear-drops; and the Weird Witch completed the feast by turning a piece of rock that nobody wanted into a wedding-cake, and every one will agree that it is better for a rock to turn into a wedding-cake than for a wedding-cake to turn into a rock. And all the flowers came of their own accord and arranged themselves on the table, which they certainly did much more prettily than anybody else could have done it for them; and when the wedding was over they just walked away again instead of stopping until they were dead, which of course is what they would have done at any other wedding.

And although the bride had lost her other shoe by the time she was ready to be married, and although her beautiful hair was more untidy than ever and her crown had tumbled off again and had to be brought to her by an obliging lion, Kit never noticed any of these things and only felt quite certain that he was marrying somebody who had come right out of Fairyland and was not an ordinary Princess at all. No doubt, it was because he was in an enchanted forest that he made such a mistake; and no doubt, it is because he has never been disenchanting since that he is making the same mistake to this day.

As for the Weird Witch of the Willow Herb, she went back to her pink cottage on the top of the hill, so as to be ready to make the next person happy who came up the white winding path. But before she went, she took care that all the singing-birds should fly back to Kit's home and tell the other boys how brave he had been, which they did with the greatest pleasure imaginable. It is said that the story became slightly exaggerated; but when we know how much one little bird can tell, it is not difficult to imagine the kind of story that could be told by hundreds and hundreds of little birds.

# The Magician's Tea-Party









## The Magician's Tea-Party

**L**ITTLE King Wistful slipped through the palace gates and went out into his kingdom to look for something new. He was only eight years old, so he was not a very big King; but he had been King as long as he could remember, and he had been looking for something new the whole time. Now, his kingdom was entirely made of islands, and in the days when the old King and Queen were alive these islands were known as the Cheerful Isles. But King Wistful changed their name soon after he came to the throne, and insisted on their being called the Monotonous Isles. For, strange as it may sound, this little King of eight years old thought his kingdom was the dullest and the ugliest and the most wearisome place in the world, and nothing that his nurses or his councillors could do ever succeeded in making him laugh and play like other little boys.

“Only look at the stupid things!” muttered his Majesty impatiently, as he stood and surveyed his kingdom from the top of a small, grassy hillock. “Five round islands in a row; always five round islands in a row! If only some of them were square, it would be something!”

At the bottom of the hill was a wood, one of those pale-green baby woods, where the trees are young and slender and nothing grows very plentifully except the bracken and the heather. And as the King stood and felt sorry for himself at the top of the hill, out from the wood at the bottom of the hill came the sound of a little girl's voice, singing a quaint little song. And this was the song:—

“Sing-song! Don't be long!  
 Wistful, Wistful, come and play!  
 Sing-song! It's very wrong  
 To stay and stay and stay away!  
 The world is much too nice a place  
 To make you pull so long a face;  
 It's full of people being kind,  
 And full of flowers for you to find;  
 There's heaps of folks for you to tease  
 And all the naughtiness you please;  
 To sulk is surely waste of time  
 When all those trees are yours to climb!  
 Ting-a-ring! Make haste, King!

I've something really nice to say;  
Ting-a-ring! A *proper* King  
Would not make me sing all day!"

King Wistful thrilled all over with excitement. Was something really going to happen at last? He had hardly time to think, however, before the little singer came out of the wood into the open. She wore a clean white pinafore, and on her head was a large white sunbonnet, and under the sunbonnet were two of the brightest brown eyes the King had ever seen. He stepped down the hill towards her, wondering how anything so pretty and so merry could have come into his kingdom; and at the same instant the little girl saw the King and came running up the hill towards him, so it was not long before they stood together, hand in hand, half-way down the hillside.

"Where did you come from and who are you and how long have you been here?" asked the King, breathlessly.

"I am Eyebright, of course," answered the little girl, smiling; "and I've been here always."

"Who taught you to sing that song about me?" demanded the King.

"The magician," answered Eyebright; "and he told me to sing it every day until you came. But you *have* been a long time coming!"

"I'm very sorry," replied his Majesty, apologetically; "you see, the magician did not tell me to come. In fact, I don't even know who the magician is."

"Are you not the King, then?" asked Eyebright, opening her great brown eyes as wide as they would go.

The little King felt it was hardly necessary to answer this; but he set his heels together and took off his crown and made her the best bow he had learned at his dancing-class, just to show beyond any doubt that he was the King. Eyebright still looked a little doubtful.

"Then how is it that you do not know the magician?" she asked him. "What is the use of being King, if you do not know everybody who lives in your kingdom?"

"It is n't any use; I never said I wanted to be King, did I?" said his Majesty, a little crossly. It was not pleasant to find that somebody else, and only a little girl in a sun-bonnet, knew more about his kingdom than he did.

"What a very funny boy you are!" remarked Eyebright, without noticing his crossness. "I

always thought it must be so splendid to be a King, and to have a banquet whenever you like, and never to go out without a procession, and to wear a crown instead of a sun-bonnet, and —”

“That’s all you know about it,” interrupted the King, somewhat impolitely. “There are n’t any banquets; and when there are, you only have stupid things with long names to eat, and you never know whether to eat them with a fork or a spoon, and it’s always wrong whichever you do. And if you ask for jumbles or chocolate creams or plum-cake, you’re told you must n’t spoil your dinner. And all the procession you ever get is a procession of nurses, who won’t even let you step in a puddle if you want to!”

“Dear me,” said Eyebright, “you’re no better off than a little boy in an ordinary nursery!”

The little King drew himself up on tiptoe with great dignity. “Some of your remarks are most foolish,” he said. “You forget that I have a kingdom of my own as well as a nursery. To be sure,” he added sadly, “it is not much to boast of, for it is a very stupid kingdom, and nothing nice ever happens in it.”

“What do you mean?” exclaimed Eye-

bright. "Your kingdom is the nicest kingdom in the whole world!"

King Wistful had managed to keep his temper so far, but this was more than he could bear. "Rubbish!" he cried, completely forgetting his royal manners. "You come up the hill with me, and I'll show you what a stupid kingdom it is."

So they raced up to the top of the hill and looked down at the five round islands in a row. "There!" said King Wistful. "Did you ever see anything so dull?"

The little girl shook her head. "I think it is all as pretty as it can be," she said. "Look how the sun glints on the cornfields, and see the great red and blue patches of flowers —"

"But they're always the same flowers," complained his Majesty, yawning.

"They're supposed to be the same flowers, but they never are," answered Eyebright. "If you were to pick them —"

"Kings never pick flowers," he replied haughtily.

"Perhaps that is why you know so little about them," retorted Eyebright; and his Majesty began to feel he was not getting the best of it.

"Anyhow," he continued hastily, "you must own that the sea never changes."

"Oh!" said Eyebright; "that is because you have not learned the sea properly. It has ever so many different faces, and ever so many different voices, too."

The King turned and stared at her. "Are you a witch?" he asked wonderingly.

"No!" laughed Eyebright, merrily. "If I were, I would make you see things right instead of wrong." Then she suddenly scampered down the hill again. "Come along, *quick!*" she cried. "We'll go and ask the magician to disenchant you."

King Wistful had to run his hardest to catch her, for the little girl in the sunbonnet certainly knew how to put one foot in front of the other. But then, a sunbonnet is not so apt to tumble off a person's head as a crown, and that makes all the difference in a running race.

"Where does the magician live?" he panted, when he came up with her.

"In the middle island," she answered. "We'll find the boat and follow the river down to the sea." She plunged into the wood as she spoke, and threaded her way through the slender young trees, with his

Majesty close at her heels. Sometimes the bracken was as tall as she was, but the boy behind could always see the sunbonnet bobbing up and down just ahead of him, and he followed it until they came out at the other side of the wood and found themselves on the banks of a charming little river. A small round boat like a tub, lined with pink rose-leaves, was waiting for them; and into this they both jumped.

"Oh, oh!" cried Eyebright, jumping up and down with delight. "The fairies are out today! Look at them—the purple ones in the loosestrife, and the pink and white ones in the comfrey, and —"

"You'll upset the boat if you don't sit still," interrupted the King, who felt cross because he could not see the fairies. "Let me have the oars and I'll take you down the stream."

"You need not do anything of the sort," said Eyebright; "for this is the boat the magician gave me, and it always takes you wherever you want to go."

So they just sat in the sunshine and floated lazily along, and they dabbled their hands in the water and made their sleeves as wet as they pleased, and they caught at the branches above as they passed under them, and they



leaned over the side and stretched after everything that grew out of reach; and, in short, if they had not been in a fairy boat, it is very certain that they would have tumbled into the water several times before they reached their journey's end. Presently, the river widened out into the big calm sea; and after that, the boat quickened its speed and took them across to the middle island in no time at all, for the fairies know well enough that nobody wants to dawdle about in an open sea, where there are no tadpoles to catch and no trees that sweep their branches down to meet the water.

When the boat stopped, they found themselves on the edge of a shore covered with sea-lilac and yellow poppies, and wonderful shells that sang without being put to any one's ear; and just a little way along the beach was the magician's cave. There was no doubt about its being the right cave, for over the door of it was written in square acid tablets: "This is the magician's cave" Besides, the whole cave was dug out of a solid almond rock; and of course, any other person's cave would have been made of plain rock without any almonds in it.

"Come along," said Eyebright; and the two children walked up the beach and knocked at the magician's door and went in.

Some people might think that a cave on the sea-shore would be full of draughts and jelly-fish and wet shrimps ; but this particular cave was just like the nicest room that ever belonged to a castle-in-the-air. The wonder of it was, that whoever went into it found the very things he had never had and always wanted, and none of the things that he had always had and never wanted. So Eyebright immediately found a beautiful story-book, with a coloured picture on every page, and all the sad stories squeezed between the happy stories, so that no one who read it could ever cry for long at a time ; while the King found the inside of a clock waiting to be picked to pieces, and an open pocket-knife with a bit of firewood lying handy, and a full-rigged schooner ready to be sailed. And they both saw the dear old magician, sitting in his arm-chair and smiling at them.

He was dressed in a long cloak, that always began by being a green cloak but changed every other minute to a different colour, according to the mood the magician was in ; and as he was always in a nice mood, whether it was a sad or a merry one, his cloak always managed to be a nice colour. On his head was a high pointed hat, with crackers sticking out

of it and a pattern worked all over it in caramels and preserved cherries; and he wore furry foxgloves on his hands to keep them warm, because he was not so young as he used to be. He had been practising as a magician for over a thousand years, but he did not look very old, for all that; he was what might be called pleasantly old, for he had soft white hair and a curly white beard and a pink complexion like a school-boy's. That is how a magician grows old when he has always been a jolly magician.

Eyebright ran straight up to him and climbed on his knee and hugged him. "I've brought the King to see you," she announced; "and we want you to be a nice, kind, *lovely* magician and help him to be disenchanting."

The magician stood up and shook hands with the King, just to make him feel at home; and the boy did not feel shy another minute, and quite forgot that he had never paid a visit before without a procession of nurses to look after him.

"You are very good children to call on me at tea-time," said the magician. "If there is one thing more than another that makes me feel the ache in my bones, it is having tea by myself. Now, would you like to have it on the floor, or shall I call up a table?"

The King, who had had his meals on a table all his life, voted for the floor; but when Eyebright said it would be more fun to see what would happen if they chose the table, he had to own that perhaps she was right. What happened was very simple: the magician just stamped on the floor, and a neat little table, covered with a nice white cloth, walked in at the door like any person and took up its position in the middle of the floor.

"Well!" exclaimed Eyebright; "I never knew tables could walk, before!"

"What do you suppose they have four legs for?" asked the magician, smiling.

"My nursery table does not walk," observed the little King.

"Ah," said the magician, wisely, "some tables do not know how to put two and two together. Now for some chairs!"

He stamped on the floor again, and two little arm-chairs bustled into the room as fast as their fat little legs would carry them. "You must excuse their being in such a hurry," said the magician; "they have been playing at musical chairs all their lives, you see. Now, while you are laying the table, I will boil the kettle. Crockery in the left-hand cupboard, and eatables in the right-hand cupboard!"

So the magician set to work and lighted the fire with peppermint-sticks, and the two children opened the doors of his wonderful cupboards. The crockery in the left-hand cupboard was the right sort of crockery, for none of it matched; so it did not take a minute to find a small pink cup and a green saucer for Eye-bright, and a big blue cup and a red saucer for the magician, and a nice purple mug without any saucer at all for King Wistful. As for the right-hand cupboard, the little King was overjoyed when he found it stocked with jumbles and chocolate creams and plum-cake. "I *am* glad," he said with a sigh of relief, "that you don't keep seed-cake in your cupboard. Seed-cake always reminds me of eleven o'clock in the morning."

"Ah," said the magician, "the wymps saw to that, when they filled my cupboard for me, centuries ago. There's never any bread-and-butter in it, either — until you've had as much plum-cake as you can eat."

That was a delightful tea-party. The magician did not mind in the least when they made polite remarks about the food and told him his jumbles might have been kept a little longer with advantage, or that his chocolate creams were not quite so soft as some they had

known. But they hastened to add that his tea was the nicest tea they had ever tasted because it had only a grown-up amount of milk in it, so he would have been rather a cross magician if he had minded. Nor did he raise any objection when they walked about in the middle of tea and took a look at the picture-book, or whittled away the piece of firewood, or danced round the cave and shouted because everything was so nice. And after tea there were all the magician's treasures to be turned out of odd nooks and corners and left about on the floor, and all his new quill pens to be tried, and his clean sheets of note-paper to be scribbled over. And when they were tired of exploring the cave and had eaten as much plum-cake as they wanted, the magician saw it was the right moment to begin telling them really true stories; and as he was a magician, of course his true stories were all fairy stories, which, as every one knows, are the only true stories in the world worth believing. But even the stories came to an end at last, and then both the children remembered at once why they had come to see the magician.

"Well, what can I do for you?" he asked, before they had time to say anything; for, truly, he would not have been a magician at

all if he had not known what they were thinking about. He smiled so encouragingly that the little King answered him at once.

"It's like this," he began, "there's something wrong with the way I see things."

"Of course there is," said the magician: "the wymps threw dust in your eyes when you were a baby; and you cannot expect to see things in the same light as other people when the wymps have once thrown dust in your eyes."

"Why did they throw dust in my eyes?" asked little King Wistful.

"Usual reason," answered the magician, briefly. "They were not asked to your christening, that's all. If people will persist in leaving the wymps out when they give a party, they must take the consequences. However, as you were not to blame in the matter, the wymps would be the first to own that you ought not to be bewymped any longer. The best thing you can do is to go up to Wympland yourself and ask them to take away the spell."

The little King looked at Eyebright and hesitated. "It is a long way to go all alone," he remarked; and Eyebright immediately stepped up to him and took his hand.

"I'll come with you," she said; "I've always longed to go to the other side of the sun. How are we to get there, magician?"

"Well," answered the magician, "the usual way is to climb up a sunbeam, but that's not very quick and sunbeams are apt to be slippery in the dry weather. Shall I send you up in a flash of lightning or on the spur of a lark?"

"Spur of a lark!" echoed the King. "You mean on the spur of a moment, don't you?"

"Not a bit of it," answered the magician; "you'd never get up to Wympland on the spur of anything but a lark, I can tell you! You have to get up there very early in any case, if you want to be even with the wymps; so the best way is to rise with the lark. However, as it is getting rather late in the day for larks, I had better send you up in a lightning flash. Will you manage it alone, or shall I send a conductor with it?"

"Would the conductor show us the way?" asked Eyebright.

"Dear me, no," said the magician. "Lightning conductors never show anything but the stupidity of some people. Perhaps you'd better have the lightning without a conductor; so stand on one side, while I pick you out a nice quiet flash without any thunder hanging to it."



He took down a large sack, labelled *Storms*, from the shelf, untied the top and plunged his head into it. Eyebright stole a little closer to the King than before and hoped that nothing would go off with a bang.

"I say," said his Majesty, putting his arm round her, "it strikes me —"

"That is impossible," interrupted the magician in a stuffy voice from the middle of the sack, "for I've got it in both hands, and it is n't going to strike anybody so long as you treat it kindly. Now, off you go in a flash!"

And off they did go in something, though they never knew what it was, for they had no time to see anything before they found themselves dropped with a thud on the other side of the sun. For a moment or two they just lay where they had fallen without moving; then they sat up and rubbed their eyes and looked round.

"Oh!" exclaimed Eyebright, clasping her hands tight; "I had no idea it was like this."

Of course Eyebright knew no more about Wympland than she had learned in her geography lessons, and we all know how little geography books ever tell us about the really nice places in the world. So, although she

knew as well as any other little girl that Wympland has no physical features and its inhabitants have no occupation, that its climate is dull and foggy and its government is a sleeping monarchy, she was not in the least prepared for what she did see.

"Well," said a voice somewhere near, "what do you think of it?"

Just in front of them a wymp was standing on his head, which is a wymp's favourite way of resting his legs. He seemed to expect an answer, so the King did his best to think of one that should be both polite and truthful. As a matter of fact, he did not think much of Wympland at all.

"It — it is rather full of fog, is n't it?" he began, a little nervously.

The wymp looked distinctly hurt; but before he had time to get angry Eyebright put things right in her quiet little way.

"I don't think it is yellow fog," she said; "it is more like dull sunshine."

The wymp fairly wymped when he heard this.

"You've hit it!" he cried in a delighted tone; "that's what it is really. It's the folks from the front of the sun who call it yellow fog; they're blinded by their own sunshine,

they are. This is the back of the sun, you see, and the sunshine naturally loses a bit of its polish by the time it has worked through."

"I think I like bright sunshine best," observed the King.

"That is absurd!" said the wymp. "Why, you can't look at it without blinking, to begin with. In Wympland you get all the advantages of the sun and none of the drawbacks, — no sunblinds or sunstrokes or sunspots! You must be a stupid boy if you can't see that!"

"It is your fault, not mine," answered the King boldly; "you shouldn't have thrown dust in my eyes if you wanted me to see Wympland in the right light!"

The wymp turned several somersaults to show his amazement at the King's words, and finally stood thoughtfully on one leg.

"That's serious," he said. "We did n't know you'd ever come up here, or we should n't have done it. However, it can't be helped now, so you'd better go back again. It does n't matter if you *do* see things wrong — at the front of the sun."

"But it does matter!" they both exclaimed; "and that's why we want you to take away the spell, please."

The wymp stood on his head again and shook it from side to side, which no one but a wymp could have done, considering the awkwardness of the position. "There's only one thing to be done," he said at last. "You must exchange eyes."

They stared at the wymp and then at each other. The little King began to think busily, but Eyebright spoke without thinking at all.

"Very well," she said. "How is it to be done?"

"Quite easy," answered the wymp, cheerfully. "All you've got to do is to wish with all your might to have the King's eyes instead of your own, and there you are!"

At that moment the King finished his thinking. "Stop!" he shouted. "If I take her eyes away, *she* will always see things wrong!"

But the King had spoken too late. Eyebright had already wished with all her might, and her eyes had turned as blue as deep water while his Majesty's were round and large and brown.

"What fun!" she cried, laughing happily. "Isn't it a nice change to have somebody else's eyes?"

The little King, however, was far too furious to listen to her.

"Stand up and let me knock you down!" he cried, shaking his fist at the wymp. "Look what you have done. She will see things wrong to the end of her days!"

"Don't be a foolish little boy," said the wymp, calmly. "Take her home and try to see things right yourself."

The King certainly did not take her home, nor himself either; but it is the truth that they both found themselves, the very next minute, standing on the top of the small green hillock and looking down at the kingdom of the Monotonous Isles.

"Hurrah!" shouted King Wistful, waving his crown joyfully. "What a beautiful kingdom I've got! Look how the sun glints on the cornfields, and see the great red and blue patches of flowers! Don't you think it *is* a beautiful kingdom?" he added, turning to the little girl in the sunbonnet.

Eyebright was distinctly puzzled. She *thought* she only saw five round islands in a row. But, of course, it was impossible that the King should be mistaken. So she looked once more over the kingdom of the Monotonous Isles and then back at the anxious face of the little King.

"Yes," she said softly, "it is, as you say, a

beautiful kingdom." Then she ran down the hill and disappeared among the slender trees of the baby wood, and little King Wistful went home to bed.

There is a Queen now as well as a King of the Monotonous Isles. She has black hair and blue eyes, and she wears a crown instead of a sunbonnet, and she quite agrees with the King whenever he tells her how beautiful their kingdom is. And if this should seem remarkable to some people, it need only be remembered that the Queen sees everything with the King's eyes.

# The Hundredth Princess





## The Hundredth Princess

**T**HERE was once a King who was so fond of hunting that all the rabbits in his kingdom were born with their hearts in their mouths. The King would have been extremely surprised to hear this, for, of course, he never hunted anything so small as a rabbit; but rabbits are foolish enough for anything, as all the world knows, and it is certain that the rabbits of the King's forest would never have had a happy moment to this day, if the Green Enchantress had not suddenly taken it into her head to try and bewitch the King.

Now, the Green Enchantress was very beautiful indeed. She sat all day long at the foot of an old lime-tree in the royal forest, and she was dressed all in green, and she had small white hands and great black eyes and quantities and quantities of dark red hair. Every animal in the forest, from the largest wild boar down to the smallest baby-rabbit, was a friend of hers; and it made her dreadfully unhappy

when she saw them being killed just to amuse the King. So it was no wonder that she made up her mind, at last, to try and bewitch him; and the first time she tried was on a fine summer evening, when the royal party was riding home from the hunt.

It had been an exceedingly dull hunt that day, for the King had found nothing whatever to kill, and this made him so exceedingly irritable that his followers took care to keep a good way behind him as they rode along. That was how it happened that the King was riding quite alone, when a voice suddenly called out to him from the side of the road.

"Good-evening, King!" said the voice. "Have you had good sport to-day?"

The King pulled up his horse and looked round; and when he saw a wonderful-looking girl all dressed in green, sitting at the foot of an old lime-tree, he did not know quite what to say. He knew very little about girls, for he had spent all his life in killing things, but he had a sort of idea that the girl in green was not much like the princesses who came to court.

"I have had no sport at all," he said at last. "All the animals were hiding to-day."

"No doubt they were," said the Green En-

chantress. "So would you be, if people came hunting you with great horrid spears and things!"

She was really laughing at him, but the King had no idea of it. He only looked at her more solemnly than before.

"What do you know about it?" he asked her.

"Perhaps I know more about this forest than you know about the whole of your kingdom," answered the Green Enchantress; and this time she laughed outright. But the King did not mind in the least.

"Perhaps you do," he said simply. "I never pretended to know much. I do not even know why you are laughing. Will you tell me?"

"I am laughing because you know so little," she answered mysteriously, "and because there is so much I could tell you if it pleased me."

"I have no doubt you could," replied the King. "Will it please you to tell me now?"

"I don't feel inclined to tell you now," said the Green Enchantress.

"How strange!" exclaimed the King. "If I had anything to tell, I should tell it at once; but then, I am not a girl. When will you tell me?"

"Next time you come," laughed the girl in green.

"Next time?" said the King. "Why should I come twice when once would do?"

She did not trouble to answer that at all; and when the King looked again at the old lime-tree, the girl in green had completely disappeared.

"Is there a witch in the forest?" he asked, when his followers came riding up to him.

"There is the Green Enchantress, your Majesty," answered the chief huntsman. "I have never seen her, but they say she is the most beautiful woman in the whole world."

"Indeed!" said the King, in surprise; and he went home and spent the whole of the evening in trying to remember what the girl in green had looked like. He had quite forgotten, however; so the very next morning he stole out of the palace long before any one was awake, and walked as fast as he could in the direction of the old lime-tree. The wild boars and the other animals were most surprised to see him there so early in the day, and they followed him in twos and threes to see what he was going to do. As for the King, he strode on over the dewy grass and never noticed them at all. And all the while the

bracken on either side of him was alive with trembling little rabbits, all squeaking to one another, with their hearts in their mouths,—

“We shall certainly be killed if the King sees us!”

At last he came to the old lime-tree at the side of the road; and there sat the wonderful girl all dressed in green, with her dark red hair falling round her down to the ground. The King would have taken off his crown to her, if he had not come out without it; but he made her a low bow instead, and the Green Enchantress began to laugh.

“Dear me!” she said, “why have you come back again?”

“They told me you were the most beautiful woman in the world, so I came to see if it was true,” said the King.

“And now you are here, do you think it is true?” asked the girl in green.

“I suppose so,” said the King, doubtfully; “but I don’t know much about girls. If you were a wild boar, now, or ——”

“But I’m not a wild boar!” cried the Green Enchantress; and she was so angry at being compared to a wild boar that she promptly threw a spell over the King and tried to turn *him* into a wild boar. But the King went on

being a king, just the same as before, and he had no idea that he was expected to be a wild boar at that very moment.

“When are you going to tell me all the things you know?” he asked her, smiling.

“I have forgotten what there was to tell,” said the Green Enchantress, sulkily; and she got up and walked away among the trees. The King wondered what he had done to offend her, and he tried hard to remember whether he had ever offended any of the princesses who came to court; but as none of the princesses who came to court ever thought of showing their feelings, he would not have known if he had.

Meanwhile the Green Enchantress was feeling very cross indeed. “What is the use of being an enchantress if people refuse to be enchanted?” she grumbled; and she ran off as fast as she could to find her godfather, the magician Smilax, for nothing ever put her into such a good temper as a visit to her godfather. Now, Smilax was the most amiable magician the world has ever contained, and he lived in an ordinary little cottage with a green door and a white doorstep and a red chimney-pot, and he did not look like a magician at all. All the same, Smilax was by no means a

stupid magician, as the rest of the story will show.

“What is the matter?” he asked, when his godchild ran in at the door. “Do you want me to teach you a new spell?”

“No, indeed!” cried the Green Enchantress. “I am tired of spells; I want something much better.”

“Well, well,” said the kind old magician, “let us hear what it is all about, and then we’ll see what we can do.”

It was impossible to go on being cross when any one was as good-tempered as Smilax; so his godchild climbed at once on to the arm of his chair, and sat there with her little white feet dangling, while she told him all about the King who would not turn into a wild boar. “Is it not hard,” pouted the Green Enchantress, “that I cannot bewitch the King?”

“Some kings are easier to bewitch than others,” remarked the magician, wisely. “Now, what is it you want me to do for you?”

“I want you to make me into a princess,” said his godchild, promptly. “Then I can go to court and dance with the King! Only think of it!” And she pretended that the poker was the King and danced round the room with it,

to show how she should behave when she got to court.

“That’s easily done,” said Smilax. “You shall go to court and dance with the King, if you like; and I will make you so fine a princess that the King will not be able to distinguish you from all the other princesses in the palace!”

“But I don’t want to be like all the other princesses, godfather; I want to be a *real* princess,” objected the Green Enchantress.

Smilax shook his head. “Then I cannot help you,” he said. “Nobody can make a real princess, — not even the Fairy Queen herself. Real princesses make themselves, and that is a very different matter.”

“Shall I never go to court, then?” asked his godchild, with tears in her eyes. ✓

“Of course you shall!” said Smilax. “Can you not go to court without being a princess? There is a back door to the palace as well as a front one, and any ordinary person can get in at the back door. But you must give up all your witchcraft the moment you set foot in the palace, for it is impossible to be an ordinary person and a bewitching one at the same moment.”

“I don’t mind that,” said his godchild. If



I cannot bewitch the King I do not want to be an enchantress any more. I will go to the palace this very minute!"

And so she did, and that was how it came about that there was a new scullery-maid at the palace; and, one fine morning, the King met her all among the vegetables, as he took his stroll in the garden after breakfast. It is extremely probable that the King would not have noticed her at all if she had not happened to be wearing a bright green handkerchief tied over her dark red hair. He felt sure that he had seen that bright green and that dark red somewhere before, so he stopped and looked at her.

"What are you doing?" he asked her, with a smile.

"I am picking beans for the King's dinner," answered the little scullery-maid.

"How extremely kind of you!" exclaimed the King, who had always supposed that the beans for his dinner picked themselves. "Will you let me look at them?"

She held out her basket, and the King peeped inside and found it full of bright scarlet flowers.

"Are those beans?" asked the King in wonderment, and he thought he had never seen anything so charming before.

"I *hope* so," said the little scullery-maid with an anxious sigh, for she knew no more about it than the King and was dreadfully afraid of being scolded for picking the wrong thing. Indeed, she had hardly finished speaking when the angry voice of the chief cook called her from the back door; and away she scampered down the garden path.

Every one noticed how absent-minded the King was at dinner, that day. He talked even less than usual, and when the fifteenth course came round he turned reproachfully to the Prime Minister.

"I thought I was going to have beans for dinner," observed the King, in a disappointed tone.

"Your Majesty has just helped himself to beans," said the Prime Minister, when he had recovered from his surprise at the King's remark.

"What?" exclaimed the King, looking at his plate. "Are these the beautiful scarlet beans that grow in my kitchen-garden? Impossible!"

"They turn green when they are cooked, your Majesty," said the Prime Minister, who had never seen a bean growing in his life but could not possibly have owned such a thing before the court.

“Then let me have my beans before they are cooked, in future,” said the King; and the Prime Minister hastily made a note of it on his clean cuff.

There was a magnificent ball at the palace that evening, and the King had ninety-nine delightful princesses to dance with, but none of them had dark red hair, and when he had finished dancing with the ninety-ninth he once more turned reproachfully to the Prime Minister.

“Where is the hundredth Princess?” he demanded impatiently.

The Prime Minister knew no more about the hundredth Princess than he had known about beans, and he wished he had gone to bed instead of coming to the court ball to be worried by the King’s questions. He was too sleepy, however, to invent any more answers, so he had to tell the truth; and no doubt he would have made a much better Prime Minister if he had always been too sleepy to invent things that were not true, but that, of course, has nothing to do with the story.

“I have never heard of the hundredth Princess, your Majesty,” he said wearily. “Would it please your Majesty to tell me what she is like?”

He fully expected the King to be exceedingly angry, and he wondered whether he should be beheaded at once or only imprisoned in one of the King's dungeons. It was therefore a great surprise to him when the King burst out laughing and was not in the least offended.

"I never heard of her myself until this morning," said the King. "She has wonderful dark red hair, and she is so sweet and so kind that she actually picks the vegetables for my dinner!"

The Prime Minister was so relieved at not being put into a dungeon that he positively yawned in the King's presence; and the King, for the first time in his life, noticed that he looked tired and sent him home to bed, which was certainly a much nicer place to send him to than a dungeon. And as for the Prime Minister, he went on speaking the truth to the end of his days.

The next morning, the King hastened into his garden the moment he had swallowed his breakfast. The chief huntsman met him just as he was leaving the palace, and asked him what time it would please him to start for the hunt.

"Hunt?" cried the King, impatiently.

“What hunt? I am going to pick the vegetables for my dinner, and that is ever so much more important!” And he ran down the steps and across the lawn, as never a King ran before.

The little scullery-maid was wandering among the gooseberry bushes with a very disconsolate look on her face. “I am looking for sage to stuff the King’s ducks with,” she said, when the King came hurrying towards her; “but I don’t know a bit what it is like, and how can I be expected to pick things when I don’t know what to pick?”

“Do not look so distressed,” said the King, for her eyes were full of tears. “I am the King, and I do not mind whether my ducks are stuffed or not.”

“Ah, but the chief cook does,” said the little scullery-maid, who, of course, had known all the while that he was the King. “The chief cook will beat me if I do not fill my basket with sage. Look! this is where he beat me yesterday for bringing the wrong beans.”

She rolled up her sleeve and showed him a tiny black speck on her dainty white arm. To be sure, it was not much of a bruise, but when one has been an enchantress all one’s life it is a little hard to be beaten for not knowing

enough. The King was quite overcome with distress, and he stooped and kissed the little black mark tenderly; and that, as every one knows, is the only way to cure a bruise.

"Come with me," he said, "and I will help you to find some sage. Then the King's ducks will be stuffed, and the chief cook will not be able to beat you."

So the King and the scullery-maid wandered all over the kitchen-garden and hunted for sage. And the King knew just as much about it as the scullery-maid, and the scullery-maid knew as much as the King, and that was just exactly nothing at all; so there is no doubt that the King's ducks would never have got stuffed that day, if the pair of them had not suddenly stumbled upon a bush of rosemary.

"Does it not smell sweet?" exclaimed the little scullery-maid, and she picked a whole handful of it and gave it to the King.

"Surely," cried the King, "anything so charming as this must be the very thing we are looking for!"

The angry voice of the chief cook sounded once more from the back door, so they did not stop to think any more about it but filled the basket with rosemary as fast as they could;

and then away scampered the little scullery-maid down the path, while the King stood and watched the little curls of dark red hair that fluttered in the breeze.

The chief cook was far too grand a person to stuff the King's ducks, so he left it to the little scullery-maid; and the result was that the King's ducks were stuffed with rosemary. There were only two people in the palace who enjoyed their dinner that day: one was the King, who sat at the head of the royal table and had three helpings of roast duck; and the other was the little scullery-maid, who sat on the back doorstep and ate the scrapings of all the plates out of a big brown bowl. As for the courtiers, they never forgot that dinner as long as they lived; but this was not surprising, for ducks that are stuffed with rosemary are surely ducks to be remembered.

After that, the courtiers had to eat a good many nasty things for dinner. Every day the chief cook sent the little scullery-maid into the garden to pick something for the King's dinner, and every day the King came and helped her to find it; and although they never found the right thing and although it was generally very nasty, the King always ate three helpings of it, and that was all that mattered to the

chief cook. To be sure, it was a lot of trouble to take, just to please the chief cook, and it would have been far simpler to have cut off his head then and there; but neither the King nor the scullery-maid thought of that. After all, it was much nicer to go on meeting each other among the gooseberry bushes, and it certainly saved the expense of an execution. ✓

Before long people began to wonder what had come over the King. He never went near the royal forest, and when he was not in the kitchen-garden he was in the library, looking for books that would tell him the difference between a banana and a turnip and the best place to find a cauliflower. The chief huntsman and all the other huntsmen had never been so dull in their lives; but the wild boars and all the other animals were as happy as the day was long. Even the rabbits began to pop up their heads above the bracken, and were quite amazed when they found that no one was waiting to kill them. "Truly," they squeaked to one another, "the Green Enchantress must have bewitched the King after all!" And perhaps they were not far wrong.

Now, the same thing cannot go on for ever; and one morning, when the King hastened out into the garden as usual, the scullery-maid saw



at once that he had something important to say.

"There is to be a ball to-morrow," he told her. "The Prime Minister says so! And there will be ninety-nine princesses there besides yourself."

The little scullery-maid shook her head. "I shall not be there," she said. "I am only a scullery-maid; and no one, not even the Fairy Queen, can make me into a real princess."

"You are the hundredth Princess," declared the King; "and no one, not even the Fairy Queen, can make you into a scullery-maid."

"The ninety-nine other princesses have never picked the vegetables for the King's dinner," sighed the little scullery-maid.

"They would never do anything half so sweet nor so kind," said the King.

"The ninety-nine other princesses," continued the little scullery-maid, looking down at her crumpled print gown, "have never worn such an old frock as mine!"

"Nor have they ever looked half so beautiful or so charming," said the King.

The angry voice of the chief cook sounded loudly from the back door, and the little scullery-maid turned to run down the path as usual.

But, this time, the King caught her by the hand and held her back.

"Will you come to the ball and dance with me?" he asked coaxingly.

She looked very sad. "I am not a real princess, you see," she sighed.

The angry voice of the chief cook sounded louder than before, and she pulled away her hand and escaped down the path.

"Will you come to the ball?" the King shouted after her.

"Perhaps!" laughed the little scullery-maid over her shoulder, and the next moment she was out of sight. It was truly a strange way of accepting an invitation to the King's ball; but then, she was the hundredth Princess, and perhaps that made all the difference.

It was a most magnificent ball; and the hundredth Princess *did* come to it. For, just as the King finished dancing with the last of the ninety-nine princesses, a great hubbub was heard in the hall outside; and into the room ran the little scullery-maid, and after her ran the chief cook with the soup-ladle in his hand, and after them both came the Prime Minister, and the chief huntsman, and the Lord High Executioner, and all the other people who were in the hall because they did not know how to dance.

“Who are you?” cried the ninety-nine princesses, as the little scullery-maid stood in front of them all, in her crumpled print gown, with her green handkerchief tied over her head.

“Who are you?” echoed all the courtiers and all the pages who happened to be there.

“She is nothing but a scullery-maid,” cried the chief cook, brandishing his soup-ladle.

“She is the Green Enchantress,” gasped the chief huntsman.

“You are all talking rubbish,” said the Prime Minister, who had certainly lost some of his manners since he took to speaking the truth. “Any one can see she is the hundredth Princess!”

But it was the King who really settled the matter.

“She is the Queen, of course,” he said gently, and came and took her by the hand. And no one thought of contradicting him, for, although real princesses have to make themselves, it is quite certain that any king can make a queen.

When the ninety-nine princesses saw how charming the little Queen was, they crowded round her with one accord and gave her ninety-nine kisses. So they were real princesses, after all! “Tell us,” they begged

her afterwards, "are you really the Green Enchantress?"

"Oh no," she said; "I gave up being an enchantress when I found I could not bewitch the King."

"Why did you want to bewitch me, dearest?" asked the King, in amazement.

"Because you were so fond of killing things," she said.

"Then I will never kill anything again as long as I live!" vowed the King.

And that is the end of the story, for when the little rabbits heard that the King had given up hunting, they all gave a great gulp and swallowed their hearts. And after that, there was no one in the kingdom who was not happy, for everybody's heart was in the right place.

Somebody Else's Prince









## Somebody Else's Prince

**I**N a country that is so far away that only wymps and fairies ever live long enough to get there, an exceptional King and Queen once ruled over their five children, a devoted nation, and each other. Now, the five children had five gardens all in a row; and four of these belonged to the King's four sons, and were just as beautiful as gardens cannot help being, which is surely beautiful enough for ordinary folk. The Princess Gentianella, however, was anything but an ordinary princess; and her garden, the one that came at the end of the row, was far more beautiful than any one could possibly describe. This was hardly to be wondered at, for, while the four Princes had to work very hard in their gardens before anything would grow in them, the fairies just came and breathed on the Princess's garden, and everything that was bright to see and sweet to smell grew up in it. Even the wymps did not play any tricks with the Princess's garden; for they had given her their warm little

wympish hearts the moment she was born; so they allowed the sun to shine on her charming flower-beds as much as it pleased—and, of course, it pleased the sun to shine there very often indeed.

Now, the Princess's garden was surrounded by a wall. When she was quite a little girl, the King and Queen had ordered the wall to be built, just high enough to keep her from looking over it; and every time that the Princess grew a little more, another row of bricks was added to the wall, so that, by the time she had stopped growing altogether, the wall was ever so much higher than she was. She was such a dainty little Princess, though, that even then it was not a very high wall. Still, it was high enough to prevent her from seeing what was on the other side; and this annoyed her so much that all the pretty flowers the fairies could give her did not make up for the things she was not tall enough to see. The King and Queen had no idea of this; they loved their little daughter extremely, and they only thought how clever and how wise they were to keep her from looking into the world that lay outside her garden. "She might see something to frighten her, if she could see over the wall," they said,

The four Princes had no walls round their gardens, and what was more, they could see over the wall of their sister's garden, too; but they never thought of telling her what they saw.

"Boys always have all the fun," sighed the little Princess. "I wish I were a boy!"

Then, one by one, the three elder Princes rode away into the world and left their gardens to run to seed; and at last the time came for the King's youngest son to go too.

"It will be dreadfully dull when you have gone away," said the Princess, who was sitting on the grass-plot in her garden when Prince Hyacinth came to say good-bye to her.

"Oh no," answered her brother, with a smile; "you can still play in your pretty garden."

The Princess pouted. "*You* would not like to play by yourself for ever and ever and ever," she remarked.

The Prince was sure he would not have liked it at all, but then, he was not a little girl. "It must be rather dull," he confessed; "but perhaps, if you wait long enough, some other prince will come into your garden, and then you can ask him to play with you."

The Princess shook her head. "He will never be able to get in," she sighed. "Only look at that stupid high wall!"

Prince Hyacinth laughed outright, as princes sometimes do when their sisters are only little girls. "I expect he'll be able to get in, if he is anything of a prince," he observed. Then he kissed her on both cheeks, and rode away like the others.

That was how the Princess Gentianella was left alone in the most beautiful garden on this side of the sun. And if it had not been for the wymps, she might never have known to the end of her days what the world was like on the other side of her wall. Fortunately for every one, however, the wymps are never far off when a charming little princess is in trouble; and on the very day that the King's youngest son rode away into the world, one of the nicest and the naughtiest and the wympiest wymps of all came head first through the sun, and was sitting on the top of the Princess's wall with his legs dangling, before she had time to say "Oh!"

"Come now," said the wymp, "let's hear all about it." His tone was so exceedingly friendly, and he seemed so unlikely to give her good advice, which was all that a fairy would have done, that the Princess Gentianella dried her eyes and told him everything. When she had finished, the wymp stood on his head

to concentrate his thoughts, and reflected deeply. ✓

"Will *you* tell me what is on the other side of my wall?" asked the Princess Gentianella, as the wymp remained in this remarkable position without speaking. She did not know that it never makes much difference to a wymp whether he is on his head or his heels, so she was naturally afraid that he would make his head ache if he stood on it any longer. However, the wymp came through the air in somersaults, when he heard the Princess's question, and he landed in the middle of a bed of scarlet poppies and twinkled at her.

"You won't like it, if I do," he remarked.

"I am quite positive I shall," declared the Princess; "and you are such a particularly nice kind of wymp that you surely cannot refuse to tell me!"

No wymp of the right sort could have resisted an appeal like that; and as every wymp is the right sort of wymp, this particular wymp at once did as the Princess asked him.

"All right," he said. "There is n't much to tell, though. There are the usual rows of mountains, and the usual rivers and lakes and islands and peninsulas and —"

"Don't!" cried the Princess, stopping up her ears with her little pink finger-tips.

“—and isthmuses,” continued the wymp, cheerfully; “and volcanoes, and hot springs and cold springs, and palm-trees and apple-trees and boot-trees —”

“I don't believe,” interrupted the Princess, indignantly, “that there is nothing but a stupid geography book on the other side of my wall!”

The wymp looked at her and twinkled more than ever; but when he saw that her eyes were shining, just as her own flowers might have done at the time of the dew-fall, he stopped teasing her at once. No one knows better than a wymp when it is time to stop teasing.

“Hullo!” he said. “What is the matter now?”

“I thought I should see something quite different,” said the Princess, plaintively.

“So you would, my little dear,” cried the wymp. “I was only telling you what *I* saw. Give me those two ridiculous little hands of yours, and you shall see everything that I did n't.”

This time the Princess Gentianella did say “Oh!” and she said it because she found herself sitting on the top of her wall, with all the world on the other side of it lying stretched

out before her, for miles and miles and miles. She did not see very much at first, though, for she looked no further than the little corner of it that lay just under her eyes.

“Why,” said the Princess, softly, “there is a garden on the other side of my wall. And only look, there is a real Prince in the middle of it!”

She turned round to tell her wymp all about it, but the wymp had other work to do and was already on his way to the back of the sun. So there was nothing for it but to look over the wall again, and this time the Prince glanced up and saw her.

Now, Prince Amaryllis had been waiting a great many days for some one to appear at the top of the wall, but now that some one really had appeared there and was looking so extremely glad to see him, he suddenly found he had nothing whatever to say to her. That is what occasionally happens to the most charming of princes. Fortunately, however, the Princess knew perfectly well what to say to him.

“I knew there would be something nice on the other side of my wall,” she cried. “The wymp was quite wrong, was n't he?”

“No doubt he was, if you say so,” answered the Prince, who had never noticed the wymp

at all. "But how is it, little lady, that you can see me?"

The Princess opened her big eyes and stared at him. "How can I help seeing you, if you are there?" she asked.

"But I'm not here, that's just it," explained Prince Amaryllis; "at least, I am not supposed to be. You see, I have been invisible all my life, and you are the first person, outside my own country, who has ever been able to see me. I am very glad you can see me," he added politely; "one gets a little tired sometimes of being heard and not seen."

"When I was a little girl," said Princess Gentianella, drawing herself up to her full height, "I was always taught to be seen and not heard. That was very dull, too. But tell me, why is it that you are invisible?"

"Alas!" said the Prince. "The whole of my country is invisible, too. Tell me what you can see, Princess, from the top of your wall."

"I can see you," answered the little Princess, promptly.

"But do you see nothing else?" asked Prince Amaryllis.

The Princess shaded her eyes with her hand and looked away into the distance. "I can see a large flat plain, with no trees and no rivers



and no people and no houses," she answered presently.

Prince Amaryllis sighed. "You are looking right into my country," he said dolefully, "and it is every bit as full of trees and rivers and people and houses as anybody else's country. Do you not hear anything either?"

"Oh, yes," said Princess Gentianella; "I can hear the murmur of voices and the ripple of rivers and the rustle of trees. I have heard those sounds all my life, but I thought they were in the wind."

"Nothing of the sort," replied the Prince. "They are the sounds that belong to my country, where everybody is heard and not seen. It all began with a christening-party, a hundred years ago. My great-grandfather was King then, and he was the most absent-minded king that has ever ruled over us, and he forgot to ask the Witch to dance with him, which, of course, offended her deeply. And it happened that she was a witch who was always making experiments, so she experimented on my country at once by making it invisible, and it has been invisible ever since."

"How strange!" said Princess Gentianella. "I never remember hearing any one talk about your country."

"Of course not," sighed the Prince; "you can't expect people to talk about a thing that is n't there, can you? You have no idea how stupid it is to live in a place that no one can see." ✓

"But why does not someone disenchant your kingdom?" asked the Princess, who had read quite enough history to know that kingdoms are always disenchanting sooner or later.

"That is what I am trying to do," answered Prince Amaryllis. "The spell can only be removed if a king's son will spend a whole year in this waste piece of ground and make it into a beautiful garden. But although I have been here nearly a year, I have not been able to make a single flower grow. It is a little tiresome," he added with another sigh, "for it is part of the spell that I shall have to be executed if I fail."

"Dear me!" exclaimed the little Princess. "You are much too nice to be executed! Won't you let me come and play in your garden? Perhaps I might help you to make the flowers grow."

Prince Amaryllis shook his head and smiled. "It is not a nice garden to play in," he said. "I think I will come and play in yours instead,

and you shall teach me the way to make the flowers grow."

So the Prince jumped over the wall into the Princess's garden, and they walked about, hand in hand, among all the bright flower-beds that the fairies had planted there. They did not play very much, though, for they had so many things to talk about; and they talked and talked and talked, without stopping a moment, for the rest of the afternoon. For all that, when tea-time came and the Prince went back into his own garden, he remembered all sorts of things he might have said to the Princess if he had only thought of them in time; while Princess Gentianella, in the middle of her second cup of tea, also remembered all the things she might have said to the Prince, only she had not said them. That is always the way with princes and princesses who are carefully brought up.

After that, Princess Gentianella and Prince Amaryllis played together for a number of days. But they always played in the Princess's garden, because it was a much nicer garden to play in; and as for the Prince's garden, they seemed to have forgotten that altogether. Then, one afternoon, when the Princess ran out as usual into the hot sunshine, her Prince from

over the wall met her with a very disconsolate face.

"The year has come to an end," he told her, "and since I cannot make the flowers grow in my garden, I shall have to go and be executed as soon as the Witch sends for me."

The little Princess's lips began to quiver, and her eyes grew large and round and shining. "It is too bad," she declared, "to execute a really nice Prince like you!"

"Do not be distressed," replied Prince Amaryllis, in a resigned tone. "Now that I have seen you, little lady, I shall be almost glad to be executed."

"You are talking nonsense," declared the Princess. "Why do you want to be executed?"

"Because, even if I knew the way to make the flowers grow," he replied, "my country would not be disenchanting unless I married Anemone, the Witch's daughter, as well. And, of course, I would sooner be executed than do that!"

"What!" exclaimed the Princess; "you have promised to marry a witch's daughter? Do you mean to say that all this while I have been playing with somebody else's Prince?"

There was no doubt that the Princess Gen-

tianella was extremely angry; and the Prince could not help thinking that she was just a little bit unreasonable as well.

"You see, it was part of the disenchantment," he explained. "If *you* had to be invisible all your life, you would promise anything to get disenchanted. Besides," he added, as the Princess showed no signs of being appeased, "they told me that Anemone, although a witch's daughter, was exceedingly beautiful."

"What difference does that make?" demanded the Princess. "You ought to have told me before, that you were somebody else's Prince. You haven't been playing fair!"

"It is true I forgot to mention it," said the Prince, a little crossly; "but one cannot remember everything, you know."

Princess Gentianella gathered up her train with much dignity and turned her back on the Prince.

"People who are as forgetful as that deserve to be invisible," she observed haughtily; and with that she swept up the garden path and into the palace. She lost all her dignity, however, as soon as she was out of the Prince's sight; and it was a very doleful little Princess who came to take tea with her royal parents that afternoon. When she even went so far as

to say that she preferred bread-and-butter to plum-cake, the King and Queen began to be seriously alarmed.

"What is the matter with the child?" asked the Queen of the King.

"Perhaps she has a sunstroke," suggested the King, who thought that only illness could possibly prevent a daughter of his from eating her plum-cake at tea-time. The Queen knew better, but she waited until the King had gone back into his study before she said anything. Then she said the very best thing possible.

"What did you see when you looked over your wall, little daughter?" she asked.

"There was a prince on the other side," confessed the Princess Gentianella.

"To be sure, there was," smiled the Queen. "There is always a prince on the other side; but why should that make you unhappy? Is he not a nice prince?"

"He is a *real* Prince," said her little daughter; "and I should not be at all unhappy if he had not just told me that he is somebody else's Prince!"

"Never mind," said the Queen, consolingly; "you will soon find another prince in your garden."







“But not *that* Prince,” wept the poor little Princess.

“One prince is much the same as another,” said the Queen; but she did not think so for a moment, and no more did the little Princess.

Now, it was quite true that Prince Amaryllis had not been playing fair, and that his forgetfulness was enough to annoy the nicest little Princess in the world; but for all that, he was going to be executed, and it is difficult to be angry for long with anyone who is just going to be executed. So, when Princess Gentianella ran out once more into the sunshine on the following morning, she was fully prepared to make friends with her Prince from over the wall. She was greatly disturbed to find, however, that there was no one to make friends with; and although she called the Prince's name several times, not an answer came from the other side of the wall. Then the Princess Gentianella did what she had never been brave enough to do before,—she shut her eyes and jumped; and either she jumped higher than so small a princess ever jumped before, or else the wall was not nearly such a high wall as she had always thought it was, for the next moment she found herself on her two little feet in the very middle of the

Prince's garden. She was very close to the invisible country now, and the people's voices were so loud that she could actually hear what they were saying. This was not really surprising, though, for they were all saying the same thing.

"Our Prince cannot make the flowers grow, and the Witch has taken him away to be executed," was what they were saying.

When the Princess Gentianella heard that, she dropped straight down on the ground and burst into tears, and her tears rained all over the garden in showers; and wherever they fell, the flowers began to grow, — first of all, snow-drops and primroses and daffodils, then red poppies and blue larkspurs and white lilies, then hollyhocks and nasturtiums and mignonette, and last of all, roses, — red roses, pink roses, yellow roses, all sorts of roses. And the scent from all these flowers was so delicious that the little Princess lifted her head at last and looked round.

"Oh!" she cried, starting to her feet; "some one *has* made the flowers grow in the Prince's garden!"

"Some one certainly has," chuckled a voice from the top of the wall; and there sat the same wymp as before, looking just as though he had

never gone away to the back of the sun at all. At the same instant, the people's voices sounded louder than ever from the kingdom close by.

"The flowers have learned the way to grow in the Prince's garden," they were shouting; "and the Prince will not be executed, after all!"

Princess Gentianella danced for joy, in and out of the Prince's bright flower-beds. "The Prince will not be executed, after all," she said, too.

"And he will be able to marry Anemone, the Witch's beautiful daughter," added the wymph.

All the laughter died out of Princess Gentianella's face, and she looked up at the wymph in a very woe-begone manner indeed.

"Oh," she said piteously, "I never thought of that. I — I had quite forgotten that he was somebody else's Prince."

The wymph fairly wimpled when he saw the poor little Princess looking so unhappy. "Don't you fret about that, my little dear," he cried. "Do you suppose the Witch's daughter wants anybody else's Prince, either?"

Princess Gentianella clapped her hands with delight. "Of course she does n't!" she cried. "But perhaps she does not know he is somebody else's Prince."

“Then go and tell her so,” suggested the wymp; and before she had time to thank him for his advice he had gone off once more to the back of the sun.

The little Princess did not stop to think about it, but just ran as fast as she could towards the invisible kingdom of Prince Amaryllis. It might seem a little difficult to run towards a place that did not appear to be there, but to any one who was in as great a hurry as the little Princess a thing like that was of very small consequence. So she ran and she ran and she ran, until the Prince's kingdom was really obliged to stop being invisible, for in all the hundred years that it had been bewitched no one had ever tried so hard to see it before. Besides, it would have been most impolite of anybody's kingdom to go on pretending that it was not there, when the Princess was so determined to pretend that it was; so in the end she suddenly found herself in the middle of a country that was as full of trees and rivers and people and houses as any other country, and the particular part of it in which she found herself was a nice green field full of woolly sheep.

“What a charming kingdom!” exclaimed Princess Gentianella. “How green the trees

are, and how fresh everything looks! Why, there is not a speck of dust to be seen."

"Of course there is n't," answered a jolly little lamb, who was trying, as lambs will, to behave as though he had only two legs instead of four. "Dust, indeed! When a kingdom has not been seen for a hundred years, naturally it keeps fresher than a kingdom that any one can stare at. Nothing fades a kingdom like staring at it, you know. However, all this will soon be altered, for I hear that the Prince has made the flowers grow in his garden; so all he has to do now is to marry the Witch's daughter, and then we shall be disenchanting at last."

"Oh no, you won't!" said Princess Gentiarella, shaking her finger at him wisely.

"Why not?" asked the lamb, standing still for the first time in his life.

"Because the Prince is *not* going to marry the Witch's daughter," answered Princess Gentiarella; and she ran on before the lamb had time to recover from his astonishment.

Down a curly white road ran the little Princess, between two of the greenest hedges she had ever seen, until she came to a stile. Now, she had never climbed a stile in her life, so of course she did not know what to do next.

However, there stood the stile waiting to be climbed, and there stood the Princess feeling very much inclined to cry, when it happened most fortunately that an old woodcutter came strolling along. He was a particularly cross-looking woodcutter, but the Princess was in far too great a hurry to notice that.

"If you please," she said as politely as she could, "will you lift me over this great, big, high stile?"

The woodcutter at once did as he was asked, and then was so surprised at his own kindness that he stood and stared at the little Princess.

"Well, I never!" he exclaimed. "That's the first time in my life I ever did anything to please anybody. Are you a witch?"

"No, but I am looking for one," said Princess Gentianella. "Can you tell me where she is?"

"If you mean the one whose daughter is going to marry the Prince, I think I can," replied the woodcutter, who thought he might as well go on being kind, now that he had once begun.

"That is certainly not the witch I mean," answered the Princess, promptly, "for the Prince is *not* going to marry any witch's daughter!" And she ran on faster than ever.

Presently she came to a brook that was covered with ice.

"Dear me!" cried Princess Gentianella. "It was springtime round the corner, and here have I tumbled into the middle of winter!"

A fish popped his head through the ice, and laughed from ear to ear,—two things that he could do quite easily, for he happened to be a skate. "The seasons have been mixed up in this country ever since we were bewitched, a hundred years ago," he said. "It is no use being particular about the time of year when there is no one to see what kind of weather you are having. If you stand on tiptoe you will see summer going on in the next field."

"It must be very difficult to know what clothes to put on, when you take a walk in this country," remarked the Princess. "But, of course, it doesn't matter what you do wear when there is no one to look at you!"

"Well, well," said the skate, "things will soon be altered, and the seasons will have to right themselves again, for I am told that Prince Amaryllis is going to marry the Witch's daughter, and so the country will be disenchanting at last."

"Rubbish!" laughed the little Princess, knowingly. "Don't you believe everything

you are told! The Prince is going to do nothing of the sort!"

Then she ran away from the skate and the frozen brook, and she ran right out of winter into the middle of summer; and she might have gone on running until she reached the middle of autumn too, if she had not been stopped by an enormous sea-serpent who was lying stretched across the road. When the sea-serpent saw the Princess, of course he flapped his fifty-five fins at her, and lashed his tail about furiously, and growled in a hoarse, fishy voice. But the Princess mistook his fury for politeness. When one has lived in a garden with a wall round it and never seen a sea-serpent in one's life, one is apt to make these mistakes.

"I am very pleased to meet you," she said, with her most charming smile; "I have often wanted to meet a dragon."

"She calls me a dragon!" groaned the sea-serpent, foaming like the sea in a tempest; "and I am connected with the very best family of sea-serpents! What will people say next?"

"I am very sorry," said the Princess, humbly. "You see, I thought, as you were not in the sea—"

"I was expecting that," interrupted the sea-



serpent, bitterly. "No one ever will believe in me unless I stop in the sea. It is very depressing!"

"I am sure I am very glad you have come out of the sea," said the Princess, politely, "because it has given me the pleasure of meeting you. But does it not make you very thirsty to lie in this hot dusty road?"

"Not nearly so thirsty as stopping in the sea and having nothing but salt water to drink," answered the sea-serpent. "People do not realise what a thirsty life a sea-serpent has to lead. If they did," he added severely, "they would not stand in front of him and ask so many questions!"

The Princess laughed merrily. "I do not want to stand here at all," she explained; "but unless you move your tail a little on one side, I really cannot get past."

"If you do get past," growled the sea-serpent, "you will fall into the Witch's hands."

"That is exactly where I want to fall!" cried Princess Gentianella; "only you must move your tail a little bit more than that, or else I am afraid I shall step on it."

It was such a novelty for the sea-serpent to find some one who was not frightened of him, that he had not the heart to tell her that he

was just going to eat her up. So he moved his tail out of the way, and Princess Gentianella blew a kiss to him from the tips of her little pink fingers and ran on as before.

The next person she met was an old woman, who was picking thistles in a field.

"I wonder why you are doing that!" said the Princess, opening her big blue eyes.

"I am making an experiment, to see if I can find any one with so brave a heart that the thistles will not be able to hurt it," answered the old woman, mysteriously.

"But does it not scratch your fingers to gather those large prickly thistles?" asked the little Princess.

"Perhaps it does," the old woman said shortly; "but who do you suppose is going to gather them for me?"

She seemed rather cross, but the Princess supposed it was because she had pricked her fingers so much.

"Well, I am in a most tremendous hurry, but I think I can stop and help you," she answered; and down she dropped on her knees and began to pick thistles as fast as she could. And when the thistles saw what soft pink fingers were going to take hold of them, they at once bent back all their prickles and allowed

the Princess to gather as many as she pleased without giving her so much as a scratch. When she had filled the old woman's apron for her, she began to run off at full speed, to make up for lost time. But the old woman called her back.

"Stop!" she cried. "Where are you going?"

"I am going to find the Witch's daughter," answered Princess Gentianella, looking back impatiently.

"Oh, indeed!" said the old woman. "May I ask what you want with her?"

"I want to tell her not to marry Prince Amaryllis, because he is not her Prince but somebody else's Prince," said Princess Gentianella.

"Oh, indeed!" said the old woman again. "And whose Prince may he be, then?"

"He is my Prince, of course!" answered the little Princess, laughing happily; and then away she ran across the field, and into the wood that lay beyond.

In the wood, under a hazel-tree, sat a tall and beautiful girl, weeping bitterly.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" said Princess Gentianella, mournfully. "How dreadfully sorry I am!"

"Why?" asked the girl, looking up at her.

"Because you are crying, to be sure," answered the Princess. "Will you tell me why you are so sad?"

"My mother, who is always making experiments, wants me to marry a Prince I have never seen, just to see how we should like it," explained the girl. "And all the while, I am somebody else's Princess!"

"That is very strange," remarked Princess Gentianella. "Now *I* am sad because my Prince has got to marry Anemone, the Witch's beautiful daughter, and I am trying to find her to tell her that he is really my Prince. Do you think she will want to marry him, when she hears that he is somebody else's Prince?"

The beautiful girl suddenly sprang to her feet and began to laugh joyfully. "I am sure she will not," she answered, "for *I* am Anemone, the Witch's daughter. So nobody will have to marry anybody's Prince except her own, and the witch will not be able to make experiments any more!"

"That is settled, then," said the little Princess, contentedly. "Now let us go and find our Princes. But supposing that I find your Prince first, how shall I know that he *is* your Prince?"

"His name is Hyacinth," answered the Witch's daughter.

"How delightful!" cried Princess Gentianella, clapping her hands. "Then I shall find my youngest brother as well as my Prince. But do you know where they are?"

Anemone, the Witch's daughter, began to look a little doubtful. "I have just remembered," she confessed, "that I sent Hyacinth to kill your Prince, only a few minutes before you came along. Do not be anxious, however," she added hastily, "for perhaps he will not be able to find him."

The Princess Gentianella was not at all anxious. "Nobody could possibly be strong enough to kill my Prince," she observed; "and as for Hyacinth, he will be quite safe, for Prince Amaryllis is much too nice to hurt any one!"

She proved to be right, for in another minute they saw the two Princes coming towards them arm in arm. And if this should seem extraordinary, it must be remembered that it all took place in an enchanted wood, where a witch had been making experiments for hundreds and hundreds of years.

"There was no necessity to kill him, dearest," cried Prince Hyacinth, "for he is somebody else's Prince."

He held out his arms as he spoke, and into them ran Anemone, the Witch's daughter, and

of course there is no need to tell into whose arms the little Princess ran. After that, there was nothing to be heard in the wood except kissing, until the Witch suddenly stepped on the scenes.

“Cobwebs and broomsticks! What is the meaning of this?” she cried furiously.

Three of them turned round and faced her in an extremely nervous manner; for, after all, a witch is a witch, and they knew fast enough that she could turn them into any shape she pleased. The Princess Gentianella did not seem nervous, however.

“Why, you are the nice old lady I met in the field,” she exclaimed.

“I believe I am,” said the Witch, who had never been called a nice old lady in her life before, and was not quite sure how to take it.

“I have found my Prince, you see,” continued the little Princess, smiling away as happily as possible.

“So it seems,” said the Witch. She was afraid to say more than that, in case the Princess should find out who she was, and she thought she would like to be a nice old lady a little longer first.

“And have you found any one yet who has so brave a heart that the thistles cannot hurt it?” asked Princess Gentianella.

"I think I have," said the Witch.

"Then we have all found what we want," smiled Princess Gentianella, "and the Witch cannot surely be so unkind as to refuse to disenchant the kingdom, just because her daughter does n't want to marry my Prince! Do you think she can?"

The Witch dropped her thistles and held out her hands to the eager Princess. "My dear little girl," she said, "the kingdom was disenchanted the moment you came into it. As for the Witch, there is no Witch any longer, for she retired into private life as a nice old lady, just ten minutes ago. Now, as you all seem to have sorted yourselves the right way, the best thing you can do is to go off home as fast as you can."

No doubt that is where Anemone must have gone with her Prince, for when the little Princess looked round and found herself standing once more in her own garden, there was no one with her except Prince Amaryllis.

"*Now* may I come and play in your garden?" asked Princess Gentianella, softly.

The Prince still shook his head. "I have a much better idea than that," he said; "we will pull down the wall and make it all into one garden."





# The Tears of Princess Prunella



## The Tears of Princess Prunella

**T**HERE is no doubt that the Princess Prunella would have been the most charming little girl on either side of the sun, if she had not been so exceedingly cross and discontented. She was as pretty as any one could wish to see, and as accomplished as all the gifts of Fairyland could make her; and she had every bit of happiness that the love of her parents and the wit of her fairy godmother could put in her way. And yet she grumbled and grumbled and grumbled!

“Can you not try to be happy, just for five minutes?” asked the Queen, in despair.

“How can you expect me to be happy, even for five minutes, when every five minutes is exactly like the last five minutes?” sighed the little Princess.

“It is tea-time, your Highness,” said the head nurse, coaxingly, “and there are pink sugar cakes for tea!”

“There were pink sugar cakes yesterday,” pouted the Princess. “There are always pink

sugar cakes unless there are white sugar cakes, and I am equally tired of them both. Can you not tell me something new?"

"Let her go without her tea," said the King, who was rather tired of having such a cross little daughter. But the Queen only smiled.

"The child wants a change," she remarked. "It must be very dull to play alone all day."

"Dull!" exclaimed the King. "Why should it be dull? Has not her godmother given her such wonderful toys that they can play with her as well as be played with?" This was quite true, for the very ball that the Princess threw to the other end of the nursery could catch itself and throw itself back to her; and it is not every ball that can do that. "What more can the child want?" demanded the King, crossly.

The Queen, however, thought there might be something more. "We must find her a playfellow," she said wisely.

"Stuff and nonsense!" protested the King. "Why should we bring any more crying children into the palace? However, you must do as you like, I suppose."

The King always told the Queen to do as she liked when he was tired of the conversation; so the Queen smiled again and issued a

proclamation at once, to tell the whole world that the Princess Prunella wanted some one to play with, and would be ready to choose a play-fellow that day week, at twelve o'clock in the morning. Now, it is not often that one gets a chance of playing with a King's daughter, so it is no wonder that, when the Princess followed her royal parents into the great hall on the appointed day, she found it filled from end to end with all the little princes and princesses and all the little counts and countesses and all the little dukes and duchesses that the surrounding kingdoms could produce.

"I never had a more excellent idea," said the Queen, as she seated herself on the throne and looked down at the crowd of children. "Prunella has talked of nothing else for a whole week, and she has not been heard to grumble once."

"That's all very well," observed the King, a little uneasily; "but it is quite clear that she cannot play with them all, and who knows that so much disappointment will not lead to a war?"

The Queen did not answer but turned to her little daughter, who stood by her side. "Do not be in a hurry," she said to her. "So many faces are confusing at first, and you might regret it afterwards if you made a mistake."

But Princess Prunella showed no signs of being in a hurry. She just glanced over the sea of faces that were turned towards her, and then looked speechlessly at her mother. The smiles had all gone from her face, and the big blue eyes were filled with tears.

"Why, they are all exactly alike!" she said piteously. "I cannot tell one from another." And to the astonishment of every one in the room, she dropped down on the steps of the throne and began to cry.

"Dear, dear! What is to be done?" exclaimed the Queen, in much alarm. "It will look so very bad if all the children have to be sent home again!"

"It will certainly lead to a war," was all the King said; and then they both looked helplessly at their sobbing little daughter. As for all the children, they were so surprised at hearing how much alike they were that they said nothing at all; and it is difficult to tell what would have been the end of the matter, if the Princess had not suddenly jumped to her feet again and pointed towards the door.

"There is the Prince I should like to play with," she exclaimed. "*He* is not like the others, for he has a wonderful look on his face."

Everybody looked round at the doorway; and, sure enough, there stood a boy whom no one had noticed before. "Come here, Prince," commanded the Princess, raising her voice haughtily; "you may kiss my hand if you like."

But the boy drew back with a bewildered air and shook his head. Princess Prunella stamped her foot angrily.

"How dare you hesitate when I tell you to come here?" she cried. At this, however, the strange boy turned and hastened out of the room altogether; and a loud murmur of astonishment rose from the children. ✓

The King's daughter had never been disobeyed in her life before, and for a moment she was too astonished to speak.

"Who is he? What is his name?" she demanded at last.

There was a pause, broken presently by the shrill voice of one of the pages. "Please, your Highness, it is only deaf Robert, the minstrel's son," he said.

"Deaf!" repeated the Princess. "What is that?"

"It means that he cannot hear anything, little daughter," explained the Queen; "so, you see, he would not do for a playfellow at all.

Besides, he is not even a Prince. Can you not choose one of these others instead?"

The Princess, however, could do nothing of the kind. "All these are alike," she said again; "but the minstrel's son has a wonderful look on his face, and I will have no one else for a playfellow!"

So all the children went sadly back to their homes, and wondered why they were so much alike; and the whole court was made uncomfortable once more by the sulkiness of Princess Prunella.

"Your Highness's best wax doll has not been out for two whole days," suggested the head nurse.

The Princess snatched the doll from her hands and threw it on the floor.

"If you will not let me play with a boy who is deaf, how can you expect me to play with a *doll*?" she asked; and although, no doubt, there was much in what she said, it was hardly the way in which to speak to the head nurse. Indeed, there would have been a serious disturbance in the royal nursery the very next minute, if the Princess's cream-coloured pony had not suddenly trotted round from the stable of its own accord, and put it into her head to go for a ride.



Now, the Princess's pony was of course a fairy pony; so when he ran away with her in the forest, that day, it was not to be supposed that he would run away with her for nothing. He took her, in fact, for a real fairy ride, all through a fairy forest, that began by being quite a baby forest and then grew and grew, the deeper she went into it, until it ended in being quite a grown-up forest. And the pony never stopped running away until he reached a dear little grey house, that was set in the brightest of flower gardens, right in the middle of the forest.

The Princess slipped off his back and pushed open the little gate and walked into the flower garden. Any one else might have been surprised to find deaf Robert sitting there, in the middle of the trim green lawn, but after a fairy ride one is never surprised at anything; so the Princess's heart just gave one big jump for joy, and she ran straight up to him and took his hand.

"Poor deaf boy! poor deaf boy!" she said softly. Certainly she was not behaving like a King's daughter, for she ought to have been extremely angry with him for disobeying her in the morning, instead of which she spoke as gently to him as any ordinary little girl might

have done. But then, as he could not hear what she said to him, what was the use of speaking like a princess?

“Poor deaf boy!” she repeated, bending over him; “no wonder you look so dull and unhappy!”

It was the first time in her life that she had forgotten she was a princess, and she was quite surprised at the gentleness of her own voice. She was still more surprised when the deaf boy rose to his feet and bowed very low and answered her.

“I was only unhappy, Princess, because I could not hear what you said to me this morning,” he explained.

“Oh!” cried the Princess. “You *can* hear me now!”

“Ah, yes,” said deaf Robert; “I can hear you now, because you speak so kindly. It is only when people are angry and speak roughly that I cannot hear them. That is why they say I am deaf.”

“Have you always been deaf?” asked the Princess, wonderingly.

“Ever since the wymps came to my christening,” answered the minstrel’s son. “For when they asked my father what gift he would choose for me, he chose that I should

be deaf to every sound that was not beautiful."

"So that is why you have such a wonderful look on your face," said Princess Prunella. "I wish the wymps went to everybody's christening!"

Deaf Robert shook his head. "If they had not come to mine," he remarked, "I should have been able to hear what you said to me this morning."

"Never mind!" said the Princess. "Come back to the palace with me now; I will never speak crossly to you again, and then you will always be able to hear what I say."

"No, no," answered Robert, shrinking back. "I cannot come to the town; it is so silent there, it frightens me."

"Silent?" echoed the Princess. "Surely, it is the forest that is silent!"

"Oh, no," said the minstrel's son, smiling; "the forest is full of sound. Can you not hear them all talking,—the bees and the flowers and the great pine-trees?"

Princess Prunella listened. "No," she said, shaking her head, "I can hear nothing." Then she took the deaf boy's hands and pulled him towards the gate. "Come back to the town with me," she said eagerly. "It is true that

you cannot hear the other people's voices ; but you will always be able to hear *me*, and that is ever so much more important ! ”

So the minstrel's son went back to the palace with Princess Prunella ; and when the King and Queen saw how happy their little daughter was at last, they said nothing more about deaf Robert not being a prince, but got over the difficulty by making him a Marquis on the spot and giving him the appointment of Playfellow-in-chief to her Royal Highness. A magnificent banquet was given to celebrate this important event, at which several speeches were made by the King and several tunes were played by the band ; but as the speeches were exceedingly pompous and the tunes were exceedingly noisy, the new Marquis, for whom they were intended, heard neither one nor the other. However, he heard every word that the little Princess whispered in his ear, and perhaps that was all that he wished to hear.

Never had life passed so peacefully at the palace as in the days that followed. The Princess was never heard to utter an angry word, and she went about with a contented look on her face that cheered the hearts of all who knew her. It was indeed a happy day

for the court when the minstrel's son came to play with the King's daughter, and every one rejoiced that the King and the Queen had been wise enough to let their little daughter have her own way. But all this while no one thought of the minstrel's son.

Now, anybody might suppose that a minstrel's son, who suddenly found himself made into a Marquis and Playfellow-in-chief to a Princess, would be the happiest boy in the world. And yet, although he grew fonder every day of his little playfellow, deaf Robert was the saddest person in the whole court. He grew more and more silent as the days went on, until at last even the Princess noticed that he was changed.

"The wonderful look has gone from your face," she said to him. "Can it be that you do not feel happy at court?" ✓

Then the boy-Marquis told her the truth. "I am unhappy because I cannot hear the sounds of the town," he said. "Will not your father go and live in the forest for a change, so that we can play there together, instead of in this horrible, silent place?"

"But I don't want to go and play in the forest," objected the Princess. "There are no people in the forest; and I should forget I

was a person myself, if I had nothing to talk to but the flowers and the trees."

For the first time since they had played together, deaf Robert remembered that he was nearly two years older than the little Princess; and he smiled in a superior manner. "That is only because you hear all the wrong things," he said. "If you could once hear the sounds of the forest, you would never want to come back to the town."

The Princess turned red with anger, and she opened her mouth to give the minstrel's son a thorough good scolding, which would certainly have surprised him had he been able to hear it. But she remembered in time that he would not be able to hear it, so she sighed impatiently and answered him as softly as she could.

"You are quite mistaken," she said, putting her chin in the air. "If you were a real boy you would understand." And with that she turned and left him. It was certainly annoying not to be able to lose her temper whenever she felt inclined, but there was nothing to prevent her from remembering that she was a princess.

That afternoon, the Princess pricked her finger, and the minstrel's son found out that

what she had said was quite true, and he was not a real boy at all. For, of course, the Princess did what any other little girl of twelve years old would have done, and burst into tears; while the minstrel's son, who was quite unable to hear her sobs, only stared at her solemnly, and wondered why her pretty round face had suddenly twisted itself into such a strange expression.

"What are you doing, Prunella?" he asked her gravely.

"Doing!" wept the Princess. "Why, I am crying, of course! That is what you would be doing if you had pricked your finger as badly as I have." She held out her small white finger as she spoke, but the minstrel's son only stared at her as solemnly as before.

"Crying? What is that?" he asked. "And why should you do anything so useless? Surely, it would be better to fetch a doctor or a piece of sticking-plaster."

Princess Prunella came to the end of her patience. It had been bad enough to exist for six whole weeks without being allowed to lose her temper once, but now that she found she could not even cry with any pleasure, she felt it was more than any little girl of twelve years old could be expected to bear.

“It is n't sticking-plaster that I want,” she said miserably. “When people cry, they want to be comforted, of course.”

“Do they?” said deaf Robert, looking perplexed. “But if I cannot hear you cry, how am I to comfort you?”

The Princess was far too cross to be reasonable, though she managed to remember that it was no use letting her crossness appear in her voice. “That's just it!” she sobbed. “You ought to be able to hear me cry, and then you would be a real boy!”

And the Princess pitied herself so much for being forced to play with some one who was not real, that she buried her face in her hands and wept more than ever. She half hoped, even then, that deaf Robert would come and kiss her and make friends again, as any nice boy would have done at once; but deaf Robert did nothing of the kind, and when she at last took her hands from her eyes, her playfellow was gone.

Truly, the forest had never looked so beautiful as on that day when the minstrel's son hastened through it on his way to his old home. The flowers looked their best, and the birds sang their merriest, and the trees bent their greenest boughs, to give him a wel-



come; but the boy with the wonderful look on his face, who had lived among them for so long, never paused so much as to glance at them, and they only had time to notice, as he passed them by, that the wonderful look was no longer there. On he hurried until he came to the little grey house, set in its garden of bright-coloured flowers; and he pushed open the gate and walked in, just as his Princess had done six weeks ago.

The minstrel was at home, this time, and he was sitting on the doorstep in the sunshine. He had just composed a new song, and that always made him extremely happy; but he sighed a little when he saw his son come in at the gate, for he, too, had no difficulty in seeing that the wonderful look had gone from the boy's face.

"What is the matter, my son?" he asked anxiously.

Deaf Robert wasted no time in greeting him. "Father," he cried, "why did you ask the wymps to my christening?"

"That is easily answered," said the minstrel, soothingly. "It was because I wished you to hear nothing but beautiful sounds all your life."

"But what sounds do you call beautiful?" demanded his son.

The minstrel smiled. "Can you not hear my music?" he asked.

"Yes, yes," said deaf Robert; "but what else?"

It had never struck the minstrel that there need be anything else, and he hesitated a little. "Well," he said at last, "can you not hear the sounds of the forest?"

Deaf Robert looked up at the pine-trees overhead and down to the flowers at his feet. "I used to be able to," he said sadly, "but even the forest has grown silent now." Then he clenched his fists and looked imploringly at his father. "Must I live to the end of my days without hearing any of the things that other boys hear?" he cried.

"You are a little unreasonable, my son," said the minstrel. "Are not the beautiful sounds of life enough for you?"

"Enough?" said deaf Robert. "I want much, much more than that, father. Why, I want to hear the Princess cry!"

"That is nonsense!" exclaimed the minstrel. "Tears make a most unpleasant sound, and you would be extremely disappointed if you were to hear the Princess cry."

The minstrel's son drew himself up proudly. "You do not understand; you are not real

either," he said. "The tears of *my* Princess make the sweetest sound in the world, and I am not going to rest until I learn how to hear it." Then he turned and walked through the gate and out into the forest once more.

The minstrel looked after him and sighed. "It was the best gift I could think of," he murmured; "it was the one I would have chosen for myself. It is true," he added thoughtfully, "that I never wanted to play with a King's daughter."

The minstrel's son wandered aimlessly through the forest,—the forest that he had once liked so well because it was all his, and that he only liked now because he had found his little Princess in it; and there he might have been wandering still, if he had not suddenly met a wymp. This was not really surprising in that particular forest, for it was just the kind of forest in which any boy of fourteen might at any minute meet a wymp; but for all that, deaf Robert was just a little bit startled when the wymp suddenly dropped in his path from the tree above and nodded at him.

"Hullo!" said the wymp. "What is the matter with you?"

"I am very unhappy, because I am not a real boy," explained deaf Robert.

"Dear me! How is that?" asked the wymp, pretending to be surprised.

"Well, *you* ought to know," answered deaf Robert. "It is all because the wymps came to my christening."

"Nothing of the sort!" cried the wymp, indignantly. "It is all because your father insisted on knowing better than we did, and we let him have his own way. If the wymps had not been at your christening, you would not even *want* to be a real boy. So you cannot hear the Princess cry, eh? That's a good wymphish joke, that is!" And the wymp stood on his head and choked with laughter.

"It is all very well for you to laugh," complained the minstrel's son. "You don't know how unpleasant it is to be a boy without being a real boy."

The wymp came down on his toes again and stopped laughing. "Then why don't you go and learn to be a real boy?" he asked in surprise.

"How can I find out the way?" asked deaf Robert.

"You ridiculous boy!" exclaimed the wymp. "Why, the first person you meet will be able to tell you that!"

Deaf Robert had no time to thank him for his information, for the wymp began turning

somersaults the moment he had finished speaking, and he went on turning them until he turned into nothing at all, and there was no more wymp to be seen. Then the minstrel's son walked on through the forest; and for three days and three nights he met no one at all, but on the morning of the fourth day he came to the very edge of the forest, and there he saw an old woman sitting by the side of a blackberry bush.

"Hurrah!" cried deaf Robert, waving his cap. "Do you know that you are the first person I have met, and that you are going to tell me how to become a real boy?"

"I will tell you at once," said the old woman, smiling, "for you come straight to the point and do not beat about the bush. This is what you must do, then:—something brave and something kind and something foolish and something wise. If you are not a real boy after that, it will be your own fault!" Then she walked round the blackberry bush and disappeared; and although deaf Robert forgot what she had just said about him and beat about that bush in good earnest, he never saw any more of her.

Then the minstrel's son walked straight on in search of a brave deed to do; and this did

not take him long, for there are always plenty of brave deeds waiting to be done by some one. So, long before the sun was above his head that day, he came to a castle where a beautiful Princess was being kept captive by a cruel old giant, — all because he was cruel, and for no other reason at all. And when deaf Robert saw the Princess weeping behind the bars of her prison window, he was reminded of his own little Princess whom he had left weeping on the nursery floor; and that made him call on the giant instantly to come out and be killed. The giant laughed a great laugh and came out into the courtyard, not to be killed, but to kill the minstrel's son instead; but before he had time to do that, the minstrel's son had managed to kill *him*, and there was an end of the cruel old giant.

“That is the bravest deed I have ever seen done!” cried the Princess, when he fetched her out of her dungeon.

“Brave deeds are easily done, then,” said deaf Robert; but he was glad enough, all the same, to hear that he had done the first part of his task. The next thing he did was to take the beautiful Princess back to her own country; and that seemed to him a great waste of time, for he could not certainly do his kind

deed so long as he had the Princess on his hands. But when they reached her country and the Princess told her father how deaf Robert had come out of his way to bring her home, the old King was pleased, and asked him what reward he would like for his trouble. "For," he said, "you have done the kindest deed any one could possibly think of."

"No reward for me!" laughed deaf Robert; "for there is my kind deed done without my knowing it!" And off he set once more on his travels.

After that, the minstrel's son wandered about for a great many days; for neither a wise nor a foolish deed could he find to do. Sometimes, when he thought he had been wise, the people told him he was cruel, and drove him out of their country; and sometimes, when he was sure he had been foolish, they only praised him for his kindness. He grew tired and foot-sore, and his clothes became old and ragged, and he almost forgot that he had once been a Marquis and Playfellow-in-chief to a princess. But he never forgot how the little Princess Prunella had looked, as she sat on the nursery floor and wept with sobs that he was not able to hear. So two years passed away, and still he had not learned how to be a real boy.

One day, as he walked along a country road, he came upon a girl driving cows.

"Why are you looking so sad?" she asked him.

"Because I left my Princess crying in her nursery two years ago, and I have been away from her ever since," answered the boy, simply.

The girl burst out laughing. "Well," she exclaimed, "that was a foolish thing to do!"

"Foolish?" shouted deaf Robert. "Did you say *foolish*?"

"To be sure I did," laughed the girl. "Could anything be more foolish than to keep away from some one whom you want to be with?"

"Then I will go back to her this very instant," declared the minstrel's son.

"And that would be the wisest thing you could do," answered the girl; and she immediately disappeared, cows and all, which just shows that she must have been a wymp all the while.

"Well," said deaf Robert, "there are my wise and my foolish deeds done together, and now I am a real boy!"

Then off he set homewards as fast as he could go; and although it had taken him two years to come away from home, it only took him two hours to get back again, so it is clear



that the wymps must have had a hand in that, too. And just about tea-time he stood outside the nursery door in the palace of his own little Princess.

It is well to remember that the wymps had come to the christening of the minstrel's son; otherwise it might seem a little wonderful that the Princess Prunella should have pricked her finger again, on the very day that her Play-fellow-in-chief came back to her. Anyhow, that is what had happened; and as the minstrel's son stood outside the door and listened, he heard the softest and the sweetest and the prettiest sound he had ever heard in his life.

"Hurrah!" he cried. "At last I can hear the Princess cry!" And he burst open the door and ran into the room, all in his rags and his tatters, and knelt down to comfort the King's daughter.

"Only look at my finger," wept Princess Prunella, as she showed him her little hand. Truly, it was impossible to tell which of her small white fingers the Princess had pricked, but as the minstrel's son kissed every one of them in turn, it is clear that he must have healed the right one; and that, of course, was why the Princess stopped crying at once.

Then she looked at her old playfellow and

laughed for joy to see him there again. "The wonderful look has come back into your face," she said, "but it is ever so much more wonderful than before!"

"Dear little playfellow," whispered the minstrel's son, "I can hear the forest sounds again, too; but you were right all the time, and the sounds of the town are much more charming than the sounds of the forest."

"Oh, no," declared the Princess. "There you are quite mistaken, for the sounds of the forest are more beautiful by far."

And it is a fact that they have been disputing the point ever since.

# The Palace on the Floor



## The Palace on the Floor

PRINCE PICOTEE had just built a fairy palace on the nursery floor, and he sat back on his heels and looked at it with pride. Surely, no one had ever built so fine a palace before in the space of thirteen minutes and a half! Not only were there two lofty towers that soared proudly upwards until they were actually as tall as the Prince himself, but there was a great arched doorway as well, with a flight of steps leading down from it away under the nursery table; and there was even a drawbridge, made of a single big brick and suspended by a piece of string. All this, however, might be found in anybody's palace; what made the Prince's palace different from every one else's was just the way the windows were built. They were not built in rows, like ordinary windows, so that any one could guess how dull and square the rooms were inside; but they appeared here and there as if by accident, sometimes at a corner, sometimes

on the top of another window, sometimes under the battlements, wherever, in fact, the little builder-Prince had felt inclined to put a window; and the most wonderful thing of all was that, however much he tried to peep through them, he could not possibly see what the rooms were like beyond. So the palace he had built himself was full of beautiful halls and rooms and passages that no one would ever be able to see.

"No doubt," exclaimed Prince Picotee, "this is the most wonderful palace that ever was built!"

Just then Dimples, the Prime Minister's little daughter, ran into the room. "How absurd!" she cried. "Why, it is n't a real palace at all!"

"It is real enough for me," said Prince Picotee. "When I am grown up and a king, I shall have a palace exactly like this to live in."

Dimples came and sat on the floor by the Prince. "I should n't like to live in a palace that would tumble down directly you pulled out the bottom brick," she observed, placing her fat little finger on the brick as she spoke.

The Prince seized her hand hastily. "There will be no girls in my palace," he said with

dignity; "it is only girls who want to pull down other people's palaces."

Dimples put her head on one side and examined the palace afresh. "How untidy your steps are!" she remarked. "The top one is shorter than the others, and there is a join in the middle of the second one."

The Prince felt a little hurt. "It is not my fault if the bricks are not all the same length," he said. "Besides, those things do not matter. Only look at my beautiful windows!"

Dimples looked, and burst out laughing. "What funny windows!" she exclaimed. "Why, you can't see into the rooms! What is the use of having a palace when you don't know what it is like inside?"

"You don't understand," answered Prince Picotee. "Anybody can see inside an ordinary palace; this is a particular palace, you see."

Dimples did not see at all; so she changed the conversation. "What are all those soldiers doing on the table?" she asked.

"They are not on the table," explained the Prince. "They have been marching since yesterday morning, and they are on the road to my fairy palace." He then began to station his soldiers on the battlements of the two lofty towers.

“I suppose you think your wooden soldiers are real, too!” laughed the Prime Minister’s daughter.

“Hush!” whispered the Prince. “If you speak so loud, they will hear you, and it would never do for them to know that you called them wooden. *Anything* might happen to you if you made them really angry!”

“You are only talking nonsense,” said Dimples, which was what she always said when she did not understand what the Prince meant. At the same time she could not help being struck by the look on the face of the soldier that Prince Picotee had just picked up. It was the captain of the little regiment; and as the Prince placed him at the post of danger on the bottom brick of all, she felt sure that she saw a flush of anger on his painted wooden cheeks and a gleam of mischief in his round black eyes. “He is only a toy soldier,” said Dimples, tossing her head; but she did not say it aloud, and it is certain that she felt a little uncomfortable, all the rest of that day, about the look on the captain’s face.

Now, Dimples had come to stay with the Prince for a few days, and it happened that the room in which she slept was next to the royal nursery; and right in the middle of the night —



which, as every one knows, is the time for wymps and fairies to be about — she awoke suddenly with a most unpleasant start. There, by the side of her bed, stood one of the Prince's wooden soldiers, shouldering his wooden gun as though he had never done anything else for the whole of his life, — which was certainly the truth, — and holding himself just for all the world as though he were glued together. He was certainly a most military-looking soldier, and if Dimples had not been a particularly brave little girl, she might have been decidedly frightened.

“What do you want?” she asked, sitting up and rubbing her eyes.

“Follow me. Prince's palace. Captain's orders,” said the little soldier, in three jerks; and he turned round and marched stiffly towards the door. His tone was hard; but then, of course, his voice, like everything else about him, was made of wood. Dimples made no fuss about obeying him, for she was always ready for an adventure; so out of bed she jumped without any more ado, and followed him into the next room. It took them several minutes to get there, because the soldier walked so very slowly; but this, again, was not surprising, for people with wooden

legs cannot be expected to walk as fast as ordinary folk.

When they reached the nursery, Dimples gave a cry of surprise. It was evident that the Prince's palace had sprung upwards since the afternoon, for the two towers were now far above her head, while as for the drawbridge, by the time she had crossed it and mounted the magnificent flight of steps, she found herself quite out of breath. "Perhaps it is a real palace, after all," she said doubtfully.

"Don't mutter. Bad manners. Captain's prisoner," said the soldier in three jerks, as before.

Dimples did not answer, for at that moment she stepped inside the Prince's palace and was too breathless with excitement to utter a word. It was indeed no ordinary hall in which she found herself; it was built entirely of oak beams of different lengths, so that in one place the ceiling was low and in another place it was high, in one corner there were several doors, and in another there were several windows; here an arch tottered perilously over an opening, and there a solitary pillar blocked up the whole of a doorway. It was truly a wonderful palace, as the Prince had said, but it was a little surprising at first sight. Dimples, how-

ever, had no time to think about it, for at that moment a stern voice was heard coming from below the floor of the hall.

“Bring the prisoner here!” said the voice. Dimples looked through a hole in the floor, — which was not difficult, as the floor was full of holes, — and there, on the bottom brick of all, stood the toy captain.

“Come along. Bottom brick. Captain waiting,” said her guide; and with some little difficulty — for it is not easy to jump from beam to beam when one is accustomed to solid floors — she scrambled after him and arrived in front of the terrible captain.

“Oho!” said the captain, grasping his sword as tightly as he could, — which was very tight, as it happened, because his fingers were glued to it, — “who is the real person now, you or I?”

The question was a puzzling one, but Dimples did her best to answer it truthfully. “Well,” she said, “I suppose you are real, though I did n’t think so before; and I suppose I am real, too; but it is rather confusing, is n’t it?”

“Not at all confusing,” said the captain, a little rudely it must be owned. “It is quite clear that I am real, of course; but as for you — why, you are not even painted!”

"No," said Dimples, as politely as she could, "I am not painted, and I don't think I want to be painted, thank you. Why, I should never feel safe for a moment if I had a face that anybody could wash off with a sponge!"

At this the toy captain was so furious that he shook with anger from head to foot.

"Do you know," he said, "that I have only to pull out the brick on which I am standing, and the whole palace will tumble down on your head?"

"Of course I know," laughed Dimples, who was growing less frightened every minute; "but if you do, it will tumble down on your head as well as mine."

"That is true," said the toy captain, "but I am a real person and I am made of wood, so it will make no difference to me."

Dimples was obliged to own that there was something in what the captain said; and as she disliked nothing so much as being beaten in an argument, she at once pretended not to be listening.

"Oh, dear, how hungry I am!" she said, yawning.

"If you were real and not made up," said the toy captain, "you would never get hungry at all." However, he called out to a soldier,

who was mounting guard on the top of a pillar just over his head, and ordered him to bring the prisoner some food. In a few minutes, Dimples found herself in front of a curious meal, served on round cardboard dishes and consisting of one red jelly, two raw mutton chops, a bunch of grapes, and a slice of salmon.

"But they won't come off the dishes, will they?" asked Dimples, who had fed her dolls for years on the very things that were now placed before her.

"Of course not," said the toy captain. "They would have been lost long ago if they had not been stuck on. What more can you want? If you were a real person, as you pretend to be, your appetite would be taken away by the mere sight of dishes like those!" ✓

This, in fact, was what had already happened to Dimples, for there was nothing very enticing about a jelly from which she remembered sucking the paint only a week ago; while as for the other things, even her youngest and favourite doll was beginning to grow tired of their monotony. So she made no objection when the captain ordered the dishes to be removed.

"Now you have satisfied your hunger," con-

tinued the captain, "I will order you to be taken upstairs to the dungeon."

"Upstairs!" exclaimed Dimples. "What a funny place for a dungeon!"

"Funny? Not in the least!" said the captain, severely. "In a palace of this kind you must take the rooms as you find them. You will find the dungeon squeezed between the drawing-room and the kitchen, at the very top of the left-hand tower. There you will have to stop until the King comes."

"Who is the King?" asked Dimples, curiously.

Before the toy captain had time to answer, the band of the regiment struck up an inspiring march. To be sure, there were only two wooden drummer boys and two wooden trumpeters, of whom one had lost his trumpet and was therefore obliged to blow continually through his stiffened fingers; but for all that they made quite a cheerful noise, and in the middle of it the King mounted the steps and entered the palace.

"Hurrah! The King! It is the King!" shouted the whole regiment in twenty wooden voices.

"The King!" repeated Dimples. "Why, it is the Prince!"

“Don't talk nonsense,” said the captain, gruffly. “Do you suppose we would allow ourselves to be commanded by a mere Prince? This is a real King, I can tell you, though he is n't made of wood, more 's the pity!”

And when Dimples saw the dignified way in which the little King walked into the palace, she could not help agreeing that he was a very real King. Indeed, she found it difficult to believe that he was nothing but her playfellow, the Prince Picotee, for never before had she seen him look so happy and so triumphant. There was no doubt that the little King had found his kingdom; and Dimples, remembering that she was really his prisoner, began to wish that she had not teased him so much about his toy palace and his toy soldiers. But the King did not even see her; he walked straight into the great hall and then stood still and drew a long breath of satisfaction.

“It is the most wonderful palace that ever was built,” he murmured to himself; “it is much, much more wonderful than I thought.”

Then his eyes fell upon Dimples, who was trying to hide behind the stiff figure of the toy captain, on the bottom brick of all.

“What is that girl doing in my palace?” asked the King, frowning.

"Please your Majesty, it is your Majesty's prisoner," answered the captain, — "she is waiting for your Majesty to decide on her punishment."

"What has the prisoner done?" asked the King in as dignified a manner as he could assume, considering that he stood on a tottering brick at the edge of the abyss in which the captain and his prisoner awaited him.

"Please your Majesty, she was heard to say that your Majesty's army was not a real army, and that I, your Majesty, — *I* was nothing but a toy soldier!" said the captain; and he again shook with anger from head to foot, which, after all, was the only way he could shake, because he was made all in one piece.

"Send the prisoner here," commanded the King. "It is not safe to keep a prisoner on the bottom brick — especially when she is a girl."

So Dimples, wishing from the bottom of her heart that the little playfellow she had teased had not been suddenly changed into a king, clambered up again into the hall.

"Prince Picotee," she said in an anxious undertone, as soon as she was near him, "I do think it is a real palace now, I do really!"

"Why, it's only Dimples!" exclaimed the



King, and he nearly tumbled off the edge of the floor in his surprise. Then he remembered that he was a king, and tried to become dignified again, which, of course, was exceedingly difficult now that the Prime Minister's daughter was there to see. As for Dimples, she had not played with the Prince all her life for nothing, and she quite ceased to be frightened of him as soon as she came face to face with him.

"If you let that nasty captain punish me, I'll tell them all you are only a little boy and not a king at all," she whispered; and her round little face twinkled with merriment.

The King wavered. "I always said I would have no girls in my palace," he murmured sorrowfully.

"Will you promise?" persisted Dimples.

The King avoided her eyes. It was very hard not to give in and smile too, when Dimples looked like that. After all, he reflected, if Dimples was a girl and did not understand things properly, she made an excellent playfellow; and the most wonderful palace in the world might grow a little dull if there were only wooden soldiers to share it with. So the King made up his mind, and took the prisoner by one hand and waved his other in a royal manner to the captain.

"I will talk it over with the prisoner," he announced, "so do not let us be disturbed. And you need not take any more prisoners without consulting me," he added hastily, for he really feared that his nurse might be the next prisoner, and then, where would be the fun of being a king at all?

"Now, let us go and explore your palace," said Dimples, impatiently; and the captain was left on the bottom brick to get over his disappointment.

It would be impossible to describe how the two children wandered over the fairy palace that the Prince had built; how they climbed from one floor to another; how they dropped from arch to pillar; how they wound their way in and out of delightful passages, finding fresh secret rooms as they went; how from one window they looked down on the vast nursery tableland and from another caught a glimpse of the towering rocking-horse; how they quite forgot they were King and prisoner, and stood at last, hand in hand, on the battlements of the highest tower and told each other what fun it was to play in a real fairy palace.

The toy captain, however, had not forgotten anything; and when he saw them talking in this familiar manner on the battlements —

which he could easily do from his position on the bottom brick, so cleverly was this wonderful palace built — he felt it was high time to interfere.

“Has your Majesty decided how to punish the prisoner?” asked the toy captain, holding himself in his very stiffest manner and raising his voice sufficiently to be heard on the battlements.

The King looked at the prisoner, and the prisoner laughed at the King.

“Well,” said Dimples, demurely, “*has* your Majesty made up his mind?”

“Oh, *don't!*” whispered his Majesty, crossly. “You know I can't behave like a king if you laugh at me!” Then he folded his arms and looked down at the captain. “I have decided not to punish the prisoner at all,” he said solemnly.

“What!” cried the captain, furiously. “You are not going to punish the prisoner at all?”

“No,” said his Majesty, growing bolder; “and what is more, I am going to have you beheaded for interfering in the King's private affairs!”

Even Dimples felt a little nervous when she saw the look that crept over the captain's face.

“Oh, dear,” she whispered to the Prince, “that

is how he looked yesterday when I said he was n't real. Would it not be wiser to make friends with him?"

But her little playfellow was looking as he had looked when he first entered his palace. "A king," he said grandly, "makes neither friends nor enemies. The captain is only my toy, and I can do as I will with him."

The captain's fury knew no bounds when he overheard this. "That is what comes of having a king who is not made of wood," he said. "But you have forgotten one thing, your Majesty!"

"And what is that?" asked the King, smiling.

"The bottom brick," said the toy captain, as he stooped and pulled it out.

Truly, there had never been such a shatter and a clatter and a tumble as when the toy captain pulled out the bottom brick of the Prince's palace! And in the midst of it all the children felt themselves falling and falling and falling. And louder than it all sounded the mocking laughter of the toy captain.

"Some people would say it was only a dream," observed Prince Picotee, the next morning, as they stood over the ruins on the nursery floor.

"It can't have been a dream," answered Dimples, who was always practical, "because here is the head of the toy captain."

"And here," added the Prince, bending down, "is his body. So he *was* beheaded after all!"

"I wish," sighed Dimples, "that it could all come over again."

"It will some day," the Prince assured her, "when I am King and have built another palace like this one."

"But I shall not be there," pouted Dimples, "because you won't have any girls in your palace."

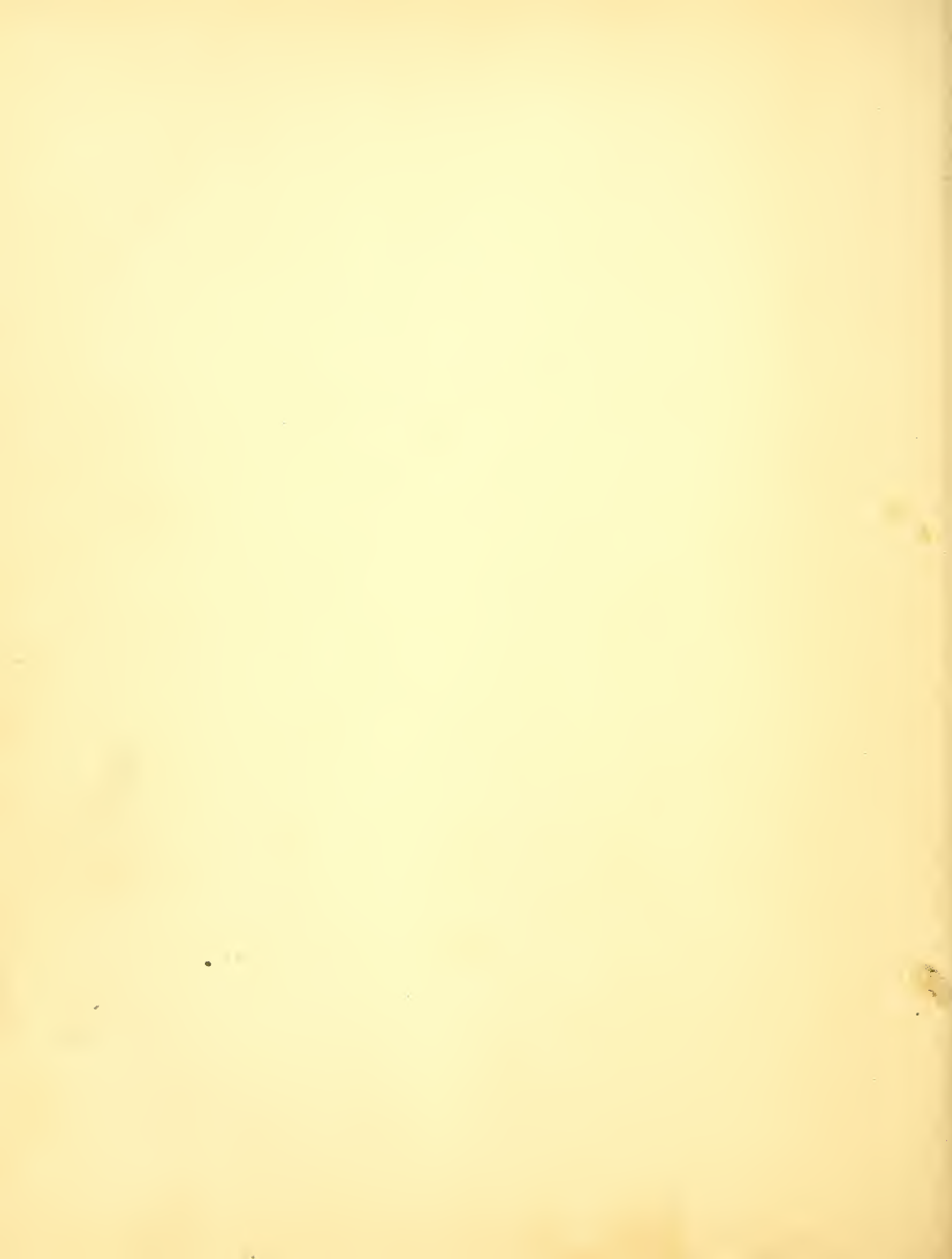
Prince Picotee kicked the headless captain about the floor thoughtfully. "Well, I'm not quite sure," he said, growing a little red. "Perhaps I'll have one girl."

"Will you?" laughed Dimples. "But what if she pulls down your wonderful palace?"

"Ah," said Prince Picotee, gravely, "I shall not tell her about the bottom brick!"



# The Lady Daffodilia





## The Lady Daffodilia

**N**O one in the whole kingdom was so idle, or so careless, or so thoughtless as the Lady Daffodilia. The only thing she had done ever since she was born was to grow and grow and grow, so that, although she was only twelve years old, she was quite as tall as the Countess, her mother. In fact, she was tall enough to be conceited about it, which, of course, was extremely foolish of her, for she had certainly had nothing to do with it herself.

“You are a whole year older than I am, but I am a head taller than you,” was what she said to Prince Brilliant, when he came to play with her, one day. She was perched on the garden wall at the time, so she was able to look down on the little Prince even more than usual.

“Hush!” said the Countess, who was drinking tea on the lawn. “That is not the way to speak to a Prince.”

Prince Brilliant stuck his chin into the air and tried to make the most of his height.

“I don’t care a bit,” he said; “I would n’t have silly long legs like yours for anything. It’s much better to know things; and only think of all the things I know that you never heard of! You could n’t even say the exports and imports of Fairyland without looking in the book first; now, could you?”

“Hush!” said his Queen-mother, who was also drinking tea on the lawn. “That is not the way to speak to a little lady.”

The Lady Daffodilia stooped a little, and smoothed out the creases in her black silk stockings, just to show that she had not forgotten how much longer her legs were than the Prince’s. The Prince pretended not to see.

“What you say is very true,” then said Daffodilia, who was always fair, even when she was most aggravating; “but I am better off than you, all the same. I can go and look in the book if I want to know all those tiresome stuffy things you think such a lot about; but all the books in the world won’t make you so tall as I am!”

The Prince was much annoyed, for there was no doubt that the Lady Daffodilia had the best of the argument. He aimed a most unprincely kick at a harmless geranium plant, that, like the Lady Daffodilia, had never done anything

in its life but grow ; and he turned very red in the face.

“You’re only a girl,” he said ; “and girls think too much of themselves. That’s what my Professor says !”

“If *you* were a girl,” laughed the Lady Daffodilia, “it would not matter about your being such a little bit of a thing ! Is it not very unpleasant to be so short, when you are a boy ?”

The Prince turned and walked quickly towards the garden gate. It was true that he was a prince, and could not therefore be rude to the Lady Daffodilia ; but he was a boy, too, and if he had stopped another minute he was quite certain he would have lifted her down from the wall and given her a good shaking.

“Where are you going ?” she cried after him, and laughed more than ever when she saw how cross she had made him.

“Where are you going ?” echoed the Queen and the Countess.

Prince Brilliant turned when he reached the gate, and faced them all with a resolute look on his small, round face.

“I am going to find out the way to grow tall,” he said. “I shall not come back until I am as tall as the Lady Daffodilia.”

Then he went through the gate and slammed

it behind him, and marched away down the hot, dusty road. The Queen and the Countess only smiled, for they did not suppose he had gone for good; but the Lady Daffodilia slipped down from the wall and on to the grass lawn, and began to weep.

"I have sent away my favourite Prince," she sobbed, "and I shall never have him to play with again."

"Do not cry, little daughter," said the Countess, soothingly; "your Prince will come back soon."

"You do not know him so well as I do," said Daffodilia. "He always means what he says; and since it is quite certain that nothing can ever make him as tall as I am, it is quite certain that he will never come back any more."

It seemed as though her words were likely to come true, for the Prince had not returned by bedtime; and, although the King's messengers rode out that very night and hunted the whole country up and down for days and weeks and years, not a trace was ever found of the little Prince who had gone to learn the way to grow tall. So the kingdom was left without an heir to the throne, and the Lady Daffodilia was left without a playfellow. It was not her way, however, to sit down and cry about it,

besides which she had found something really important to do at last.

“If the Prince has gone away to grow as tall as I am,” she said, “*I* will stay at home and grow as clever as he is!”

So she shut herself up in the Count's library with a pile of dusty books, and tried her very best to learn the exports and imports of Fairyland. But as fast as she learned one she forgot the other; and she ended by completely jumbling them up, which was really a serious matter, for it is quite evident that the things we give to Fairyland are not at all the same things as Fairyland gives to us. And then, long before the Lady Daffodilia had grown as clever as the Prince, the people came and clapped her into prison, “for,” they said, “it is your fault that the heir to the throne is lost.” It is true that they did not put her into a very unpleasant prison, for it was a nice, comfortable old castle, in the middle of a green plain; but there was no one to play with and no one to tease, so it was most decidedly a prison. Added to this, the Lady Daffodilia seemed to have stopped growing at last, for she never grew another inch after the Prince went away; and as this robbed her of her only occupation, she began for the first time in her life to long for

something to do. And she grew so tired of looking at the same green plain day after day, that she determined to make it into a garden for a change; and the flowers and the shrubs were so proud of being planted by such dainty, white hands that they tried their very hardest to grow up nicely and be a credit to her; and the result was that the little lady in the castle soon became known as the most wonderful gardener in the kingdom. ✓ ✓

Now, when Prince Brilliant ran away from the Lady Daffodilia he found the road so hot and so dusty that he was obliged to keep near the hedge at the side; and he had not run very far before he pushed his head through a very elegant spider's web. The spider was exceedingly cross, and grumbled; but the daddy-long-legs that tumbled out of her web was very much pleased with himself.

"Well, my little friend," he said to the Prince, "where are you running so fast, this fine morning?"

Now, one of the things the Prince had learned from his Professor was the way to speak to a daddy-longlegs, so before another five minutes had passed he had told him the whole of his trouble. "Do *you* know the way to make your legs grow long?" asked the Prince at the end of his story.

“Well,” said the daddy-longlegs, “that is certainly one of the things I am generally supposed to know; but if I show you the way, do you think you will have patience to do everything I tell you? It may take a very long time.”

“I can wait years and years and years and years,” said the Prince, in his determined way; and the daddy-longlegs had the sense to see that he meant what he said.

“Right you are,” he said. “Then jump straight into that hedge; and the more spiders’ webs you break on the way, the better — nasty, choky, stuffy things!”

“What shall I do when I get there?” asked the Prince.

“Oh, you have n’t got to do anything,” said the daddy-longlegs, with a chuckle. “Just wait there until I come to you.”

“All right; but you won’t be long, will you?” said the Prince; and he tucked his crown under his arm and shut his eyes tight and jumped straight into the thorny, prickly hedge.

When he opened his eyes, he found himself in a strange new country, that was all made of rose-coloured dreams, and filled with rose-coloured air, and lighted with rose-coloured

sunbeams. There were no people or trees or mountains or rivers to be seen ; but before the little Prince had time to notice this, his mind was filled with rose-coloured thoughts, and so he forgot the Lady Daffodilia and his own crossness and everything that had made him unhappy when he was in the real world.

“Hullo! Where am I?” he cried.

“You are in the world of dreams, to be sure,” said a voice in his ear. “Where else should you be at your time of life?”

“But who lives here?” asked Prince Brilliant.

A great many voices answered him. “*We* live here, of course,” they said. “We are really nice dreams, we are; and when children are the right sort, like yourself, they come here to stay with us until they are grown up.”

“May I play with you, then?” asked the Prince. In the real world he had been too fond of books to play much, but here he felt as though he must do nothing but play all day long.

“Of course you may,” answered the dream voices; “that is what you are here for.”

Prince Brilliant was soon the happiest boy possible. Some people might think it dull to have playfellows who could not be seen, but the Prince thought nothing could be more



delightful than to live in the midst of dreams for the rest of his life. It is true that he was fast forgetting everything that his Professor had taught him; but this was hardly surprising, for there is no room in a very small head for serious thoughts as well as rose-coloured ones.

It is doubtful whether the Prince would ever have wanted to go back to the real world again, if he had not met the daddy-longlegs one day, as he was strolling along with his favourite dream.

“Hullo!” said the daddy-longlegs, chuckling. “I see it is time for you to go back into the real world.”

“What, already?” exclaimed the Prince. “Why, you said I should have to wait years and years and years and ——”

“You have been here exactly seven years,” interrupted the daddy-longlegs; “and it is time for you to meet the waking-up dream.”

The Prince suddenly began to remember things. “When shall I be as tall as the Lady Daffodilia?” he cried. But the daddy-longlegs had no time to do anything but chuckle before the waking-up dream came and seized hold of the Prince, and he found himself falling, falling, falling — down, down, down — until he

dropped with a thud on a soft grass lawn, and found himself in the middle of the most beautiful garden in the world. A little way off stood an old grey castle; and as he lay looking at it the gate swung open, and out stepped a dainty, winsome little lady.

The Prince sprang to his feet with a shout and held out his arms; and the Lady Daffodilia ran straight into them without stopping so much as to think.

“How *did* you learn to grow so tall?” she asked, looking up at him.

“Well,” said the Prince, truthfully, “I just went into the world of dreams and waited till I was grown up. You see, I was a boy and not a girl, all the time; so I was not in such a hurry as you to get my growing done early.”

“I tried to grow as clever as you,” sighed Daffodilia, “but nothing would stop in my head. I couldn’t even say the exports and imports of Fairyland without looking in the book first!”

“Never mind,” laughed the Prince; “I don’t believe there are any imports, for I am sure *we* have nothing good enough to send there. And as for the exports, there is only one thing that Fairyland has sent into this country that is worth remembering.”

“And what is that?” she asked anxiously.

“It is something that is not very tall and not very serious and not very wise,” answered the Prince; “but it is sweet and merry and charming, and it is called the Lady Daffodilia!”

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# The Kite That Went to the Moon









## The Kite That Went to the Moon

**J**ERRY had made the biggest kite in the village; and Chubby, the woodcutter's daughter, had painted a big round moon on it and several stars as well. That alone was enough to show that it was by no means an ordinary kite; so it was no wonder that Jerry felt very proud of himself when he ran on to the village green to fly it.

"Stand back, all of you!" he said, as the girls and boys came crowding round him. "Now, you shall see my kite fly to the moon!"

No doubt, Jerry was inclined to make quite enough fuss about his kite; but it is not every day that one has a chance of flying the biggest kite in the village, especially when one is only seven years old. He felt very sad, however, when he found that his kite had no intention of flying to the moon. Every time he threw it into the air, back it fell again on the grass; and although he tried again and again, and

used yards and yards of the very best string that twopence-halfpenny could buy, any one could see that something was decidedly wrong with the biggest kite in the village. ✓

Jerry turned red, and blinked his eyes, and reminded himself desperately that he was seven years old. It was certainly hard to have spent six half-holidays in making a kite that would not fly in the end.

“Stupid thing!” he muttered crossly. “If I had the chance, just would n’t I fly to the moon! Kites don’t know when they are well off!”

But when all the boys and girls burst out laughing, and pointed their fingers at him and began to tease, it was impossible to keep back his tears any longer. After all, one cannot go on remembering for ever that one is seven years old. The children, however, only laughed the more, when the little maker of the kite suddenly flung himself down on the ground and began to cry.

“What is the use of a kite that won’t fly?” they jeered. “Take it home, Jerry, and make it the same size as other people’s kites! And mind you let us know what the moon is like, when your kite gets there!”

Jerry started to his feet again and shook his

fist at them. "Some day," he shouted, "I shall be able to laugh at you instead."

"When will that be, Jerry?" cried all the boys and girls.

"When my kite has flown to the moon," answered Jerry, in a determined tone; and he picked up his kite there and then, and marched off to the school to find Chubby, the wood-cutter's daughter.

"Hullo, Chubby!" he said, popping his head in at the schoolroom window. "Have n't you done that sum yet?"

Chubby looked up with a doleful face. After painting a moon and several stars on the biggest kite in the village, it was not pleasant to be kept in school just because seven would not go into sixty-three.

"I shall never finish it, Jerry, never!" she said with a sigh.

"Chubby," said Jerry, solemnly, "you've been crying."

Chubby rubbed her eyes hastily with her two fists. "I don't think so," she replied in a muffled tone; "it was just three tears that trickled down my nose and made a smudge on the slate; but that is n't crying. You know it is n't, Jerry!"

Jerry rubbed his own eyes a little guiltily.

"My kite would n't fly," he remarked, and tried to look as though he did not care a bit.

"What!" cried Chubby. "Would n't your kite fly? Then I never need have cried at all."

Jerry clambered on the window ledge and sat there with his legs swinging to and fro. He wished Chubby would not talk so much about crying. "All the string got mixed up," he explained with dignity; "I expect that was it."

"I don't," said Chubby, decidedly; "it was because the tail was too short. I told you so, all the time."

No doubt there was something in what she said, but reasons are not much good when you are seven years old and your kite won't fly, and Jerry was not in a mood to be trifled with.

"If you know so much about it," he retorted, "you'd better come and fly it yourself."

"I only wish I could," sighed poor little Chubby. "If you'll tell me how many times seven goes into —"

"Oh, don't," interrupted Jerry, crossly. "How can I do sums when my kite won't fly?"

Then he flung himself down from the window ledge, and started off to find some one who would tell him why his kite would not fly. Half-way down the village street, he met a fine black raven.

“Good day to you,” said Jerry, who knew that ravens could explain most things if they chose. “Can you tell me why my kite won’t fly?”

“Caw, caw!” croaked the raven. “Nine times, Jerry, nine times! Caw, caw!”

“I wonder what he means,” thought Jerry, and trudged on a little farther. Presently he met a sheep. Now, sheep do not know much as a rule, but they are always extremely anxious to tell what they do know. So Jerry asked her at once why his kite would not fly.

“Baa, baa!” said the sheep. “Nine times, Jerry, nine times! Baa, baa!”

“Everybody is going mad this afternoon,” thought Jerry; and he went on a little farther. Just at the end of the village, a cockchafer came buzzing round his head.

“Buz-z-z!” hummed the cockchafer. “Nine times, Jerry, nine times! Buz-z-z!”

“Oh, go away, do!” cried Jerry, impatiently. “What do you all mean by nine times?”

The cockchafer did not go away an inch, but buzzed closer to Jerry’s head than before. “Buz-z-z,” he hummed; “nine times, Jerry, nine times, nine times, nine times —”

All at once, the cockchafer’s meaning entered

Jerry's head, which was hardly to be wondered at, considering how close his head was at that moment to the cockchafer.

"Of course it's nine times!" he cried. "Why didn't I think of that before?" Then he turned round and dragged his kite all the way back to the school, where Chubby still sat sighing over her sum.

"It goes nine times exactly, Chubby," he told her through the window; "so now you can come and help me to carry this great big kite."

"Where are we going, Jerry?" asked Chubby, when she had finished her sum and joined him.

"We are going out into the world, to discover the reason why my kite won't fly," answered Jerry; and between them they picked up the biggest kite in the village and carried it out into the world.

"How are we going to discover why your kite won't fly?" asked Chubby, when they had walked a good way. She had had no tea, to tell the truth, and was beginning to feel remarkably hungry.

"We will ask everybody we meet," said Jerry, who had had his tea and was therefore not at all hungry. "There is sure to be some

one in the world who can tell us, and we will not rest until we find him."

"We haven't met anybody yet," remarked Chubby, rather dolefully. "How long do you think we shall have to go on walking before we find the right person?"

"Perhaps for years and years," answered Jerry, cheerfully. "But if we are quick, we may meet him sooner than that."

He quickened his steps as he spoke, and Chubby had to run a little to keep up with him. It was beginning to grow dark now, and the country seemed more and more desolate.

"The world is not so full of people as I expected to find it," said Jerry, in a disappointed tone. "I do hope we shall soon meet some one who will know why my kite won't fly."

Just then, he thought he heard something from behind that sounded like a sob. Sure enough, there was Chubby, wiping her eyes with the corner of her pinafore.

"I'm so hungry," she sobbed. "I want my tea! Can't we go home, Jerry, and put off seeing the world until to-morrow?"

Jerry looked at her and sighed. If it had been any one but Chubby, he would most certainly have grumbled at her. As it was, he

only propped up the kite against the hedge and made her sit down beside it.

"I am afraid I don't know the way home," he said; "but if you will wait here, I will go and get you something to eat."

He was not at all sure where he was going to find it, but he hastened along the road as fast as he could and hoped he would soon come to a house. Long before he came to a house, however, he came to a man, a little old man, who was carrying a large sack on his shoulder. Directly he saw Jerry, he swung the sack on to the ground and began untying the mouth of it.

"Well, my little fellow," he said in a friendly tone, "what do you want out of my bag?"

"That depends on what you have got in your bag," answered Jerry, promptly.

"I have everything in the world in my bag," replied the little old man, "for everything is there that everybody wants. I have laughter and tears and happiness and sadness; I can give you riches or poverty, sense or nonsense; here is a way to discover the things that you don't know, and a way to forget the things that you do know. Will you have a toy that changes whenever you wish, or a book that tells you stories whenever you listen to it, or a



pair of shoes in which you can dance from boyhood into youth? Choose whatever you like and it shall be yours; but remember, I can only give you one thing out of my bag, so think well before you make up your mind."

Jerry did not stop to think at all. "Have you something to eat in your bag, something that will please a hungry little girl who has had no tea?" he asked.

The little old man smiled and pulled out a small cake about the size of Jerry's fist. It did not look as though it would satisfy any one who was as hungry as Chubby; but as the old man disappeared, sack and all, the moment he had given Jerry the cake, it was not much good complaining about it. So back trotted Jerry to the place where he had left Chubby; and greatly to his relief her face beamed with joy directly she had eaten one mouthful.

"What a beautiful cake!" she cried; "it tastes like strawberry jam and toffee and ices, and all the things I like best. And see! as fast as I eat it, it comes again, so that I shall never be able to finish it. Take some, Jerry."

"Why," said Jerry, as soon as he had taken a bite, "it tastes like currant buns and ginger-beer and all the things *I* like best. It is cer-

tain that we shall never starve as long as we have a fairy cake like this." Then he told her how he had come by it.

"Perhaps," remarked Chubby, "the little old man could have told you why your kite wouldn't fly."

"Perhaps he could," said Jerry, carelessly, "but I didn't think to ask him. We'll come along and ask the next person instead."

When, however, they looked round for the kite, it was nowhere to be seen. The moon came out obligingly from behind a cloud and helped them as much as it could; but although they searched for a long time, not a trace could they find of the biggest kite in the village.

"Oh dear, oh dear!" sighed Chubby. "Perhaps I went to sleep while you were away, and somebody came along and took it. But I did think I stopped awake, Jerry; I did indeed!"

"And so you did, to be sure!" cried a voice from the hedge; "but you would have to be very wide awake to keep *that* kite from giving you the slip, as soon as the moon came up!"

Of course, no one but a wymp would have appeared like that, just in time to say the right thing; so the children were not at all surprised when a particularly wympish wymp came tum-

bling out of the hedge and perched himself on a thistle and wimped at them.

“Do you mean to say you know where the kite has gone?” asked both the children, breathlessly.

“Look up there and see,” answered the wymp, pointing to the sky.

The sky was covered with stars, hundreds and thousands of them, all twinkling round the moon just as Chubby had painted them on the kite. Only, she could not help thinking that her stars had more shape and were decidedly more like stars than the real stars were; but this, she supposed, might be because the real stars were such a long way off. One of them was different from all the others; it had a long bright tail that glittered like a cracker at Christmas time, and it was scurrying across the sky at such a pace that the rest of the stars had to get out of its way as best they could. Most of the people who looked out of their windows that night thought they saw a comet; but Jerry and Chubby knew better.

“Oh,” they cried, clapping their hands with excitement. “There is our kite, and it *is* flying to the moon after all!”

“There’s no doubt about that,” said the wymp, who was still wimpling at them from the top of the thistle.

"But why did it not fly to the moon this afternoon, when all the other boys were looking on?" asked Jerry, regretfully.

"Because there was n't a moon to fly to, of course!" answered the wymp. "You should n't expect too much, even from the biggest kite in the village. Directly there *was* a moon, you see, away it flew."

"Then, if I had painted the sun on it, instead of the moon, it would have flown away this afternoon!" exclaimed Chubby.

"Exactly so," said the wymp. "Now, what ever induced you to paint a thing like the moon on anybody's kite, eh?"

"Well, you see, the moon is so nice and easy," explained Chubby. "All you have to do is to draw a circle round the biggest soup plate you can find; and then you take away the soup plate, and you paint in the eyes and the nose and the mouth, and there you are! You can't do much more than that with three paints and a brush that's got hardly any hairs, can you?"

"Yes, you can," retorted the wymp, "you can paint the sun, and that's ever so much better than painting the moon — nasty, silly, chilly thing!"

"Oh, but you can't paint the sun when

you've only got three paints," objected Chubby. "It takes ever so many more paints than that to make it shine properly; and even then, it does n't always."

"Shine!" repeated the wymp. "Who said anything about shining? When I say the sun, I mean the other side of the sun, of course. *That* does n't shine, — knows better, indeed!"

He seemed so hurt about it that Chubby hastened to pacify him. "I'm very sorry," she said. "Of course, I should like to paint your side of the sun very much, but it is a little difficult when I have n't ever been there, is n't it?"

"Perhaps it is," admitted the wymp; "but if that is all, I'll take you there this very minute. Will you come?"

Chubby looked round; and there was Jerry still gazing up at the star with the long tail, that was causing so much commotion among the countries of the sky. Just then, it reached the moon and went straight into it with a big splash; and Jerry heaved a deep sigh.

That decided Chubby. "If you please," she said, turning to the wymp in a great hurry, "I think we would rather go to the moon." ✓

The wymp instantly flew into the most violent passion. "What!" he exclaimed, shaking all

over with indignation. "You would sooner go to the moon than the back of the sun? Well, I *am* sorry for you."

Chubby was just going to be frightened, when Jerry came and put his arm round her protectingly. "You see," he explained to the wymp, "it's not the moon we want, it's the kite. And the kite has gone to the moon, unfortunately. I suppose I am glad it has gone," he added rather doubtfully, "but I do wish it had waited to take me with it."

"Oh, well," said the wymp, calming down a little, "if you are quite sure you don't *want* to go to the moon, I shall have the greatest pleasure in taking you there. I'll call a comet at once." He put his fingers to his mouth and blew a whistle that was long enough to reach the countries of the sky. "Now I come to think of it," he continued thoughtfully, "it is a very good thing you did not want to go to Wympland, because we should have been obliged to wait until the morning."

"Why couldn't we go to-night?" asked Jerry.

"Because there is n't a Wympland to go to," answered the wymp, promptly. "When the sun goes down it takes the back of itself with itself, and there is n't a Wympland again till

next morning. I should n't be here now, if I had n't missed the last sunbeam this evening. That is the worst of living in a place that disappears every night."

"Oh, but it does n't disappear really," said Chubby, who wanted to show that she knew a little geography; "the sun is shining somewhere else at this very moment, only we can't see it."

"Rubbish!" said the wymp, scornfully. "Don't you believe everything you're told about the sun! Who said it did n't disappear, eh? Has any one ever gone after it to see?"

"N-no," said Chubby, doubtfully, "but —"

"That proves it does n't go on shining, then," said the wymp, triumphantly. "There's plenty of inquisitive people who'd have gone after the sun long ago, if it had n't the sense to disappear every night. It must have some peace, you know, if it's got to come up smiling again the next morning."

"Do the wymps disappear every night, too?" asked Jerry.

"Of course they do," answered the wymp. "Don't you?"

"I did n't know we did," said Jerry, a little bewildered. "I thought we only went to sleep."

"Ah, you do that first," said the wymp. "Then you disappear."

"No, we don't," said Chubby, positively. "We should n't have dreams if we disappeared."

"You certainly would n't have any dreams unless you did disappear," chuckled the wymp.

"Then what about to-night?" demanded Jerry. "Do you mean to say we have disappeared now?"

The wymp sighed. "Some people never will know when they're not there," he complained. "But here is our comet; jump in, or else we shall be late."

Down swooped the great shining comet, and there it lay across the road, waiting for them to mount. The children climbed on to its broad glittering tail and held tightly to each other, while the wymp mounted in front of them and stood like the man at the wheel, with his hand on the comet's head; then up they flew at a terrific pace, right through the wonderful blue darkness that stretched all round them. Far above was the great land of light that lay round the moon; but the country of the stars came in between, and the stars were still so far off that they had not even begun to look like real stars.

"Afraid of the dark?" asked the wymp over his shoulder.



"Oh, no," said Chubby. "I am only afraid of the dark you get at home when the candle is put out. This is a nice, friendly kind of darkness, and candles would n't make any difference to it."

"I don't know so much about that," said the wymp; "if you had the steering to do, you would n't mind a candle or two to help you."

"Do you steer by the points of the compass?" asked Jerry, eagerly. Some one had given him a compass on his last birthday, and he had steered by it ever since. Indeed, he had arrived late at school several times, through steering his way by the points of the compass.

"Certainly not," said the wymp; "when you are sailing on a comet, you steer by the points of the comet, of course." Just then, he gave a sharp turn to the points of the comet, and it sailed right out of the blue darkness and took them into the dim mysterious greyness of the country of the stars.

"They *are* like real stars," murmured Chubby, for she had begun to have serious doubts whether the stars she had painted on the kite were not wrong after all. It was very comforting to find that the stars that were whizzing past them in hundreds and thousands looked just like the stars she had been accus-

tomed to see on Christmas trees, and had such sharp points that it would not have been at all pleasant to run against one of them by mistake. Indeed, the wymp had as much as he could do to steer through the country of the stars without coming into collision with them, although the comet did not make half so much commotion in the sky as Jerry's kite had done. But then, Jerry's kite had never been trained to be a comet, and that made all the difference.

It grew lighter and lighter as they came nearer the moon, and even the stars began to look pale in the white light that was shining so close to the edge of their country. The stars were growing fewer, too, for stars naturally prefer to shine in a place where they can be seen, and just here, at the edge of their country, they could hardly be seen at all. Then the wymp gave another turn to the points of the comet, and it glided gently from the country of the stars into the pale white country of the moon.

"It's like being inside a great flame that is n't hot," whispered Chubby.

Even the wymp had to admit that the country of the moon had something in its favour. "For those who like light," he allowed, "the moon is all very well. For my part, I prefer

Wympland, where there is n't any light at all. You can't say that of any other country on either side of the sun!"

"I don't want to say it," objected Chubby; "I am very glad there *is* some light in my country."

"But there is n't," retorted the wymp. "There's only other people's light in your country! Where would you be, if you did n't borrow bits of light from the countries of the sky, eh?"

Chubby thought it would be wiser to change the conversation. "If you please," she said politely, "can you tell me when we shall get to the moon?"

"Why," laughed the wymp, "we are in the moon now!"

Chubby looked round her in bewilderment. "But where are the eyes and the nose and the mouth?" she asked.

The wymp shook his head. "I am afraid," he said gravely, "that you must have found them in the soup plate. Perhaps Jerry knows where they are."

But Jerry was looking everywhere for something that was far more important. Some people might want to come all this way to look for the man in the moon, but for his part he

intended to find the biggest kite in the village, the kite that had taken him six half-holidays to make. "Do you think we shall find it soon?" he asked impatiently.

Nobody answered him, for just then the comet came to such a sudden standstill that all three of them were nearly jerked off into the air. It was not the comet's fault, however, for right in its way was Jerry's kite; and it was lucky for everybody, that night, that there was not an extremely bad accident in the countries of the sky.

"Why don't you look where you are going?" asked the kite, in just the flippant fly away sort of tone one would expect from a kite.

Jerry was so astonished at being addressed in this impudent manner by a thing he had made with his own hands, that he did not know what to reply. The comet, however, was a comet of a few words; and all it did was to put its head down and rush straight at Jerry's kite. There is no doubt that in another minute there would have been a terrific battle in the middle of the moon, if a strange, clear voice from beyond had not spoken just in time to stop it.

"Who is daring to make all this commotion in my country?" said the voice.

"Hullo!" muttered the wymp, suddenly; "I was expecting that. Good-bye, children; I'm off!" And pointing his hands downward, he took a dive from the head of the comet and disappeared in the direction of the country of the stars.

At the same instant, out from the pale white distance of the country of the moon glided a tall figure, as white and delicate and shimmering as the light that surrounded it.

"Is it—can it be the man in the moon?" whispered Chubby to the boy beside her.

Then the figure came closer, and they saw that it was a wonderful, mysterious-looking, white witch-woman.

"I am the Lady of the Moon," she said, in the same clear, cold voice. "Snow and stillness and space are wherever I go; when I smile, I make the whole world beautiful, but my smile takes the colour away from the flowers and the ripple away from the water and the warmth away from the sunshine."

She looked round, and her eye lighted on Jerry's kite. "What is that creature doing in my country?" she demanded.

All the impudence seemed to have gone out of the biggest kite in the village, for it lay there trembling at the feet of the Lady of the

Moon, and had not so much as a word to say for itself. Jerry, however, summoned up courage to answer for it. After all, it was through him that the kite was there, and he naturally felt bound to defend it.

"If you please," he said, "it is my kite. I made it, all by myself,—it took six half-holidays; and Chubby painted the moon and the stars on it."

"I am afraid," said Chubby, hurriedly, "that the moon is not very much like the moon, but it was the best I could do with three paints and a brush that had n't any hairs. The stars are right," she added anxiously.

The Lady of the Moon smiled contemptuously. "Stars, indeed!" she observed. "What does it matter how the stars are painted? The moon is far more important, and you have made a regular muddle of that! And who told you children that you might come into my country, I should like to know?"

"The wymp brought us," explained Jerry. "He was here a minute ago, but he has just left."

"No doubt he has," said the Lady of the Moon, with a little laugh that made them shiver. "Wymps know better than to come in my way. I can turn their laughter into

hoar-frost, and they don't like that. As for you, unless you want to be frozen tight to the middle of the moon for the rest of your lives, you had better make haste home again."

Chubby was only too anxious to be off, for she had no wish to spend the rest of her life with some one who made people shiver whenever she laughed. Jerry, however, did not mean to have his journey to the moon for nothing.

"Please, may I take my kite back with me?" he asked boldly. "I want to show the other boys and girls that it did fly to the moon after all."

"That's all very well," objected the kite, who had stopped trembling and become impudent again; "but I don't want to go back among a lot of girls and boys who do not know how to appreciate me. When a fellow has once been a comet, you cannot expect him to end his days as a common kite."

"Oh, well," said the Lady of the Moon, gathering her mantle closely round her and stepping away from them, "settle that among yourselves, only please go out of my country first. For my part, I must go and put the finishing touches to that hoar-frost of mine before dawn."

She had hardly finished speaking when a faint gleam of pink pierced the white light around her and touched the edge of her mantle. She gave a shrill cry instantly, and waved her arms about her in the greatest excitement.

“Go, go, go! Dawn is coming, and you will be swallowed up in the setting of the moon,” she screamed at them. “Go, go, go!”

Chubby began to feel tearful, for it is not pleasant to be told that one is going to be swallowed up in anything. But Jerry had a sudden inspiration.

“Jump, Chubby, jump!” he shouted, seizing her by the arm and springing away from the comet. Chubby must have done as she was told, for the next minute she found herself sitting beside him, on the top of the biggest kite in the village. As for the comet, it was only too anxious to get back to the place where it could shine and be seen; so it took a great dive down into the country of the stars, just as the wymp had done, and they never saw it again.

“Now,” said Jerry sternly to his kite, “you’ve just got to take us home straightway without any more nonsense! If you want to stay and be swallowed up, we don’t. You can come back again and be a comet for the rest of your days, for all I care; but I’m determined that



you shall show the village first that you know how to fly. Now, down you go!" ✓

Evidently, the kite felt that there was some sense in Jerry's words, for it made no further objections, but sailed swiftly out of the country of the moon just in time to escape being swallowed up. The downward journey was much simpler than the one of the night before, for the sun was rising as fast as it could, and the stars were disappearing so rapidly that there were hardly any of them left to get in the way. This was a very good thing, for, as I said before, Jerry's kite had not been trained to be a comet, and it takes a good deal of steering to get through the countries of the sky without an accident on the way.

Chubby was hungry enough to remember her fairy cake; and as it was nearly breakfast time, of course it tasted of milk and porridge and eggs and bacon. But Jerry refused to touch a mouthful. He was busy thinking of what the other boys and girls would say, when they saw him come sailing home on his kite.

The sun was shining brightly, and the birds were singing, and the children were laughing on their way to school, when Jerry and Chubby at last reached home on the biggest kite in the village.

“Oh, oh!” cried all the boys and girls, rushing up to them in great excitement. “Here’s Jerry and Chubby been sailing about on the biggest kite in the village! Where have you been, Jerry?”

Jerry smiled in a superior manner, and waved them all back with his hand.

“What a fuss you do make, to be sure!” he observed. “Did n’t I tell you my kite was going to the moon?”

Then Jerry went home to breakfast; but Jerry’s kite sailed back to the countries of the sky, and it has been a comet ever since.

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