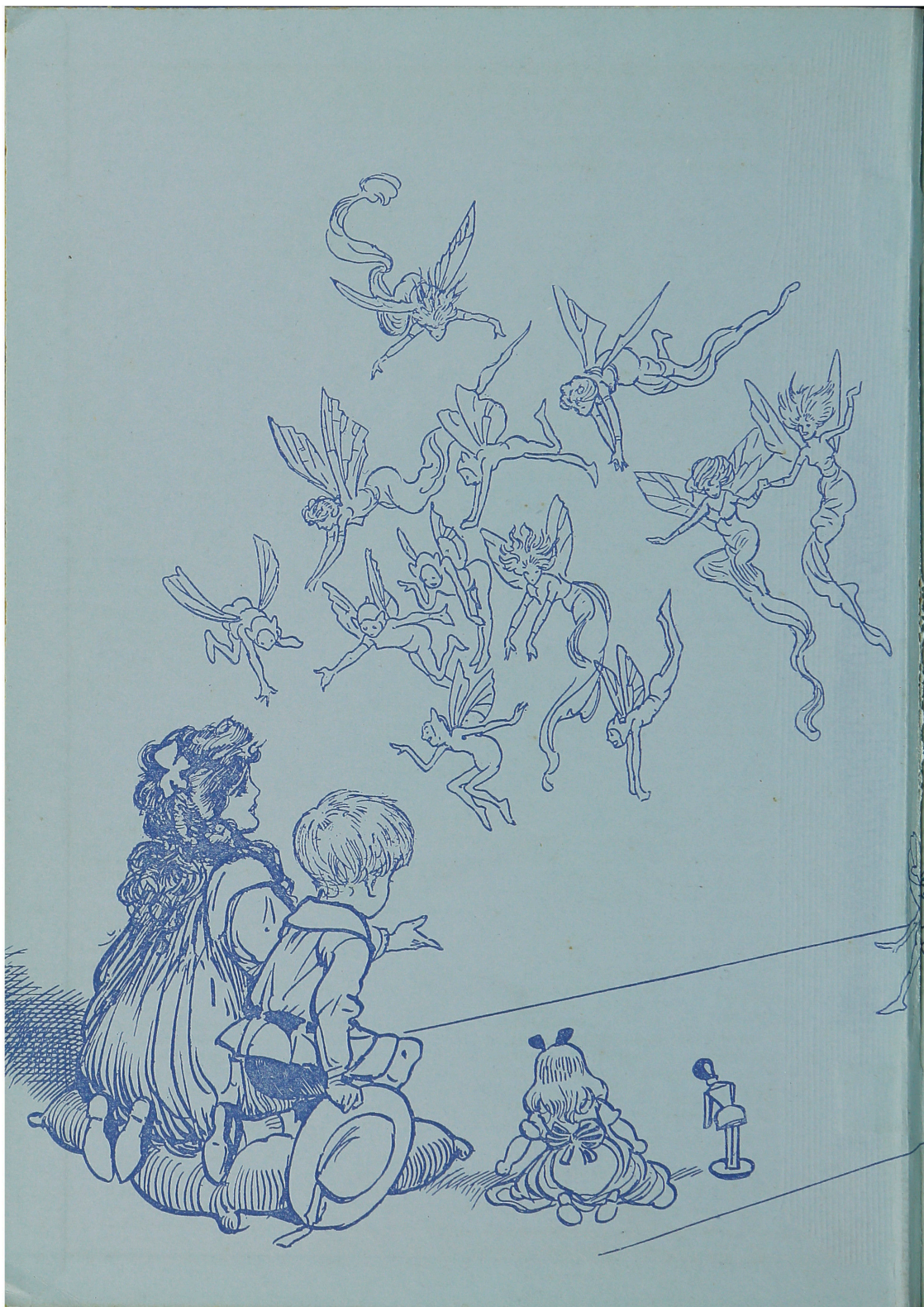


# THE MAN FROM THE MOON

BY  
PHILIP  
CARMICHAEL

ILLUSTRATED BY  
FRANK WATKINS





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THE MAN  
FROM THE MOON

Dorothy gibbons

Xmas 1915





By the side of a rough path . . . on the trunk  
of a fallen tree, sat a lovely little maiden.

[See page 20.]



# THE MAN FROM THE MOON

BY  
PHILIP CARMICHAEL

WITH EIGHT  
ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR AND  
MANY IN BLACK AND WHITE

BY  
FRANK WATKINS



LONDON  
GRANT RICHARDS  
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PLYMOUTH, 1909

## TO MY MOTHER

ONCE in the happy long ago  
Whose memory still endures,  
Such joys and fears as children know,  
Such golden dreams were yours.

You, too, the fairies' presence felt,  
Ere time had banished all,  
And in a fairy palace dwelt  
And heard the fairies call.

But childish joys and childish fears  
Pass all too soon away,  
The hopes and griefs of older years  
Are those that with us stay.

Beneath no grim magician's wand  
The fairy palace falls :—  
The years soon bear us far beyond  
Its disenchanted walls.

Yet still at times the fairies call,  
The fairy palace gleams,  
Nor are they quite forgotten all  
Your childhood's golden dreams.

And this my tale, a work of love,  
Shall not be all in vain,  
If it but bring one memory of  
That childhood back again.





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The First Day

The Beginning of  
the Adventure



# I

## A Nasty Fall

**T**HE Man in the Moon was skipping about in a very excited manner and Mother Goose was very angry with him.

“Whatever is the matter with you?” she said crossly; “how can I do my sweeping properly if you will get in the way so often?”

She was sweeping the snow off the edge of the moon and she was quite right to be angry, for she had had a great deal of work to do that night. The worst of it was the Man in the Moon could give no reason for his absurd behaviour.

“I feel so happy,” he cried; “I know something is going to happen.”

“You will fall off altogether in a minute,” said Mother Goose, sweeping very hard, “and if you do, you’ll have to stay off until I throw my broomstick down to you.”

Somehow this didn’t strike the Man in the Moon as such a *very* terrible threat and he skipped about harder than ever. But the very next moment his foot slipped, he lost his balance and fell backwards.

“I told you so,” said Mother Goose, and she went on with her sweeping.

“Now I am really off,” said the Man in the Moon as he went down, “still it was unlucky that I slipped or I shouldn’t have fallen. So Mother Goose was quite wrong. I should like to be back again if only to tell her so.”

He was turning head over heels in the air as he fell, which was very ridiculous and prevented him from thinking properly. The snow, too, which Mother Goose was sweeping off the moon kept getting into his eyes and mouth. “I always thought all that work of hers was great nonsense,” he grumbled. “I see now it is also most unpleasant.”

Down he went.

“If I could only fall quietly,” he thought, “without turning over like this every moment, it would be much nicer. I can put up with the snow, but this spinning is making me giddy. As for seeing anything, it is impossible. I really almost wish I had stayed up there.”

He might very well wish that, but then the question was—whose fault was it that he had fallen off?

Down he went.

“I had no idea it was so far,” he went on; “it is really quite a journey. I don’t suppose anyone has ever fallen so far before, if you come to think of it. How could they? Still, I ought to fall softly with all this snow about. That’s a comfort.”

Down he went.

“Well, really——” he was just beginning in an aggrieved tone, when his complaints and himself were suddenly smothered at the same moment. He had reached the earth at last, and now lay with his head buried in

18 THE MAN FROM THE MOON

a snow-heap and his feet sticking out of the top. He remained quiet for a minute, trying to collect his thoughts, and at length, finding that his fall was really over, he struggled out



His first glance was at the moon.

of the snow-heap, got on his feet, and shook himself free from the snow.

His first glance was at the moon. There it was, shining as brightly as ever.

“Mother Goose will certainly miss me,”



he thought. "Well, let her!" and he proceeded to look about him.

There was not very much to see—nothing but hills and fields and woods, all white and glittering in the moonlight. Luckily, Mother Goose had finished her sweeping, so that he was not troubled any more by the falling snow.

On the right rose a small hill and to the left stretched a great wood. Which way should he go? "There is more chance of adventures in the wood," he considered, and so took that way into the vast, unknown world.

He felt very brave as he stepped under the shadow of the great trees, though his heart beat a little faster than he would have liked to own. But he had not gone far when a sound of weeping fell upon his ears. He stopped and listened. Yes, there was no doubt about it, someone was crying bitterly. How very lucky—here was an adventure at once!

So he turned his steps towards the sound, and very soon came upon a picture that filled him with astonishment.

## II

### The Little Princess

**B**Y the side of a rough path, alone and disconsolate, on the trunk of a fallen tree, sat a lovely little maiden. She was dressed in magnificent white robes, which the Man in the Moon could not have described if he had wanted to, and on her head she wore a little gold crown, from under which her golden hair fell in thick curling masses. A patch of moonlight shone full on her figure through a gap in the trees.

The Man in the Moon stared at this lovely vision with his mouth and eyes wide open.

“Hullo,” he cried, forgetting his manners altogether, “you are much more beautiful than Mother Goose.” The little maiden, who had stopped crying on seeing him

approach, gave a faint smile, and the Man in the Moon at once remembered himself, for Mother Goose had often told him it was rude to make personal remarks.

“Can I help you?” he asked, feeling very much ashamed of himself. “I see you are in trouble.”

“I am afraid you cannot do much,” the little maiden answered in a soft voice—such a soft little voice! “but thank you all the same. I am a princess,” she went on sadly; “at least, I was, but I have been turned away by my subjects and I have nowhere to go to and no friends to help me.”

As she said this the Little Princess nearly cried again.

“Don’t say that,” cried the Man in the Moon, feeling that here was an adventure indeed, “let me help you to recover your kingdom. Trust me, and you shall soon have all your subjects at your feet.”

“All?” repeated the Little Princess, with a tearful smile; “there are only two.”

“Only two!” cried the Man in the Moon,

## 22 THE MAN FROM THE MOON

very much puzzled. He could not understand at all how a princess so beautiful and so splendidly dressed could have only two subjects.

“Only two real ones, I mean,” she explained; “I have plenty of others, but they don’t count. I can’t quite show you how it is, but perhaps you will see for yourself some day.”

“Then where is your kingdom?” asked the Man in the Moon; “it cannot be very large.”

“Not very large,” replied the Little Princess, “but very real—at least, it was until to-day. But now, you see, I am without any at all.”

“But surely,” said the Man in the Moon, “two subjects cannot drive you away against your will? It sounds ridiculous.”

“Indeed they can,” answered the Little Princess sadly, “and it may be harder than you think to get them to take me back. Besides,” she went on proudly, “I would not go back to rule over them if they did not

want me, even if I could. Then there's the Dragon—he rules over my kingdom now; though why my subjects should like a nasty yellow Dragon better than me I don't know."

The Man in the Moon was more puzzled than ever. He wished he knew more about such matters, and then perhaps he could have suggested something. As it was he felt quite helpless. Yet it was clear something must be done for this beautiful princess.

"You know I am very ignorant," he began humbly; "couldn't you tell me exactly how it all happened? because I really wish to help you, and I might be able to think of something."

"You are very kind," said the Little Princess. "Will you think it very rude of me if I ask you who you are?"

Of course not. Why should he? So he told her all about himself and Mother Goose and his wish for adventures, and how he fell off the moon. When he came to that part,

the Little Princess clapped her hands and laughed merrily.

“Oh, what fun!” she cried. “I should have loved to see you coming down. It must have looked so funny.”

But after all, the Man in the Moon had his feelings, and the way the Little Princess took it, hurt him. She might have sympathized a little. Even Mother Goose had not laughed—as far as he knew.

“It was not funny for me,” he said rather reproachfully; and at that the Little Princess was so sorry for having behaved badly, and showed her sorrow so prettily, that the Man in the Moon wondered why he had been angry with her for laughing at first.

“Now, I hope,” he said, “that Mother Goose will not trouble to come after me.”

“Can she?” asked the Little Princess; “how would she get down?”

“You see,” said the Man in the Moon, “she rides on her broomstick. She can go anywhere on it, but she has never let me use it.”

“But you have managed very well without it,” laughed the Little Princess, and this time the Man in the Moon was not offended at all.

“I like Mother Goose very well,” he went on, “but it is nice to have a change sometimes, and you see that is just what I never get.”

“You must make the most of it, then,” said the Little Princess roguishly. “But oh,” she went on, suddenly changing her tone and jumping up, “here we are talking and talking, and all the time——”

“And all the time——?” repeated the Man in the Moon, for she had stopped.

“I mean,” said the Little Princess, blushing, “that I am no nearer to getting back my kingdom than I was before.”

This was true, and the Man in the Moon felt somehow as though it was his fault.

“I do not see that I shall be of much use to you,” he said regretfully.

“You will, indeed,” said the Little Princess. “I am sure you are very clever.”

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The Man in the Moon did not feel at all so sure himself, but he did his best to look wise.

“Well,” continued the Little Princess, “you must see my kingdom first, and after that we must consider what is best to be done. But I will never go back for good,” she cried, “until they want me.”

“You mean your real subjects?” said the Man in the Moon. He did not understand her feelings about that, but then, of course, he had not seen her subjects yet. Perhaps he would understand better afterwards. He felt quite anxious to start at once.

“I suppose it is not very far?” he asked.

“Oh, no,” answered the Little Princess, “we can walk there very easily. It will be quite nice going through the wood—much nicer than it was coming,” she added with a smile.

So they set out together. The snow, already crisp under their feet, sparkled and glittered in the moonlight, and the trees crackled and the twigs rustled. All round



them the forest seemed alive and full of queer noises, and yet over all hung the stillness of the winter night. The Man in the Moon was enchanted. He had never seen anything like this.

“It is much nicer altogether down here,” he thought—“much nicer. But I suppose I shall have to go back in the end.” He glanced at the Little Princess and sighed. She looked up at him with a smile.

“What a sigh!” she said gaily. So he laughed and she laughed, and they walked along together merrily enough towards the Little Princess’s kingdom.

### III

## In the Nursery

“**W**HAT a lovely dragon,” said Doods ;  
“ isn’t he beautiful, Bubbles ?”

Bubbles eyed the yellow dragon suspiciously and said nothing.

“ Such games we can have with ~~him~~,”  
Doods went on ; “ it’ll be much nicer than  
playing with the frog.”

Here nurse broke in. “ Now, Miss Doods,  
you know what I’ve told you—that isn’t a  
toy, it’s a money-box, and you mustn’t pull  
it about. Your papa thinks it’s time you  
began to save some of your pocket-money,  
and he didn’t get you that dragon to play  
with.”

“ That’s all nonsense, Bubbles,” said  
Doods, when nurse had hustled out of

the room; "of course she has to say that, but if we choose to pretend it's a real dragon, they can't stop us, can they?"

"No," said Bubbles doubtfully.

"Come and sit down here, then," said Doods, "and I'll read you about *The Little Princess*."

It was a very nice story and the one they liked most. But Doods's eyes kept wandering to the yellow dragon on the mantelpiece, and after a few minutes she stopped reading to Bubbles, and closed the book with a bang.

"I wish we had lived in those days, Bubbles," she said with a sigh, "it would be so much nicer to do the things than just read about them. Only fancy how grand it would be to be a princess and live in a beautiful palace and have a fairy godmother; though"—with a little shiver—"I shouldn't like to be carried off by a dragon. But you see you must be if you are a princess, or your prince can't come to rescue you. Then you let down your golden hair, and he climbs up and kills

the dragon. Then he marries you and you live happy ever after. It is most beautiful." She clasped her hands over her knees and looked at Bubbles.

"Would I be a dwagon?" asked Bubbles, much interested in Doods's account of ancient times.

"Of course not," said Doods, "you would be a prince."

"I would radder be a dwagon—ever so much," said Bubbles, whose great desire in all the games which he and his sister played was to figure as some ferocious animal or other.

"Don't be silly, Bubbles," said Doods. "No, you would have to be a prince. But of course," she added, hoping to soften his disappointment, "you could be a frog or something like that as well, because, you know, princes used to be turned into frogs by wicked fairies who hated them."

Bubbles accepted the suggestion—he generally did bow to his sister's superior knowledge.



“I’ll read you about *The Little Princess*.”



“And when will I begin?” he asked.

“What do you mean?” said Doods.

“Why, to be a fwog—like ’oo said. When will I begin?” he repeated.

“Oh, you stupid,” returned Doods when she saw his meaning, “it’s no good *playing* at it. I was talking of how nice it would have been to really be what those books say. It’s no fun pretending; it’s just as good to read about as that.”

But to her surprise—for he did not often disagree with her—Bubbles showed signs of resistance. He did not understand the difference between *being* and *playing*; all he knew was that what seemed to him a very nice game was suddenly to be stopped for no reason that he could make out.

“I wants to play it,” he said stolidly.

And this was the beginning of all the trouble. Doods was very much astonished, but she began by trying severity. “Now, Bubbles,” she said as sternly as she could, “don’t be a baby. I am older than you and know much better what is right and what is

wrong." This was her favourite argument. She had picked it up from nurse, and generally used it with great effect on Bubbles, though, as a rule, it had nothing whatever to do with what they were talking about.

"Now, listen to me, Bubbles," she went on with great dignity, "if we play at it, we are only pretending, and that's no good at all, because it's so different from being it."

This rather lame speech naturally did not produce much result.

"If we plays it, we *are* it," persisted Bubbles.

Doods was quite vexed. She knew she could not explain to Bubbles properly, but she was annoyed at his not understanding her.

"You are a very naughty boy," she said at last. "Don't you see that I am I and you are you? It would be no good pretending I was you, would it? I couldn't really be you, you know."

But at this point Bubbles who, as Doods often told him, "never could argue," burst





A little fairy form slowly rise from the crumpled pages.



into tears, which more easily conquered Doods than anything he could have done. For, after all, she had a tender heart and could not bear to see her brother crying. So in an instant she was down on her knees petting and kissing him, and making all sorts of nice promises.

Bubbles did not take long to be consoled and, being at peace with his sister, poured out his anger on the nearest object.

“It’s all vat howwid book,” he said with conviction.

“Of course it is,” said Doods; “that horrid, nasty book. We’ll never, never, never read it again.” And she took it up and threw it to the other end of the nursery, while Bubbles smiled approval. The book nearly fell right into the big blazing fire, and lay among the ashes and cinders in the grate, very crumpled and dirty.

But neither of the children saw—how should they?—a little fairy form slowly rise from the crumpled pages of the fairy book, gaze on them reproachfully, and pass, with

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downcast head and tearful eye, to the window, where it vanished into the snow outside.

And so it had come about that the Little Princess had been driven away from her kingdom.

But Doods and Bubbles knew nothing about that, and they went to bed that evening and fell asleep as peacefully as usual.

## IV

### The Little Princess's Kingdom

**T**HE Man in the Moon and the Little Princess were standing together in the nursery. There were a number of toys upon a table on one side, which were all, in their own way, showing their satisfaction at seeing the Little Princess back among them again.

“This is my kingdom,” she was saying in a low voice to the Man in the Moon; “now, perhaps, you understand a little better.”

Well, he might certainly have understood much better; but at present he was so interested in and astonished at everything he saw, that he had no room for understanding left.

“All these things you see round you,” continued the Little Princess, waving her hand at the toys, “are my subjects—not my real

40 THE MAN FROM THE MOON

subjects, you know, but you will understand that presently."

"Is *he*?" asked the Man in the Moon in an awe-struck voice, pointing to a Wooden Soldier, who stood upon the table and looked very bright and smart.

"Shun!" cried the Wooden Soldier. This was the only word of command that he knew, and he said it to impress the Man in the Moon. But he made no impression at all, for the Man in the Moon was already deeply engaged in looking at a large toy Frog, with enormous eyes and a very fat body, who was squatting on the table, staring at nothing in particular. He was painted green.

"I wonder what sort of thing he is," thought the Man in the Moon, but he was too polite to ask the question. However, the Little Princess saw him looking at the Frog.

"Yes," she said, "that is another of my subjects. He can swim in the water and hop on land, and he is altogether very







wonderful. He is wiser than anybody else in the whole world—he told me so himself.”

The Man in the Moon was really interested, and he stared hard at the clever Frog, who stared back at him without winking.



Staring at nothing in particular.

“I should like to see him swim and hop,” said the Man in the Moon, “it must be a marvellous sight.”

“Oh, well,” the Little Princess answered hesitatingly, “you’ll have to wait, I’m afraid. He only does it when he’s wound up with

a key. Of course that is his pride, you know, because he has often said the key is only for show."

It seemed to the Man in the Moon that the Little Princess took a very great interest in the Frog.

"If you had ever read any fairy stories," she continued—and the Man in the Moon was obliged to confess that he had *not*—"you would know that frogs sometimes turn into princes; but," she added with a sigh, "though he is so wise, I am afraid this one will never become a prince. He is not made in the right way."

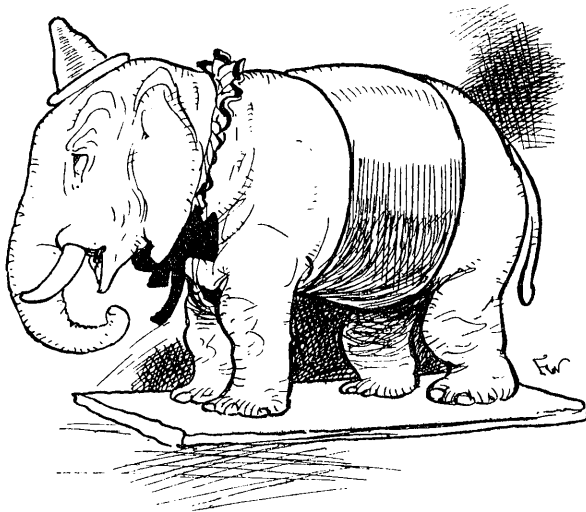
Somehow the Man in the Moon did not like the Little Princess's thoughts turning so much on this ugly Frog and the chance of his becoming a prince, but he said nothing.

There was a small doll about the same size as the Wooden Soldier, and beautifully dressed, sitting on the table near the Frog.

"Yes," said the Little Princess, seeing the Man in the Moon looking at the doll, "she's small, but she's very pretty, isn't she?"

The Man in the Moon agreed, but he was too shy to speak to the small doll.

“Here is another of my subjects,” the Little Princess went on, turning to a grey cardboard Elephant. His feet were glued



“No, I never use an ear-trumpet.”

to a stand, and he looked very battered indeed.

“He’s very old,” said the Little Princess ; “talk to him—he likes talking when he’s awake. He’s generally asleep most of the time, and he’s rather deaf.”

"Can you trumpet?" asked the Man in the Moon, not knowing in the least what to talk about, but feeling that he ought to say something.

The old Elephant looked at him drowsily, and shook his head.

"No—no—no," he said slowly in a very hoarse voice; "no, I never use an ear-trumpet."

"I don't think you quite understand," began the Man in the Moon politely.

"Ah, yes," returned the Elephant, looking down at his feet, "it *is* a fine stand; all solid wood—no cardboard."

The Man in the Moon gave it up, and turned in despair to the Little Princess, who was watching him with a smile.

"Never mind," she said; "he's very pleased that you spoke to him. And this," she went on, "is Jack-in-the-Box."

"Glad—see you," said the Jack-in-the-Box. He spoke very jerkily in short gasps. "Fine—day. I'm—out of—health—just now."

"I'm sorry to hear it," said the Man in the Moon.

"Ah!" gasped the Jack-in-the-Box; "most annoying—but not—my fault. Spring—broken—can't—sit down—very tiring work—standing up—always."

"Here is Noah," went on the Little Princess.

"Don't you believe it," said Noah angrily.

The Man in the Moon looked startled.

"What that Jack-in-the-Box says," continued Noah. "It's all rubbish about getting tired standing up. I always stand up—it's the only dignified way of living."

It seemed to the Man in the Moon that Noah couldn't have sat down if he had tried, being made out of a solid block of wood, but he was too polite to say so.

"Is the Dragon here?" asked the Man in the Moon; "the yellow Dragon you were talking about in the wood."

"There he is," said the Little Princess, "on the mantelpiece."

The Man in the Moon looked up with

interest. The Dragon was sitting on the mantelpiece with his huge mouth wide open, as if he were hungry. He was made of china, chiefly, with a few bits of gold or brass stuck about him here and there. He was rather terrible to look at, yet somehow the Man in the Moon fancied there was a friendly twinkle in his eye.

“Don’t look at him too long,” said the Little Princess with a shiver, “you might offend him. And now you must come and see my real subjects.”

She glided from the room, and the Man in the Moon, following her, found himself in another smaller room, very different in appearance, and with no toys in it. In one corner were two small cots with curtains, and the Little Princess beckoned to him to come and look at them.

“Here,” she said, holding back the curtains, “are my real subjects.”

The Man in the Moon drew near, and peeping in, beheld Doods and Bubbles, two sweet little figures, sleeping peacefully. It



The Dragon was sitting on the mantelpiece with his huge mouth wide open.





was quite different from anything he had ever seen—different somehow even from the Little Princess, and he felt he understood in a moment all that she had meant by talking of them as her real subjects.

He looked at them for a long while, until at length the Little Princess let the curtains fall again. Then he drew a deep breath.

“Those are subjects worth having,” he said.

“And yet,” said the Little Princess, “they drove me away.”

“Oh, no,” cried the Man in the Moon, “it must have been the Dragon’s fault.”

“I should have said so once,” the Little Princess answered, “but wait till you have heard all I have to tell you, which you will now understand better.”

Thereupon she told the Man in the Moon all that had passed between Doods and Bubbles, beginning with the reading of the fairy story, and ending with the throwing away of the book.

“So now you will see,” said the Little

Princess when she had finished, "it was not altogether the Dragon's fault. And I have lost my kingdom, for how can I stay here when the only subjects I care about have treated me in such a way? And how was it *my* fault that they quarrelled—what did *I* do?"

She looked at the Man in the Moon so appealingly that he felt his heart harden towards the two little figures in their white cots.

"You have been shamefully treated!" he cried; "but I shall certainly stay and see you righted."

"Thank you," said the Little Princess; "but remember you must not do any harm to my subjects, for they have always loved me up to now, and some day I am sure they will be sorry."

"They ought to be ashamed of themselves," said the Man in the Moon, as he followed the Little Princess back into the other room.

Here he found that the feeling among the

toys about the Little Princess's kingdom was very bitter. All the toys were agreed, too, that it was entirely the Dragon's fault.



“I'd go and fight the Dragon to-morrow—only—well, you understand!”

The Wooden Soldier in particular was very heroic.

“I'd go and fight the Dragon to-morrow,” he said to the Man in the Moon, “only—well, you understand.”

The Man in the Moon didn't understand at all, but he hardly liked to say so.

"It's very good of you," he replied.

"Not at all—not at all," said the Wooden Soldier airily, "don't mention it. We soldiers have to be dashing and brave and all that sort of thing. It's nothing at all."

At this moment the Man in the Moon had a curious feeling that someone was looking at him very hard and trying to attract his attention. He turned round and saw that the clever mechanical Frog was watching him earnestly.

"I'll tell you," said the Frog, "what *I* think about it."

The Man in the Moon could not help noticing that the Frog said this as though nobody else's opinion on the matter could possibly be as important as his.

"It's all the Dragon's doing," said the Frog slowly and impressively.

"So everybody seems to think," said the Man in the Moon.

"Yes, since I told them so," rejoined the

Frog rather sharply. "They simply repeat what I say. But," he continued, lowering his voice, "do you know why the Dragon did it, eh?"

"Of course I don't," said the Man in the Moon.

"Well, the fact is," said the Frog, "he's jealous."

"Jealous!" cried the Man in the Moon. "What's he jealous of?"

"Of me," said the Frog. "You may have noticed that the Princess is in love with me?"

"I can't say I have," replied the Man in the Moon shortly. He felt the Frog might have been more modest about it, even if it were true.

"Well, she is," said the Frog. "Naturally enough the Dragon knows it, and this is his revenge."

"It seems very unlikely," the Man in the Moon could not help saying.

"I should like to know why," said the Frog; "princesses have fallen in love with

frogs before now. Perhaps you didn't know that frogs are generally enchanted princes?"

"But you seem so different from other frogs," said the Man in the Moon.

"So I am," retorted the Frog; "I am much wiser and better in every way."

"Well, the question is," said the Man in the Moon, "have you any plan?"

"For marrying her?" asked the Frog.

"No," said the Man in the Moon, "for upsetting the Dragon and putting the Little Princess back on her throne, of course."

The Frog winked his eye. "Oh, yes," he answered, "I've dozens of plans—all simple and all good. But I'm not going to tell them to you. You'd go away and carry them out and get all the glory. No, thanks, you make your own plans."

"Not much use having dozens of plans if you don't *do* anything," thought the Man in the Moon, but he said nothing, though he felt he did not altogether like the clever Frog.

"As for upsetting the Dragon," went on

the Frog, "any frog could do that easily. I know a story——"

"Oh, do tell it now," interrupted the Little Princess, who had just joined them. "Ever since the Dragon came," she went on, turning to the Man in the Moon, "the Frog has promised to tell us this story and he never has. Isn't it a shame?"

"To-morrow," said the Frog; "it's too late to-night. I'm going to sleep. Good night."





The Second Day

The Dragon Smiles



# I

## What the Man in the Moon Overheard

**B**UBBLES and Doods were just finishing breakfast when Doods suddenly clapped her hands in dismay.

“How provoking!” she cried. “I had such a lovely dream last night, Bubbles, and I meant to tell it before breakfast and it would have come true, but I forgot all about it, and now it won’t come true, and it was such a lovely dream.”

“What was ve dweam?” asked Bubbles, looking up from his bread and milk.

“All about a lovely Princess, and you and me and the Man in the Moon, and—oh, a lot of things I can’t remember,” answered Doods.

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“Who *is* ve Man in ve Moon?” Bubbles asked again.

“Well, I don’t know exactly,” returned Doods (which was her way of saying that she did not know at all), “but——”

Luckily at this moment the door opened and nurse, who had been busy in the other nursery, bustled in. And who should enter at the same moment but the Man in the Moon himself, though, of course, no one knew that, for he was not visible to ordinary people.

“Nurse,” cried Doods, jumping as usual into the thick of the subject, “who is the Man in the Moon?”

“Good gracious me, Miss Doods,” exclaimed nurse, quite taken aback, “whatever put that into your head?”

“Never mind,” said Doods impatiently; “who was he, nurse? The other day you told me that he was a very wicked man.”

Some wise person once said that listeners never hear any good of themselves. It certainly did not seem that the Man in the



“Who is the Man in the Moon?”



Moon was to be the exception to the rule. However, he listened very attentively, for he was very anxious to know why he should be thought wicked.

“So I did, Miss,” said nurse in answer to Doods, “and, indeed, he is a most wicked man. He was put into the moon for picking up sticks on a Sunday when by rights he should have been going to church. And now,” continued nurse, “his only pleasure is to entice good children to be naughty. That’s his bad ways, Miss, and don’t you be thinking or talking about him too much, for as sure as fate he’ll be coming down the chimney and making you discontented.”

And off hurried nurse about her work, quite unconscious of the effect her words had had on the Man in the Moon himself.

At first he was merely astonished, then he grew vexed, and finally he quite lost his temper.

“I like that,” he said to himself, “considering that I am here simply to make these naughty children good again and take back

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their princess! Make them naughty, indeed! It seems to me they are quite naughty enough already! And as for that nurse, she ought to be put in the moon herself with Mother Goose; though if she was," he went on, "I'd never go there again. And why should I come down the chimney?"

Meanwhile, with nurse safely out of hearing, Doods was continuing the forbidden subject.

"You know, Bubbles," she said, "I don't believe he is as bad as nurse says. Think how long he's been there. I'm sure he must be a little sorry by now for being so bad, and then think how lonely it must be for him up there all by himself" (the Man in the Moon could have set Doods right about that). "Poor Man in the Moon," continued Doods, "I wonder if he is very miserable."

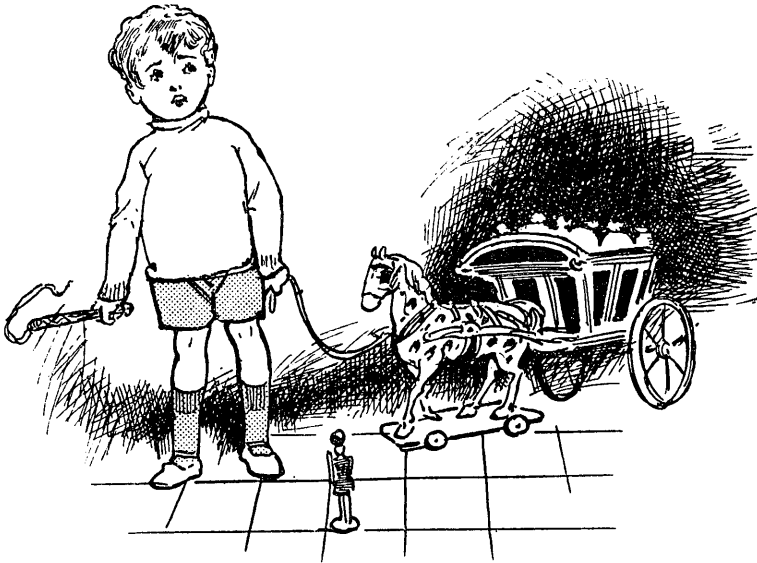
"He's vewwy bad," said Bubbles with conviction. He always believed everything nurse told him

"Not at all," said Doods, now quite ready to take the Man in the Moon's part, "how



## WHAT THE MAN OVERHEARD 63

does nurse know any better than us? *I* believe he's quite good—now, at least. You shouldn't judge hastily, Bubbles. How would *you* like to be put in the corner for ever?"



"Vewwy bad man!"

"*I*'se good," returned Bubbles.

"Well," argued Doods, "when you're bad, you're put in the corner. When you're good, you're let out, so why shouldn't they let the Man in the Moon out?"

"Vewwy bad man," repeated Bubbles, not to be shaken.

"How tiresome you are," said Doods; "I tell you he's quite good now, and I'm very sorry for him, and it's very naughty of you to be so obstinate. I'm surprised at you," she continued severely, "being so unforgiving, Bubbles. You know we ought to forgive everybody, even the wickedest people."

"I'se not forgiven till I'se good," said Bubbles.

"Of course not," Doods answered promptly, feeling, nevertheless, rather embarrassed by this argument. "Don't you see that's just the point?"

But to this Bubbles, not at all sure that he understood, answered nothing, and Doods felt a little vexed, though she had had the last word, if that was any consolation.

But it was lesson-time, and for the next hour, at any rate, Doods was obliged to pay more attention to sums and spelling than to the Man in the Moon.

"It's extraordinary," said the Man in the Moon, as the children went off to the school-room.

"What's extraordinary?" asked the Mechanical Frog.

"Didn't you hear what that nurse said?" inquired the Man in the Moon.

"Of course I did," said the Frog; "I see nothing extraordinary in it. I suppose it's true enough."

"Not a word of it," said the Man in the Moon warmly.

"Oh," said the Frog in a very nasty tone, and just then the Little Princess came in.

"Please don't quarrel," she said hurriedly. "We're all so longing to hear that story you promised us," she went on, turning to the Frog, "about the dragon, you know."

"Ah, yes," said the Frog, "I remember. It's a very good story, and quite true from beginning to end. Well, all of you sit quite still and I'll tell it to you. And I hope the Dragon's listening—it may do him good."

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He looked at the Dragon, who was in his usual place on the mantelpiece and pretending not to hear a word, though the Man in the Moon was certain he was listening very hard.

## II

### The Frog's Story

“ONCE upon a time,” began the Frog, “there was a dragon—a fat, stupid, ugly, useless dragon. He was painted yellow.”

“Wasn't he a real dragon, then?” put in the Man in the Moon.

“Of course he was a real dragon,” growled the Frog; “what else should he be?”

“Real dragons aren't *painted*,” said the Man in the Moon.

“That's all you know about it,” cried the Frog. “Of course they're painted. Do you suppose the colour grows on them?”

“No,” said the Man in the Moon, “only——”

“Only hold your tongue,” said the Frog

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angrily. "This is my story, and this dragon was painted yellow."

He gave another malicious look at the Dragon on the mantelpiece.

"This fat — stupid — ugly — useless — dragon," went on the Frog, uttering every word very slowly and distinctly, "did nothing but eat all day. He would eat anything anybody gave him. But what he liked to eat best were the beautiful frogs that lived in a pond close to his cave. They were wonderful frogs. They could swim in the water and hop on the land, and they were always doing something useful—such as giving people good advice—and every one of them was painted a lovely green colour.

"But this fat, stupid, ugly dragon had no eye for beauty or goodness, and there he would sit all day in the sun eating these beautiful frogs."

"Why did they let him eat them?" asked the Man in the Moon; "why didn't they go away to another pond?"

"Well," the Frog answered, after reflect-



A whole crowd of them would go up to the dragon and hop right into his mouth.





ing a moment, "they knew that the dragon would starve to death if he couldn't eat them—he was too useless and lazy to take any trouble about getting his dinner himself, and these frogs were so tender-hearted and good-natured (like all frogs) that they couldn't bear to think of even such a fat, useless thing as the dragon dying of hunger. In fact, they were so tender-hearted about it that every day a whole crowd of them would go up to the dragon and hop right into his mouth so that he shouldn't have the trouble of dragging his fat body down to the pond."

"How noble," murmured the Little Princess.

"It was very noble," agreed the Frog. "Also they used to keep the dragon's cave clean and tidy, for of course he was a dirty dragon, like all dragons. I must tell you that these frogs had a king, who was really an enchanted prince."

"Wasn't he very unhappy?" asked the Little Princess with interest.

"Why should he be unhappy?" said the

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Frog, "he could swim and hop just like the other frogs, and he was even more beautiful than they were. No, he was very happy indeed—far happier than when he was just an ordinary prince. The only thing that troubled him was the enormous number of his subjects that the fat dragon insisted on eating every day. So after thinking over the matter a long time, he determined to see the dragon about it.

"The dragon was lying asleep outside his cave when the prince called, and, if possible, he looked uglier and more stupid when he was asleep than when he was awake. He was snoring very unpleasantly, too (all dragons snore unpleasantly, you know). The prince, however, was much too careful of other people's feelings to wake him up; it was a habit he had learned from the frogs—all frogs are very careful of other people's feelings.

"So he sat down to wait till the dragon should wake up of his own accord, when, as he waited, he thought he heard the sound of



He hopped past the fat, stupid dragon and went inside the cave



someone crying inside the cave. He wondered what it could be. No one lived in the cave besides the dragon, for dragons are not companions that respectable people care about living with, as a rule.

“However, the longer he listened, the louder grew the noise of the crying. So at last he hopped past the fat, stupid dragon and went inside the cave, and there, sure enough, was a lovely princess sitting on a stone and crying her eyes out. So, with a graceful bow, the prince asked if there was anything he could do for her. Then she told him, with tears in her eyes, that the dragon had carried her off that very morning.”

“Wasn’t she rather surprised to hear a frog talk?” asked the Little Princess.

“Dear me, no!” said the Frog. “What an idea! In fact, I should think she rather expected it. There was nothing unusual in that at all. Anyhow, there wasn’t any time for her to be surprised if she wanted to, because just then the dragon woke up and

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saw the princess talking to the prince inside the cave.

“‘Now, then,’ he growled rudely—dragons never have any manners, you know—‘what are you two doing there?’

“The princess was terribly frightened, but the prince took her hand and led her boldly out of the cave.

“‘Leave him to me,’ whispered the princess softly, ‘I know something that’ll put him in a good temper.’

“So the prince let her go up and stroke the dragon’s head. ‘You remind me of such a nice dragon I used to read about when I was a child,’ said the princess.

“‘Dare say I do,’” said the dragon with a conceited smirk.

“‘May I tell you about him?’ went on the princess coaxingly; ‘he was such a nice dragon—I’m sure you must be some relation of his.’

“‘If you like,’ yawned the dragon.

“So the princess stood up and repeated the following verses :—

## THE FROG'S STORY

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' A painter once a dragon took  
And put him in a picture-book.  
In every page he was on view  
And always doing something new.  
He had a very pleasant look  
This dragon of the picture-book.



' On knights he never used to sup  
Nor did he eat princesses up.  
In fact, he never dined at all  
On anybody, great or small.  
There wasn't anything to cook  
Inside the dragon's picture-book.

' He was the dearest dragon, too,  
And always had a smile for you.  
Whatever picture he was in  
He never lost his friendly grin.  
No wonder people loved to look  
Inside the dragon's picture-book.

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' And if a child was feeling faint  
From drinking too much water-paint,  
Or over-eating made it ill,  
It never had to take a pill.  
Instead, it simply took a look  
Inside the dragon's picture-book.

' And so through all the country-side  
The dragon's fame went far and wide,  
And all the dragons thereabout  
Began to think the matter out,  
Till as his model each one took  
The dragon of the picture-book.

' The happy times that then began  
You may imagine, if you can.  
And every one agreed it was  
The dragon's doing, all because  
He'd such a jolly, laughing look,  
And such a funny picture-book.'

“‘Very good,’ remarked the dragon at the end, ‘but when you say I’m like your dragon of the picture-book, I can’t altogether agree with you. Didn’t you say that he did not eat princesses up?’

“‘I don’t think any dragons do nowadays,’ faltered the princess timidly.

“But here the prince broke in. He thought it was time to show the dragon that there



was some one, at any rate, who wasn't frightened of him.

" 'The princess has left out all the last verses,' he said.

" 'Those are all I ever heard,' said the princess. 'I didn't know there were any more.'

" 'Indeed there are,' said the prince, 'every frog knows them by heart.'

" 'You can repeat them,' said the dragon in what he thought was a gracious manner.

" 'That's just what I intend to do,' said the prince.

" And these were the verses :—

'Once in the garden, thrown aside,  
The picture-book lay opened wide ;  
And as a frog came hopping by  
The dragon's picture caught his eye.  
" Hullo," he said, " I'll have a look  
Inside this precious picture-book."

'But everywhere the frog peeped in,  
There was the dragon with his grin.  
" This is," he cried, " ridiculous,  
A frog must not be laughed at thus !  
I'll smash him up by hook or crook,  
This dragon and his picture-book,"



'So on that picture-book he jumped,  
He banged upon it and he bumped.  
He tore the pages inside out,  
He flung them anywhere about.  
A most complete revenge he took  
Upon that dragon's picture-book.

## THE FROG'S STORY

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Since then no dragon, fat or thin,  
Has dared at any frog to grin.  
But should they meet, with downcast eye,  
The dragon humbly hurries by:  
He knows the fate that overtook  
The dragon of the picture-book.'"

"I wonder the dragon didn't eat the prince up at once for repeating such verses," said the Man in the Moon.

"He didn't dare try," replied the Frog; "but of course he got very sulky.

"'I don't know what you want here,' he said to the prince, 'but you needn't wait any longer; the princess and I have got plenty to talk about.'

"'I came up to see you about the number of frogs you've been eating lately,' said the prince, keeping his temper for the princess's sake.

"'I'm glad to hear it,' the dragon answered insolently, 'because I'd like to tell you that I don't get half enough. I want the number doubled every day, do you hear?'

"The prince still kept his temper. 'You can't have any more,' he said; 'you're eating

too many as it is. There won't be any left at all soon. What'll you do then?'

"'Plenty of time to think of that when you're all eaten,' said the dragon, snapping his big jaws.

"'You'll starve,' said the prince.

"'Not me!' said the dragon contemptuously, 'I shall start on princesses then. There are plenty of them about.'

"The princess gave a gasp. 'You wouldn't really?' she cried.

"'Yes, I would,' returned the dragon brutally; 'I've half a mind to have you for supper to-night, just for a change. I'm getting tired of frogs.'

"This was more than the prince could stand, and he flew into a rage at once.

"'How dare you say you're getting tired of frogs?' he cried; 'I call it downright ungrateful of you. And you've always had the fattest, too.'

"Now, the dragon, like all other dragons, was nothing but a coward at heart, and if only the princess hadn't been looking on, he

would have humbly begged the prince's pardon, as he had done hundreds of times before. But he quite understood that if he did that in front of the princess she would at once see what an old fraud he was and would not be frightened of him any longer. So he thought he would bluster the thing through.

“‘How dare you talk to me like that!’ he cried in a very loud voice, trying to look dignified. (Have you ever seen a dragon trying to look dignified? It's the most ridiculous sight in the world.) ‘You little whipper-snapper—I'd eat *you* for tuppence!’

“Now if the prince had been in his natural form, I can't tell what he might have done, but having been a frog for so long he had naturally become very brave indeed, like all frogs, so of course he couldn't stand such an insult as that, and in a moment he had drawn his sword and cut off the dragon's head.”

“I say!” cried the Man in the Moon,

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interrupting the story; "that was rather sudden, wasn't it?"

"Of course it was sudden," retorted the Frog. "You don't suppose he was going to wait for the dragon to eat him, do you?"

"No," said the Man in the Moon, "but you might have told us about the fight."

"There wasn't any fight," said the Frog; "the dragon ran away at once, and the prince cut his tail off."

"You said he cut his head off just now," said the Man in the Moon.

"So he did, he cut them both off," the Frog answered impatiently. "Well, after that, the princess was so overcome at the prince's bravery that she fell on his neck and said she would marry him at once. And they were married that very day."

"And didn't the prince recover his natural form?" asked the Little Princess.

"Oh, yes," admitted the Frog reluctantly. "You see, when the princess married him, of course the spell was broken, and he became a prince again."

“And was he very handsome?” asked the Little Princess.

“Yes,” said the Frog, “he was a handsome prince. Not so handsome as when he was a frog, of course, but still good-looking enough. He was very sorry to leave the pond and the frogs, but he invited them all to come and live with him in his palace for as long as they liked. So they did, and everything was very pleasant. All the other princesses near were mad with jealousy when they heard of the princess who had married a prince that had actually been a real frog for years. And, of course, they lived happily ever after. So did all the frogs who lived with them.”

“Is that the end of the story?” asked the Man in the Moon.

“No, it is not the end,” said the Frog severely; “I wish you would wait for me to finish. There is a moral, and the moral is—to beware of dragons, especially yellow dragons.”

And before the Man in the Moon could

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ask where the moral came in, the door of the nursery burst open, and Doods and Bubbles came rushing in from the school-room, having finished their lessons for the morning.





In a moment he had drawn his sword and cut off the Dragon's head.



### III

## The Wooden Soldier gets into Trouble

**D**OODS had had a new book sent her that very morning from her Uncle Joe.

“It isn’t a lesson-book, I hope,” Doods had said on opening it, for before now she had had several nice-looking books given her which had turned out to be lesson-books in disguise.

“They pretend to tell you a story,” Doods used to complain, “and then you find out they’re really teaching you history or geography, or how bread is made, or something just as silly. I hate them.”

This new book of hers was full of poetry—in fact, it was nothing but poetry—and Doods thought this a very bad sign. The only

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poetry she had ever read was in her English Reader, out of which she had to learn bits every day by heart. It wasn't interesting at all, and Doods didn't feel much inclined to read any more.

Still, Uncle Joe had given her the book, and he would be sure to ask her if she had read it the next time he came, so she supposed she must try to get through it somehow.

But she hadn't read far before she found it was very different from her lesson-book. None of the pieces of poetry in it were long, and some were funny and some rather sad; but the best of it was they were all about things Doods understood, such as children and toys and fairy tales.

"It's a lovely book," said Doods. "I shall read things out of it to you, Bubbles, if you're good. Now, for instance, there's a piece of poetry here all about a new game with toys. And I tell you what, Bubbles," she went on excitedly, "we can play it. It's a sort of a mixture of a story and a game.

And the Dragon can be in it—and it will be lovely.”

“Will I be in it?” asked Bubbles.



“And now for the dragon.”

“Yes,” said Doods hastily, “we’re both in it—at least, we look on. I’ll tell you what it is. Now here’s the doll’s-house” (it was a

very small doll's-house, and stood on the table). "Now, we have to pretend that's a castle, you see; then we put the doll inside and we pretend she's a princess. Now, you see, this is the dragon's castle, and he's carried off this lovely princess and he's keeping her here. And now for the dragon."

Doods got on a chair and took the Yellow Dragon carefully off the mantelpiece. He was rather bigger than his own castle, but Doods got over that difficulty by putting him on guard outside. "Besides," she explained to Bubbles, "it's much more probable for a dragon to be outside than inside a castle."

"Why?" asked Bubbles.

"Now all we want is a prince," continued Doods, taking no notice of Bubbles's question, "and then we'll make up a lovely story of how he rescues the princess, and all the adventures they go through. And the best of it is we shall make them all really happen—with the toys, you know.

It's much better than just an ordinary story, isn't it?"

Bubbles agreed meekly. He would much rather have played the dragon himself, but there seemed to be no chance of that.

Meanwhile the Toys had become very much interested in the new game, and they all thought it a good one. Even the Frog was less languid than he usually pretended to be.

"It's a great bore," he yawned, "but I suppose I must play to please the children. Of course, they will want me to be an enchanted prince and slay the dragon. Well, I don't mind, and I must say that this is the most sensible game I've seen in the nursery for a long time. It's more like my story."

Then he put on a very dignified air and waited for Doods to come and pick him out for the part of the Prince. But the Man in the Moon, who was watching Doods, saw her suddenly bend over the table and pick up—not the Frog, but the Wooden Soldier!

"Here's our prince, Bubbles," she cried,

waving the Wooden Soldier in the air; “doesn’t he look splendid?”

The Man in the Moon looked at the Frog. He was absolutely speechless with rage.

“Did—did you hear that?” he spluttered at length; “did you hear what that ridiculous gawk of a girl said? She called the Wooden Soldier splendid!”

“Well, he’s smart enough,” said the Man in the Moon, who was not at all sorry at what had happened.

“BOSH!” roared the Frog, who seemed to get angrier every moment. “Don’t talk to me. This is the most idiotic game I ever heard of. Look at that stupid doll in the doll’s-house, simpering away as if she really was a princess. And that Wooden Soldier, too, trying to look like a prince. Bah, I’ve no patience with people who pretend to be better than they are.”

“Indeed!” the Man in the Moon could not help saying; “only just now you were talking of playing the part yourself.”

“And how do you know I’m not a



prince?" retorted the Frog. "But I'm not going to argue with you; you're as bad as the rest of 'em. It's a plot, that's what it is. I wouldn't play in this game now, not if they were all to go on their knees."

Just then the Man in the Moon heard Bubbles talking.

"What shall we Fwog be, Doods?" he asked.

"Oh," Doods replied carelessly, "he can be the dragon's servant."

"I won't—I won't—I won't!" screamed the Frog, who was now perfectly furious.

"It's only a game, you know, after all," said the Man in the Moon, by way of consoling him.

"It's not a game," said the Frog, "they're doing it on purpose to spite me."

But whether he liked it or not, the Frog was taken up and put down beside the Dragon by Bubbles.

"That's right," said Doods; "now we can really begin the story, Bubbles. Now this

dragon had lived in the castle for ages and ages—nobody knows how long—till one day, when he was flying about a long way off from his castle he saw a beautiful princess—here she is, strolling about in her palace gardens. And he fell in love with her at once. But he was not a wicked dragon, Bubbles, and he knew the princess could never fall in love with him, so he came back to his castle, feeling very sad and lonely, but not meaning to carry off the princess or do her any harm at all.

“But when he got back his servant, the frog, saw from the dragon’s face that something was wrong. Now the frog was very curious, and, after a lot of questions, he managed to find out that the dragon was in love with a princess.

“Now the frog, you know, Bubbles, was a wicked, bad-hearted creature” (the Man in the Moon chuckled to himself at this point), “and he at once told the dragon that he ought to carry the beautiful princess away.

“‘No, I won’t,’ said the dragon, ‘it

wouldn't make her fall in love with me—she'd only hate me for it. Besides, she's in love already with a prince; I heard her murmuring his name as she was walking!

“But the artful frog persuaded and persuaded him until at last the dragon grew tired, and said he would think it over. There was no reason at all why the frog should have wanted the dragon to carry off the princess, but the frog was so bad that he wanted to see it done simply because it would be a wicked and horrid thing to do.

“The next morning the dragon found he was more deeply in love with the princess than ever; and the frog kept telling him it was quite a common thing for dragons to carry off princesses and marry them, and that the princesses were always quite happy ever after.

“‘Well,’ said the dragon, ‘I'll tell you what I'll do. Before I decide I'll go and see the princess again and ask her if she thinks she could ever care for me. That would be fair, wouldn't it?’

“‘I think it’s a foolish plan,’ said the frog, ‘much better carry her off at once and save trouble.’

“However, the dragon set off that same day to the palace where the princess lived. Of course, she had never seen him, though he had seen her, and he had no idea that she would be frightened at him. You see, Bubbles, this dragon was so good-hearted that he had never done any harm to anyone, and so he never thought anyone could be frightened of him.

“So when he got to the palace he folded his wings and alighted in the garden, and presently he saw the princess coming towards him.

“She didn’t see him at first, for her eyes were on the ground, so he went forward to meet her. Then she suddenly raised her eyes and saw the dragon, and gave an awful scream, for of course she thought he was going to kill her at once.

“‘Don’t be frightened——’ began the dragon; but he hadn’t time to get any

further, for at the princess's scream hundreds of guards, with swords and spears, came running out to help her. And the moment they saw the dragon they attacked him with their spears."



"Presently he saw the princess coming towards him."

"Weren't vey fwightened, too?" asked Bubbles.

"Well," said Doods, "I expect they were a little; but the princess was so beloved that they would have done anything for her sake,

and when they saw the dragon they naturally thought he was going to kill her or carry her away—just like she did.

“Now at first the dragon was so surprised at being attacked that he quite forgot to be angry; but presently, when the spears and things pricked him, he lost his temper. So would you, you know, if you’d meant to be nice and then found everyone thought you horrid and wanted to kill you. Besides which, there wasn’t time to explain, and he had to fight to defend himself.

“And, being a dragon, he soon killed all those soldiers.

“Then he looked round, still very angry, and saw the princess lying on the ground in a faint.

“‘That frog’s right,’ said the dragon, ‘and this princess must be wicked to have got all these soldiers to try and kill me before she’d even heard what I’d got to say. I’ll carry her off now as a punishment.’

“So he did; and here they are, Bubbles, in the castle. However,” continued Doods,

taking up the Wooden Soldier, "this brave and handsome prince, her lover, soon heard how a dragon had carried off his princess, and of course he set out at once for the dragon's castle."

"Didn't he meet nuffing on ve way?" asked Bubbles.

"No. We'll have the adventures afterwards," said Doods. "He'll have to kill the dragon first."

"And ve fwog, too," said Bubbles; "it was ve fwog's fault, Doods."

"Oh, yes, he shall kill the frog all right; that's easy," said Doods (and the Man in the Moon chuckled again as he saw the Frog squirming under this fresh insult). "So now here he is at the castle. And the first thing he saw was the dragon on guard outside.

"Well, they didn't waste any time in talking, but started fighting at once. It was a most dreadful fight, Bubbles, between the dragon and the prince, for the frog hopped away at the very beginning. They fought all round the castle while the princess looked

on and encouraged the prince from her window.

“But at last, after they had fought all day, the prince saw his only chance was to cut the dragon’s head off at one blow, so he gave a great leap in the air” (here Doods took up the Wooden Soldier and held him just above the Dragon’s head), “and while he was there he raised his sword and —*oh!*” Doods gave a little scream—alas! alas! her hand had slipped, and the Wooden Soldier, instead of triumphantly cutting the Dragon’s throat, had fallen right into the Dragon’s mouth!



## IV

### “ Higgledy-Piggledy ”

**B**UBBLES opened his own mouth wide and howled. That Wooden Soldier—the last of the box—was the best-loved of all his toys.

“It’s all right, Bubbles,” said Doods hastily, “don’t cry—I’ll get him out in a minute.”

But it was more easily said than done. Doods turned the Dragon over and over, this way and that, and rapped and shook it a dozen times. It was no use. The Dragon had not been made into a money-box for nothing, and once anything was put inside that great yawning mouth of his, it was not to be got out again in that way.

All the Toys (except the Elephant, who

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was fast asleep and knew nothing at all about it) looked on in dismay. The Frog alone was calm and triumphant.

“What did I tell you?” he said. “That



Bubbles . . . howled.

Wooden Soldier was bound to bungle it somehow. Now, I suppose, they'll want me to help them out of the mess and rescue this precious prince of theirs. But I sha'n't—so there!”

But the children were not thinking of the Frog at all.

Bubbles was weeping bitterly, and Doods was on her knees by his side, trying to console him and making all sorts of impossible promises.

“Never mind, darling,” she was saying, “we’ll get the Wooden Soldier back when nurse comes in. Don’t cry, he’s not really lost.”

“He’s swallered,” sobbed Bubbles; “my *dear* sodger.”

And just then nurse came bustling in, as usual.

“Whatever have you been doing to the child, Miss Doods?” she said; “I declare he’s always crying now, and he used to be that good——”

“It wasn’t me this time, nurse,” Doods answered crossly, “it’s Bubbles’s Wooden Soldier. We were playing a game, and he fell into the Dragon’s mouth and we can’t get him out.”

“And serve you right, Miss Doods, for play-

ing with that dragon," said nurse. "Didn't I tell you it's a money-box, and not to be played with? You'll be breaking it next. That soldier will have to stop there now."

And nurse took up the Dragon from the table and set him on the mantelpiece again, while Doods did her best to comfort Bubbles, who was still sobbing over his loss.

"I tell you what, Bubbles," she said, "I'll read you some jolly verses from my new book. That *will* be nice, won't it?"

So Bubbles, looking still very woe-begone and tearful, sat down on the floor, while Doods, sitting beside him, turned over the pages of her book.

"I won't read you a sad one," she said. "This one will do. It's called

#### ' HIGGLEDY-PIGGLEDY.

' Have you heard of Higgledy-Piggledy's fate?  
Listen while I the tale relate.

' Higgledy-Piggledy thought he'd go  
One day for a voyage—an hour or so.

## “HIGGLEDY-PIGGLEDY”

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‘ Higgledy-Piggledy could not sail,  
But he took some canvas in case of a gale.

‘ Higgledy-Piggledy could not row,  
But he took some oars to make a show.



‘ Higgledy-Piggledy could not steer,  
But he took some beautiful steering-gear.

‘ And Higgledy-Piggledy took a bun,  
In case he was hungry before he'd done.

‘ Moreover, Higgledy-Piggledy took  
A mackintosh and a boating-hook.

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'For Higglely-Pigglely thought of rain,  
It had rained before—it might rain again.



'And Higglely-Pigglely thought he might get  
Fished out by the hook if he got upset.

'And Higglely-Pigglely took a boat,  
And on the river was soon afloat.

## “HIGGLEDY-PIGGLEDY”

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‘And as Higgledy-Piggledy floated away,  
A breeze on the water began to play.



‘Said Higgledy-Piggledy, “This is grand,  
Much nicer than walking about on land.”

‘So Higgledy-Piggledy set his sail  
And the breeze soon rose to a thumping gale.

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‘Then Higgleddy-Piggledy tried in vain  
To make the boat turn back again.

‘For when Higgleddy-Piggledy turned about  
His boat went over and he fell out.

‘And as Higgleddy-Piggledy could not swim,  
That, I’m afraid, was the end of him.’”

“It was a vewwy sad stowwy,” said Bubbles,  
as Doods closed the book.

“Nonsense,” said Doods, “it’s not meant to  
be sad.”

“Higly-Pigly was dwounded,” went on  
Bubbles mournfully. “It’s like my sodger;  
I shall call *him* Higly-Pigly.”

Doods was afraid he was going to cry  
again, but luckily it was dinner-time, and for  
a while Bubbles’s thoughts were drawn away  
from the sad fate of his Wooden Soldier.



## V

### What the Dragon said

**T**HE Frog was telling everyone that he knew how it would be from the very beginning.

“And there’s that doll again, crying her eyes out,” he said; “as if she cared tuppence.”

“I do care,” said the small doll; “and to think it was for me that he died!”

“He did no such thing,” said the Frog angrily; “he wouldn’t have had the sense to do it, even if he had thought of it.”

“Someone must rescue him,” said the Little Princess. “If only there was a real prince, for instance——” She paused, and all the Toys looked hopefully at the Frog. He yawned in a tired fashion.

“I don’t see why you’re all making such a fuss about the thing,” he said; “however, if you want me to tell you what to do, why, let *him* go and see the Dragon about it.”

The Frog pointed to the Man in the Moon as he spoke.

“How beautifully calm he is,” whispered the Little Princess to the Man in the Moon. “It’s a sign of true bravery, you know.”

The Man in the Moon had an idea that in this case it looked rather more like a sign of cowardice, but he did not say so. He would not have undeceived the Little Princess for all the world.

“I suppose I had better start at once, hadn’t I?” he said.

“Will you really go?” cried the Little Princess. “That *is* good of you.” And the Man in the Moon felt that he would go anywhere and do anything to hear her say that again.

It was not so very far to the mantelpiece where the Dragon lived, and the Man in the Moon soon clambered up, though it was

higher than he thought. But when he had actually reached it, he could not help feeling a little nervous.

The Dragon was much larger than he looked from below. Indeed, he was several times larger than the Frog, and with that enormous mouth of his, he looked as though he could have swallowed half a dozen frogs and thought no more about it.

The Man in the Moon was not at all sure how he ought to address the Dragon, for he had never even seen one in his life before. So he coughed gently and waited to see if the Dragon would speak first. But the Dragon took no notice of him at all. So at last the Man in the Moon cleared his throat again and spoke.

“Dear sir,” he began.

“What!” said the Dragon suddenly, and in such a deep voice that the Man in the Moon gave quite a jump.

“I have called,” he went on hurriedly, “to inquire after the Wooden Soldier. You—you swallowed him, didn’t you?”

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The Dragon gave a broad smile, which was encouraging, for at any rate it showed that he was not offended.

“Well, yes,” he admitted, “I did swallow him, but you mustn’t blame me for that.”



“You—you swallowed him, didn’t you?”

“I wasn’t blaming anybody exactly,” said the Man in the Moon.

The Dragon smiled again good-humouredly. He was a very friendly sort of dragon to be sure, and did not seem at all fierce.

“I don’t believe you’re the sort of chap to

blame anybody for anything," said the Dragon. "I've been watching you ever since you came, though you mightn't have known it. But the rest of the nursery all think it's my fault. Now I'm glad they sent you here, because I should have lost my temper with any of the others—I really should. However, as it's you, I'll explain things. That's more than I'd do for the rest of 'em. Perhaps, now, you have noticed my mouth. It's *rather* large, isn't it? Now it's no good your trying to be polite and saying it isn't, because I know it is, and I'm proud of it. Well, I dare say you know there's a reason for everything."

"I suppose so," said the Man in the Moon.

"Very well, then. Now the reason for my mouth being so big is so that it can hold things easily—or swallow them, as you'd say. But then you must remember that I never swallow anything unless it's put into my mouth by someone. Now, one of the children dropped the Wooden Soldier into my mouth to-day, and of course I swallowed him, but I didn't want to."

“I see,” said the Man in the Moon, after thinking for a moment; “so it’s not your fault at all?”

“Exactly,” the Dragon replied with a pleased smile. “It’s quite simple, isn’t it?”

“But how about the Wooden Soldier?” asked the Man in the Moon; “isn’t it very uncomfortable for him?”

“Not a bit,” said the Dragon cheerfully, “he’s quite happy. It’s rather dark inside there, but he’s got plenty of room, and then if he feels lonely, he can talk to me whenever he likes.”

“Does he like?” the Man in the Moon inquired.

“Well, no,” said the Dragon, “not just now. He’s rather grumpy at present, but we must make allowances for his feelings, and he’ll get over it all right.”

“Can’t he get out?” asked the Man in the Moon.

“No,” said the Dragon. “I must tell you there’s a neat little wire arrangement in my throat, so that though you can fall in you

can't fall out again, do you see? Very convenient, I call it. It wasn't always there, you know—only since they made me into a money-box."

"Then the Wooden Soldier will have to stay inside you for ever?" said the Man in the Moon.

"It all depends," replied the Dragon. "You probably haven't noticed the wonderful door in my back. It's quite a work of art—made in the days when people really knew how to make things. Well, that door can be opened, but——" he stopped and stared impressively at the Man in the Moon—"you've got to find the key first."

"And where is the key?" asked the Man in the Moon.

The Dragon smiled.

"Well, it's not in the nursery," he said; "but I believe it's downstairs somewhere. However, it wouldn't be any good your trying to get it; it's kept very safe, you may be sure, for fear the children should get hold of it. However, the Wooden Soldier will be

taken out when they *do* open the door, so you needn't worry about him."

"I wasn't worrying about him myself," said the Man in the Moon, "it was the Princess. And, oh! that reminds me, there was something else I wanted to talk to you about—the Princess's kingdom, you know, that you've taken."

The Dragon looked puzzled.

"It's the first I've heard of it," he remarked.

The Man in the Moon was amazed.

"You mean to say," he cried, "you don't know that those children have turned the Little Princess away and put you in her place?"

The Dragon smiled his old good-humoured smile.

"You'd better explain," he said, "for I haven't the least idea what you're talking about."

So the Man in the Moon did explain (as well as he could) and the Dragon's smile grew broader as he listened.



“Dear me!” he said, at the end; “if the children only knew—but there, they’ll find out soon enough. Still, just to satisfy your princess, you may tell her from me that *I* shan’t reign here long, whoever else does.”

“Do you mean you’ll give it all up?” asked the Man in the Moon.

“Never mind what I mean,” replied the Dragon mysteriously; “you’ll find it will be so. And now that’s settled there’s just one matter I should like to mention. I like you, and I can see we shall be friends, but I do not like that Mechanical Frog. He talks too much, and he’s a humbug. If I ever get the chance I shall do him some harm. You can tell him that if you like.”

“I’m very glad to hear you say so,” said the Man in the Moon, “for I thought him a humbug myself. But the strange thing is that the Princess thinks a lot of him.”

“Pooh!” said the Dragon, with a sniff of contempt; “the Princess is a good little thing, but girls are all the same. None of them know an impostor when they see him.

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It's just as well for them perhaps. When you're as old as I am——”

“Well, if it comes to that, I'm pretty old myself,” interrupted the Man in the Moon. “How old are you?”

“I was made in China hundreds of years ago,” the Dragon replied dreamily, “or was it thousands? I forget, and it doesn't really matter. Come and see me again soon. I like to talk with a fellow that's got something in him. I've only a Wooden Soldier inside me,” he added with a smile—“at present.”

So the Man in the Moon said good-bye and went off. He had taken quite a liking to the Dragon with his good-humoured smile and his quiet ways, and he meant to let the whole nursery know what a nice Dragon he really was.

## VI

### The Frog's Advice

**T**HE Little Princess and the Toys were awaiting him anxiously.

“Well,” drawled the Frog, with a half-concealed sneer, “did you kill him?”

The Man in the Moon took no notice of the question, but turned to the Little Princess.

“The Dragon's not so bad at all,” he began; “he didn't swallow the Wooden Soldier on purpose.”

Here the Frog coughed in a very disagreeable manner.

“I'm so glad,” said the Little Princess.

“You always do believe the best of everybody,” said the Man in the Moon, “but really I do think we've been mistaken in the Dragon. He——”

"Can he swim?" interrupted the Frog suddenly.

"I shouldn't think so," replied the Man in the Moon, rather taken aback.

"Can he hop?" continued the Frog.

"Of course not!" said the Man in the Moon.

"*I* was never mistaken in him," said the Frog. "I never thought he could do anything half so clever. Don't talk to me."

It struck the Man in the Moon that the Frog had done most of the talking, but he said nothing.

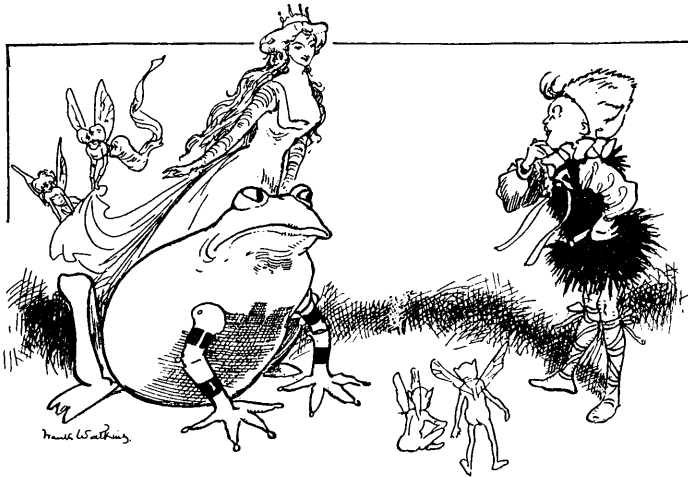
"Well," said the Little Princess, "what else did the Dragon say? Tell us everything, please."

So the Man in the Moon did. "And as for the kingdom—your kingdom, you know," he wound up, "why, he doesn't want it at all. He hadn't even heard about it till I told him."

"Really, the innocence of some people is a trifle ridiculous," observed the Frog, as though speaking to himself.

"Please be quiet," said the Little Princess, rather timidly though, the Man in the Moon could not help noticing.

"Oh, certainly," said the Frog, "by all means! Don't mind me."



"What did the Dragon say?"

The Little Princess looked quite distressed, and the Man in the Moon hurried on with his story.

"When you come to think of it," he said, "I don't see how it could be the Dragon's fault. Of course he was mixed up in it, but

it isn't as if he was really the cause of it all, is it?"

"No, I quite see that," said the Little Princess, "and I'm very grateful to you for having seen the Dragon. Still, though he may not have done it on purpose, he certainly has swallowed the Wooden Soldier. Isn't there any way of getting him back?"

"No," said the Man in the Moon, "not till the key is got that opens the door in his back."

"That may be never," said the Little Princess. "Whatever shall we do?"

"I know what you ought to do," said the Frog.

"Oh, what?" cried the Little Princess.

"I believe," the Frog answered, "that I was requested just this moment to keep quiet. I couldn't possibly offer any advice that was not wanted."

"Oh, dear! whatever shall we do?" cried the Little Princess again, not daring to answer the Frog, who was evidently in a very bad temper.

The Man in the Moon thought and thought, but nothing came of his thinking.

"The whole mistake," the Frog began again presently, "was in letting the Wooden Soldier imagine he was a prince. Naturally he lost his head at once."

"But *we* didn't do it," said the Man in the Moon, "that was all part of the game."

"Well, it was your game," snapped the Frog.

Here the Little Princess touched the Man in the Moon gently. "Don't be hard on him," she whispered, "you can see he's very much upset about it all, really. It's his good nature, you know. It's very kind of him to worry about it at all."

"I see," said the Man in the Moon, though he did not see in the least.

"Mind you," went on the Frog, "when you say that the Wooden Soldier didn't fall into the Dragon's mouth on purpose, I quite agree with you."

"Excuse me," interrupted the Man in the Moon hurriedly, "what I said was that the

Dragon didn't swallow the Wooden Soldier on purpose."

"Ah!" returned the Frog; "I know you *said* that, but I didn't suppose for a moment you really meant anything quite so foolish."

"Oh, well," cried the Man in the Moon impatiently, "what's the use of arguing about it?"

"No use at all," said the Frog. "I never argue."

"What do you call this?" asked the Man in the Moon, who was nearly losing his temper.

"You can call it anything you please," said the Frog. "I tell you I never argue—on any point."

"But won't you tell us what we ought to do?" asked the Little Princess.

"Do whatever you like," answered the Frog placidly, "it will be all the same in the end. I've got several excellent plans—but we should never do anything in a hurry."

"But what would you advise?" asked the Little Princess.



"I don't advise anything," the Frog answered; "it's the best thing that could have happened for everyone."

"Oh, no!" cried the Princess; "you don't mean that."

"I say," repeated the Frog firmly, "it's the best thing that could have happened. The Wooden Soldier got uppish and thought he was a prince. Well, pride goes before a fall——"

"Yes," interrupted the Man in the Moon, "so I've heard."

"You couldn't have," retorted the Frog; "I just made it up. Well, as I say, pride goes before a fall, and the Wooden Soldier got so proud that he fell into the Dragon's mouth. That was the best thing for *him*—it will do him a lot of good, if he ever gets out again. Then there's the Dragon—he swallowed the Wooden Soldier, and he's probably got indigestion to start with—that's good for *him*. Besides which, he'll get unpopular with the children—that's another good thing. Then there's all of us. We've got something

to talk about; we've got another grievance against the Dragon, and we've got rid of the Wooden Soldier, who was getting much too proud—that's a good thing for us. What more do you want?"

"Of course, that's one way of looking at it," admitted the Little Princess, who seemed rather dazed by the Frog's long speech.

"It's the only way," said the Frog.

"Then you think we should do nothing?" asked the Little Princess.

"If you can think of anything sensible," said the Frog, "do it. But don't blame me afterwards."

"Anyhow," said the Little Princess, "I suppose we must wait and see what happens next. Perhaps nurse will open the Dragon after all."

# The Third Day

A Birthday Tea



# I

## Bubbles's Birthday

**I**T was Bubbles's birthday, and there was to be a lovely birthday tea in the afternoon for Doods and Bubbles together. They were allowed downstairs all day, but they always had a special tea together in the nursery on their birthdays.

Doods had been feeling very mischievous all day—why, she could not have told even if she had troubled her head about it, but as Bubbles was particularly good and never once contradicted or disagreed with her the whole day, no harm had come of it.

And now they were back in the nursery and waiting for tea. It was quite half an hour before tea could possibly be ready, and Doods looked round the nursery for some-

thing to do. Presently her eyes lit on the Dragon, who was sitting as usual on the mantelpiece.

“Come on, Bubbles,” she cried, “we’ll have another game with the Dragon.”

“That you won’t, Miss Doods,” said nurse suddenly, as Doods mounted a chair to reach the Dragon down; “leave it alone this minute. You know what I told you before—it’s not to be played with.”

“It’s Bubbles’s birthday,” said Doods sulkily, still standing on the chair; “Bubbles can do what he likes on his birthday. You want to play with the Dragon, don’t you, Bubbles?”

“Now, Miss Doods,” said nurse, “don’t try to lead Master Bubbles into mischief. Birthday or no birthday, you can’t play with the Dragon, so that’s enough.”

“Don’t you want to play with the Dragon, Bubbles?” persisted Doods.

“No—o, Doods,” replied Bubbles hesitatingly. He was very fond of Doods, but he never dared disobey nurse.

"Oh, very well," said Doods, who was feeling thoroughly naughty by this time, "it's *your* birthday, not mine."

"Let's play wiv ve Fwog," suggested Bubbles, hoping to coax Doods into a good temper again, "let's wind him up and make him hop, *dear* Doods."

"Where's the key?" said Doods shortly. She was determined to punish Bubbles for not taking her side against nurse, and a horrid idea had just occurred to her.

"Here," cried Bubbles delightedly, "here's ve key, Doods ; wind him up."

"Now," said Doods, taking the key and speaking in a very low voice, so that nurse should not overhear, "it was very mean of you, Bubbles, to say you didn't want to play with the Dragon when you know you did, and I'm going to punish you."

Bubbles stared open-mouthed at his sister as she climbed quickly on to the chair, and before he could say a word dropped the Frog's key right down the Dragon's mouth.

"There," she said, "you wouldn't play

with the Dragon, so you shan't play with the Frog."

Bubbles burst into tears on the spot, and nurse was by his side in a moment.

"What is it, then?" she said tenderly, for nurse could be very tender when she liked.

Bubbles explained as well as he could for his sobs, while Doods sat defiantly in the chair.

"Very well, Miss Doods," said nurse, who was very angry indeed at Doods's behaviour, "there's no good in speaking to you. You shall sit in that corner and go without your tea till you're good."

Good indeed! Doods sniffed contemptuously. Why was everyone so horrid? she wondered. She would have been *quite* good if only Bubbles had behaved himself. And on his birthday, too! And—oh, what a dreadful thing! She would miss the lovely birthday tea if nurse really meant what she said. Doods looked at her doubtfully.

"Come, now, Miss Doods," nurse said again more sharply, "be a good girl and say





Dropped the Frog's key right down the Dragon's mouth.



you're sorry to Master Bubbles at once, and we'll say no more about it, as it's his birthday."

Well, Doods was sorry, very sorry now that she had really hurt Bubbles's feelings, but she was proud, too, and her pride got the better of her.

"I would have said I was sorry, nurse," she replied loftily, with her nose in the air, "if you had not interfered; but I shan't now, not if you were to punish me ever so much."

She cast one look at her sobbing brother, and then took up her chair and stalked with it into the corner. There she pursed her lips, folded her hands, and waited while nurse turned away in despair to comfort the miserable little Bubbles.

"How you can look at your brother crying like that, Miss Doods," said nurse indignantly, "I can't make out, I'm sure."

Doods's only reply was to get up, turn her chair face to the wall, and sit down again.

Nurse sighed, and once more set herself

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to console Bubbles, and presently he grew calmer. But it was five o'clock, and time for tea.



In the corner.

“Now, Master Bubbles,” said nurse, “come and have your tea.”

“Isn't Doods tummin'?” asked Bubbles

"No," said nurse; "Miss Doods is a very naughty girl, and she will have to wait."

There was a moment's dreadful silence, broken only by an uneasy shuffling from Doods's chair in the corner, while Bubbles slowly sucked in this idea. Then a loud wail startled the nursery echoes, and once more Bubbles burst loudly into tears.

Doods sat on, outwardly unmoved.

"Well," said nurse, "I don't know what to make of you, Miss Doods. You never used to be like this. I shouldn't wonder if the Man in the Moon really had come down and changed you."

Doods said nothing and, as nurse turned away, she began to meditate. Why should Bubbles cry? she wondered. He wasn't going without his tea like she was. Thank goodness, nurse was taking him into the night nursery to wash his face. She was sorry for him, too, but she would not say so now, even if she had to go without her tea altogether.

What a long time nurse was! And how

dark the nursery was getting! And whatever was that noise? Somebody was singing, surely. Doods sat very still, and listened hard. Could it be Bubbles? Doods had never heard him sing before. Listen!

## II

### Doods hears a Song

**T**HE Man in the Moon was dreadfully distressed.

“It wasn’t me,” he said, “it wasn’t me.”

“What wasn’t you?” asked the Little Princess softly.

“It’s nurse,” said the Man in the Moon. “Didn’t you hear her? I declare,” he broke off, “it really is too bad.”

“Well, what’s the matter?” said the Little Princess. She was very nice, but she couldn’t help smiling—just a little.

“Why,” said the Man in the Moon, more quietly and feeling rather ashamed of himself, “those children—at least, the girl—have been so naughty just now, and then all of a sudden nurse turned round and said that I had made

her naughty. The idea of such a thing! She doesn't want any making, she's too naughty herself."

"She is rather out of temper just now," agreed the Little Princess, "but of course it isn't your fault. You mustn't take any notice of what nurse says. She doesn't know anything about you. It's just her way. She probably doesn't mean it in the least."

"Well, I don't think it's fair," said the Man in the Moon.

"It's very unfair," said the Little Princess, "and not at all nice of nurse. But I know you better, don't I?" she added, looking at the Man in the Moon very sweetly.

The Man in the Moon's anger vanished at once.

"It's very stupid of me," he admitted, "to mind, but I'm not used to it, you know. And I've been trying my very best to make these children good and take you back."

"I know you have," said the Little Princess, "and if you like you can help to make Doods good now."



"Can I?" cried the Man in the Moon. "I'll do anything you like. Only tell me what it is."

"It's only to sing a song," said the Little Princess; "it's just an idea of mine. Of course it may not be much use——"

"Sing a song!" interrupted the Man in the Moon in dismay, "I've never done such a thing."

"But you can try," urged the Little Princess; "still, if you'd rather not——"

"I'll sing it," interrupted the Man in the Moon. "What is it?"

"Here it is," said the Little Princess, and she gave him a large sheet of paper with some verses written on it.

"It's rather long, isn't it?" said the Man in the Moon. "And what about the tune?"

"The tune will come to you," said the Little Princess.

"And where shall I sing it, and when?"

"Now and here," said the Little Princess, "you must sing it to Doods. She's asleep."

“But will she hear it?” asked the Man in the Moon.

“Yes,” said the Little Princess, “this is just the time when she will hear it. She couldn’t hear it if she were awake.”



The tune came of itself.

So the Man in the Moon took the paper, and in a thin, childlike, and rather quavering voice started to sing. As the Little Princess had said, the tune seemed to come of itself:—

“ Oh, Doods, I'm sorry you thought me unkind,  
 Though I don't know what caused you such pain ;  
 But if you'll forgive me this once you'll find  
 I never will do it again.

Oh, Doods, dear, why are your brown eyes hid,  
 And what can I do to show  
 That I love you as much as ever I did,  
 And I'm sorry I treated you so ?

“ Oh, Doods, dear, do come and play with me,  
 I'm sorry, indeed I am,  
 And there's muffins and hot buttered toast for tea  
 And plenty of blackberry jam—  
 Plenty of blackberry jam, dear Doods,  
 And you do like blackberry jam !

“ Oh, Doods, you usen't to be like this,  
 And I've always lent you my toys ;  
 And only this morning you gave me a kiss  
 And told me you *did* like boys.  
 I'll be awfully good, indeed I will,  
 And if all our games are stale,  
 I'll sit by the fire and keep quite still  
 While you tell me a fairy tale.

“ Oh, Doods, dear, do come and talk with me,  
 I'm sorry, indeed I am,  
 And there's muffins and crumpets and cakes for tea,  
 And plenty of blackberry jam—  
 Plenty of blackberry jam, dear Doods,  
 And you do like blackberry jam !

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“Oh, Doods, there's nothing I will not do  
If only you'll come and play.  
But if you are cross nurse says that you  
Shan't have any tea to-day.  
But I'll smuggle you something by and by,  
Though I wish you would play with me,  
For I know in the middle I'm sure to cry  
If you can't share my birthday tea.

“So, Doods, dear, do make it up with me,  
I'm sorry, indeed I am,  
And it's oh! such a lovely birthday tea  
With heaps of blackberry jam!  
Such heaps of blackberry jam, dear Doods,  
And we both love blackberry jam!”

Doods had sat quite still all the time the Man in the Moon was singing, but at the end of the last verse she jumped up.

“I'm a horrid, disgusting creature,” she cried, “and I'm very, very sorry, and I won't ever do it again.”

Bubbles was still in the night nursery, but as Doods ran to the door, her eyes full of tears, he came in, his face shining from soap and water.

“Dear, darling Bubbles,” cried Doods, catching him in her arms and kissing him a

dozen times. "I was horrid to you ; and I'm so sorry, and I'm going to be so nice and never be cross any more."

Bubbles was delighted. That was the best



"I was horrid to you ; and I'm so sorry."

of Bubbles. He was always ready to be friends again, whatever had happened.

"I'm glad to hear you're sorry, Miss Doods," said nurse, who was not quite so ready to forgive, "and I only hope it's not the tea that you've been thinking of," she added significantly.

Ten minutes ago Doods would have said or done something very nasty at this, but she was really sorry, and so she felt she deserved all the horrid things that could be said of her.

“It wasn’t the tea, nurse,” she said humbly, “it was the song.”

“The song!” cried nurse; “whatever’s the child talking of?”

Doods blushed very red. “I forgot,” she said; “I must have fallen asleep, and I thought I heard Bubbles singing a song. It made me cry, and then I saw how horrid I’d been. And I am really and truly sorry, nurse.”

“Well,” said nurse, relenting as she saw Doods was in earnest, “as long as you’re sorry it’s all right, I suppose; but you don’t deserve any tea.”

“I know I don’t,” said Doods. “I—I won’t have any, if you like.”

She said it very weakly, and couldn’t help feeling a little bit relieved when Bubbles flung his arms round her neck.

“Doods *will* have some birfday tea, won’t she, nurse?” he cried.

“Of course she will, Master Bubbles,” said nurse. “Now sit down both of you at once; it’s very late.”

“What shall we start on, Bubbles?” said Doods; “it’s *your* tea, you know.”

Bubbles carefully eyed all the good things on the table, and considered.

“Muffins,” he said at last. Then he added: “And plenty of jam wiv ’em.”





**The Fourth Day**

**The Dragon is Hungry**



# I

## Supposings

**D**OODS was going to be very good. Now Doods's idea of being really good was to sit quite still for a long time without doing anything at all—she wouldn't even play games when she was "really good."

"However," said Doods, "reading isn't playing, so I'll read you something, Bubbles, out of my new book. It may improve your mind. Besides, it will keep you from getting into mischief."

Poor Bubbles, who never by any chance got into mischief unless he was led into it by Doods, sat down obediently at her feet.

"Here we are," said Doods, "Now listen properly, Bubbles.

"Supposing that you were a tadpole——"

“What *is* a tadpole?” asked Bubbles.

“A sort of a thing with a big head and a small tail and no body,” explained Doods; “it turns into a frog.”

Bubbles thought a moment.

“Vat’s a stupid game,” he said at last, “I won’t be a tadpole.”

“It’s not a game,” said Doods, “nobody wants you to be a tadpole.”

“’Oo said *supposing*,” Bubbles persisted.

“It’s a piece of poetry,” said Doods; “remember I’m reading it to you for your—your instruction.”

“Is it lessons?” asked Bubbles, looking very dismal.

“Of course not,” said Doods; “it’s—oh do be quiet, Bubbles, and not ask such ridiculous questions. Now listen.

“Supposing that you were a tadpole  
And I was a frog, we would go  
Away down beyond and live in the pond  
Where the lilies and water-weeds grow.”

“We’d be dwounded,” remarked Bubbles.

“There you’re quite wrong,” Doods said

triumphantly ; “ tadpoles and frogs live under water—at least they can if they like.”

“ I wouldn’t like,” said Bubbles.

“ Well, you’d have to,” returned Doods, “ and anyhow it’s only *supposing*, you know.”

“ Ven it *is* a game,” murmured Bubbles.

“ Will you be quiet and let me finish?” said Doods, feeling very cross at not being able to make Bubbles understand.



“ What fun we should have in the morning,  
What fun in the afternoon,  
In fact we would play the whole of the day  
And at night  
By the light  
Of the moon.”

“ Wouldn’t we never eat ?” Bubbles asked.

“ I don’t know, very likely *not*,” said Doods impatiently ; “ you eat too much, Bubbles.

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“Such wonders there’d be to examine,  
We never had dreamed of before,  
Such travels to take, such journeys to make,  
Such places to see and explore!  
And when you were tired of playing  
And weary and sleepy your head,  
I’d wish you good night and tuck you up tight  
Complete  
In a neat  
Little bed.”



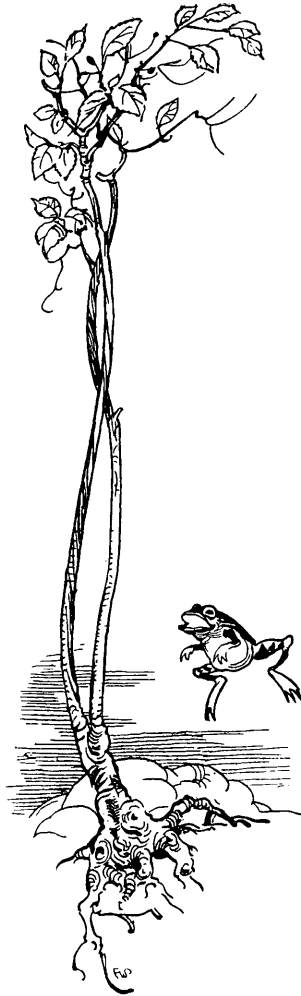
“Do tadpoles have beds?” asked Bubbles.

“No, they don’t,” said Doods very sharply.

“But——”

“No, I won’t explain,” interrupted Doods.

“I’m very disappointed in you, Bubbles, not being able to understand a simple thing like that. You’re very backward.” (This by the way was exactly what Doods’s governess had said to Doods herself that very morning.)



“And hop  
On the top  
Of the land.”





Bubbles opened his eyes very wide but said nothing, and Doods went on.

“We’d find out the daintiest corners  
In the midst of the moss and the fern,  
And there we would laze together for days  
With no lessons whatever to learn.”

“Are tadpoles ever backward, Doods?”  
asked Bubbles at this point.

“Not as backward as little boys,” said  
Doods severely.

“And don’t vey weally ever have lessons?”  
asked Bubbles again.

But Doods pretended not to hear, and went  
on reading.

“And when you were grown to a frog, dear,  
And when you were able to stand,  
We’d travel beyond the wonderful pond  
And hop  
On the top  
Of the land.”

“Would we be wound up?” Bubbles  
asked.

“What *do* you mean?” said Doods, feeling  
quite giddy with all Bubbles’s questions.

“Wiv a key—like him?” said Bubbles, pointing to the Frog.

“How silly you are,” said Doods; “we should be real frogs—not toy ones.”

“But we couldn’t be weal fwogs,” said Bubbles.

“Don’t contradict,” said Dodds crossly; “you’re always contradicting me, Bubbles. You can go and play by yourself. I shan’t read you anything more out of my book.”

“There those children go—quarrelling again!” said the Man in the Moon.

“It’s all they’re fit for,” said the Frog; “What do they know about frogs and keys?”

“Is it true that tadpoles turn into frogs?” asked the Man in the Moon.

“Certainly not,” answered the Frog; “the idea!”

“So you were never a tadpole?” continued the Man in the Moon.

“Never!” replied the Frog. “A tadpole indeed! You might as well say the Elephant was once a kangaroo!”

“Eh?” put in the Elephant in his hoarse voice; “what’s that?”

“A kangaroo!” repeated the Frog very loudly.

“No—no,” said the Elephant, “I was never à kangaroo.”

“I know you weren’t,” roared the Frog.

“Then why did you say I was?” grumbled the Elephant.

“I didn’t,” cried the Frog. “I said it would be as silly to say you were once a kangaroo as that I’d ever been a tadpole.”

“Who said you were a maypole?” asked the Elephant.

“A tadpole!” screamed the Frog.

“Well, a madpole, then,” said the Elephant. “I never said you were a madpole. What d’you want to bother *me* for?”

The Frog turned away, very much put out.

“He’s as deaf as a post,” he muttered angrily to the Man in the Moon; “it’s time he was put away in the lumber-room.”

“The what?” asked the Man in the Moon.

“Good gracious!” groaned the Frog; “are you getting deaf too? The lumber-room, I said—the place where the useless toys are kept. It seems to me,” he added surlily, “this nursery might as well be a lumber-room for all the use anything is in it.”

And really, for once in a way, the Man in the Moon was inclined to agree with him. One thing was plain, at any rate, everybody in the nursery was in a very bad temper.

## II

# The Story of the King of the Dragons

**D**OODS was reading an old forgotten book of fairy tales she had discovered hidden away in the cupboard, and Bubbles was playing with the Noah's Ark on the floor.

For once in a way it seemed as though the children were going to be quite good. This was all the more curious, as nurse had gone out and left them to themselves, begging them, just for once, not to be naughty while she was away.

Suddenly Bubbles, who had been playing very quietly, looked up at Doods and frowned. Then he carefully went through all the

Noah's Ark animals, looking at each one very earnestly.

"There's no dwagon," he said at last. "Why isn't there no dwagon, Doods?"

Doods looked up from her book. "Noah's Arks don't have dragons," she answered; "but I don't know why—I never thought of it before. Of course they ought to have dragons. It's quite clever of you to have found it out, Bubbles."

"What will I do?" asked Bubbles.

"It's very awkward," said Doods; "they ought to put dragons in—they've got all the other animals. And if there was a dragon we could play such a nice game, Bubbles—there's a story in this book that would do splendidly for a game."

As she spoke her eyes wandered to the Dragon on the mantelpiece.

"It would be nice," she went on, "if we could play with *that* Dragon again—only, of course, we mustn't do that, Bubbles, because it would be wrong after nurse had told us not to, wouldn't it?"



“Why isn't there no dwagon?”





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"Vewwy wong," said Bubbles, though he had a kind of idea that Doods would have liked him to say it wouldn't matter a bit.

"Then of course our game's spoilt," said Doods, with a very resigned air; "it's a great pity, because we should have been *so* careful not to break it. But we mustn't complain."

She took up her book again and made a pretence of reading it.

"If only nurse were here," she went on after a little, "we could ask her if we mightn't play with the Dragon just this once. She couldn't refuse, could she, Bubbles?"

"No," said Bubbles doubtfully.

"But we can't ask her, because she won't be back for ages," Doods continued; "it's a great nuisance. Besides, we're sure to be naughty if we've nothing to do. I tell you what, Bubbles," she cried, jumping up, "I really think we *ought* to play with the Dragon. You see, if we do nothing, we don't know what mischief we shall get into; but if we do play with the Dragon, we know we can't be doing anything else that's wrong. I'm

quite sure," she concluded, "it would be the *right* thing for us to do."

Bubbles was quite ready to be convinced, especially as nurse was not at hand.

"And of course," added Doods, "if nurse was here, we should ask her leave—that's quite understood."

So the Dragon was brought down "very carefully" from the mantelpiece, and placed on the floor with the Noah's Ark animals. Doods and Bubbles were delighted.

"He's just the right size," cried Doods, "just the size you'd imagine a real dragon would be if real animals were the same size as these things. And now, Bubbles, we'll have a game like the one we had before. The only thing is, before I begin to read the story, we must have one more toy—oh, this'll do," and she took the broken Jack-in-the-Box from the table; "now we can start properly."

She opened the old book of fairy tales, and began.

Once upon a time there was an Emperor

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("Noah is the Emperor, Bubbles") who was in a very bad temper. He was not a bad Emperor always, and he was only in a bad temper because a dragon had just arrived in the country and was eating up all the people. So after this had been going on for some time, the Emperor went off to consult an old Magician ("this is the old Magician," put in Doods, waving the Jack-in-the-Box in the air), who lived in a cave all by himself and had made a vow that he would never sit down.

"I put that last bit in myself," explained Doods, "because the Jack-in-the-Box is broken and can't sit down. I think that's rather clever."

Now the Magician was kept by the Emperor on purpose to prevent dragons getting into the country, and he looked very glum when the Emperor came and told him one had got in.

"That's very annoying," said the Magician, "I can't understand how he got in at all. And the worst of it is that it'll be very hard to get him out again."

“He’s *got* to be got out,” said the Emperor “it’ll be very annoying for you if he stays, mind that.”

“There’s only one way,” the Magician said, after consulting his books, “you’ll have to take a boat and go to the island where the King of the Dragons lives and tell him one of his dragons has come here and is eating up all the people.”

“That sounds a rather dangerous thing to do,” said the Emperor.

“Oh, no,” said the Magician, “as long as you catch the King of the Dragons in a good temper there’s no danger.”

“But he might be in a bad temper,” objected the Emperor.

“Of course he might,” agreed the Magician; “then he’d probably—er—eat you.”

“Well,” said the Emperor, “I think you’d better go instead of me. I ought to stay here and see that the dragon doesn’t eat too many of my subjects.”

“But the King of the Dragons wouldn’t listen to me,” said the Magician, “he only

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receives other kings or emperors like yourself.”

“Well, I’m not going,” said the Emperor.

“Then there’s only one thing to do,” said the Magician, “we must all of us get into a big ship and sail away somewhere where the dragon can’t find us.”

So after a little more talk, it was decided to do this, and the Emperor and the Magician, and all the people who hadn’t already been eaten up, got into a big ship and sailed away.

“The Ark is the ship, Bubbles,” said Doods, “and the animals will have to be the people. Put them all in and the Jack-in-the-Box too.”

Bubbles obeyed, and Doods went on with the story.

They sailed on for a good many days until at last they reached a large island, and as they got near they saw a number of baby dragons paddling and playing together on the beach.

“Why,” said the Magician, “this is very

curious. This *is* the Dragons' Island. As we're here, don't you think we might land and see if the King of the Dragons will help us?"

The Emperor didn't like the idea, but he couldn't refuse, especially as all his subjects were on board, and they would certainly think him a coward if he didn't go. Even the baby dragons were rather large, and the Emperor felt very nervous about landing at all. However, he sent the Magician on shore first, and when the baby dragons went on playing without trying to eat the Magician up, he thought it was safe for him to follow. So he did.

They could see the Dragon-King's palace on the top of a hill not very far away, but when they got there they found that the King of the Dragons himself was in a terrible rage.

"Of course," said Doods, "*our* Dragon is the King of the Dragons, Bubbles."

"Where's my son?" he roared, as soon as he caught sight of the Emperor and the Magician.



The Emperor . . . sent the Magician on shore first.





“We—we didn’t know your son was lost,” murmured the Emperor nervously.

“Of course he’s lost,” said the King of the Dragons; “he’s been missing for days and days. There’s a reward out for finding him.”

Here the Magician nudged the Emperor’s elbow.

“This is a grand bit of luck,” he whispered hurriedly; “don’t you see our dragon must be the King’s son? So we’ll restore him to his father, get rid of him, and earn the reward at the same time.”

“I see,” the Emperor whispered back, and then he turned to the King of the Dragons again.

“May we ask what the reward for finding your son is?” he said.

“Certainly,” replied the King of the Dragons, “the reward is that if you don’t find him you’ll be eaten for supper.”

Here the Magician nudged the Emperor’s elbow again.

“Leave it to me,” he whispered, “I’ll pre-

tend to find his son by my magic—that'll impress him.”

So the Magician stepped forward and made a very low bow.

“I am only a poor magician,” he said, “but I *think* I could find out where your son was by my wonderful magic arts, if you'll let me try.”

“Try away,” said the King of the Dragons. “I should advise you to try very hard if you want to win that reward I told you about.”

The Magician made another low bow, and began his magic spells and charms.

He did it very well, and the Emperor would have been quite amused to see the way the Magician pretended to draw magic circles on the carpet and waved his wand in the air, only the thought struck him that if the Magician could deceive the King of the Dragons like this, it was very likely that he was a fraud altogether. So the Emperor privately decided to have him executed as soon as they got back to their own country.

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“Well,” said the King of the Dragons impatiently, after the Magician had gone through a lot of mutterings and other nonsense, “have you found out where he is?”

“I have,” replied the Magician very solemnly.

“Is he quite well?” asked the King of the Dragons; “is his appetite good?”

“Very good,” the Magician answered; “he eats at least a dozen people every day.”

“That’s pretty fair,” said the King of the Dragons—“pretty fair.”

“But,” went on the Magician, “the people of the country where he is would be very glad if he would go away. He’s eating them all up.”

“What sort of people are they?” inquired the King of the Dragons.

“They are very good people,” said the Magician.

“But are they good eating?” said the King of the Dragons. “Are they nice, fat, wholesome people?”

“They were once,” answered the Magician,

“but they’re all getting thin and bony now, through anxiety, you know.”

“Just what they would do,” said the King of the Dragons indignantly. “It’s mere spite; they ought to be only too pleased to think a king’s son was taking any notice of them at all.”

“I don’t suppose they knew he was a king’s son,” said the Magician.

“Pooh!” said the King of the Dragons; “anyone can tell a king’s son anywhere.”

Just then a tremendous fluttering and whirring of wings was heard outside, and the next moment in came the King’s son himself! The Emperor and the Magician both started as they looked at him. He was their dragon right enough, but he was looking very thin and haggard, and his flesh scarcely covered his bones.

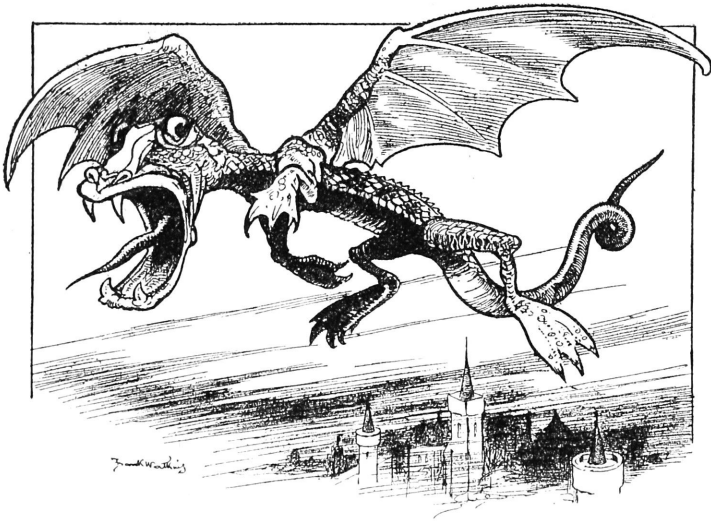
“Hullo!” roared the King of the Dragons; “so you’ve come back. We were just talking of you.”

“Yes, I’ve come back,” said the son discontentedly. “It was all I could do to get

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back, too. I've had a precious time, I can tell you."

The King of the Dragons turned and glanced angrily at the Magician.



"Only just managed to fly back."

"Then what do you mean by your cock and bull story about his eating such nice fat people?" he demanded.

The Emperor and Magician shivered, and the dragon's son turned also to look at them.

"Hullo!" he cried in his turn; "why, these are the people who played me such a shabby trick."

"Ah, indeed!" said the King, frowning; "what was that?"

"Well," said his son, "it was to their country I went."

"Oh," growled the King, "I begin to understand how that magician found you so easily."

"Don't interrupt," said the son. "I came to their country, as I told you, and at first everything was very comfortable—plenty of good fat people to eat, and no one to bother me at all. In fact, it was so comfortable that I thought of staying there some time. But one morning I woke up, and what do you think had happened?"

"How should I know?" said the King.

"Why," went on the son, "everybody in the country had gone, and there I was all by myself with nothing to eat for breakfast, tea, or dinner. At first I thought they would be sure to come back, and I waited and



It's wonderful how fast you can run with a lot of hungry dragons  
at your back.





waited, getting thinner every day. But they never came, and then I found out what they'd done—all gone, without saying a word to me, mind you—to me, who was their guest. I was so weak and thin that I only just managed to fly back here.”

“What have you got to say to this?” said the King, looking at the Emperor and the Magician very fiercely.

“All I've got to say,” said the Emperor, “is, good-bye and many thanks.”

And before anyone knew what he was about, the Emperor had darted out of the palace and was running as hard as he could towards his ship.

“Stop him!” roared the King, and in the confusion the Magician thought he might as well run off too. Both he and the Emperor ran faster than they'd ever run in all their lives before. It's wonderful how fast you can run with a lot of hungry dragons at your back.

Luckily for the Emperor and the Magician, they had a good start, and it was not far to

the shore. They just managed to reach the ship in time, and as a strong wind was blowing, the ship was able to sail faster than the dragons could fly.

“Is vat ve end?” asked Bubbles, as Doods closed the book and put Noah and the Jack-in-the-Box into the Ark with the animals; “didn’t ve dwagon swaller nuffing?”

“There’s some more,” said Doods, “but that’ll do for the present. No, the dragon didn’t swallow any of them. We’ve had a very nice game,” she added, “and our Dragon has been very good and not swallowed anything. Now we must be quick and put everything away before nurse comes.”

She struggled to her feet with the Noah’s Ark in her hands, but unluckily she had not shut the door properly, and just as she had lifted the Ark up to put it on the table, the door burst open, and out poured Noah and the Jack-in-the-Box and the animals with a tremendous clatter.

“*Bother!*” cried Doods. She might well

say “bother,” for she had been standing close to the Dragon, and more than half the animals, besides Noah and the Jack-in-the-Box, had fallen straight into his great open mouth! Some of the animals fell on the floor, and these were the only ones that were not swallowed.

Bubbles and Doods looked at each other in dismay.

“What a nuisance!” said Doods, cheering up, however, when she saw that Bubbles did not seem to mind very much. “I know now why Noah’s Arks don’t have dragons—the dragons would eat all the other animals, that’s why. Well, it can’t be helped, and we’ll just have to finish the story differently, that’s all. We’ll have to pretend that just as the ship got away and everyone thought they were safe the wind suddenly dropped and the King of the Dragons came flying along and ate them all up, except a few that were drowned. How d’you like that, Bubbles?”

“Vat’s much better,” said Bubbles. As

he spoke, the door opened and nurse entered the room.

“Oh, you naughty children,” she cried, as she saw the Dragon on the floor with the Noah’s Ark and the few animals he hadn’t swallowed lying near him.

“We’re not naughty,” said Doods, with her nose in the air, “you shouldn’t be so hasty, nurse. We were simply trying to be good, and we have been good, too, and we’ve lost a lot of toys through it. I shall never try to be good again.”

Meanwhile nurse had pounced on the Dragon and put him on the mantelpiece.

“Don’t let me catch you touching that money-box again, Miss Doods,” she said.

“Then,” said Doods calmly, “you shouldn’t leave us for so long by ourselves. I’m sure mamma would be most annoyed if she knew it.”

And for the rest of the evening Doods was in disgrace.

# The Fifth Day

The Dragon gets Hungrier



# I

## Pocket-money Day

“**W**ELL, we’ve hardly any toys left now,” said Doods dolefully, “the Dragon seems to eat everything.”

“Everyfing,” agreed Bubbles.

“Why,” said Doods, “if I was to take the old Elephant and hold him over the Dragon’s mouth for two minutes, I believe the Dragon would swallow him. I’ll just try it.”

“Don’t, Doods,” said Bubbles, “we don’t want him to be swallered.”

“Nonsense,” said Doods decidedly, “it’ll be—what do they call it?—oh, yes, an interesting experiment.”

The Elephant was fast asleep as usual and Doods took him up, climbed on her chair, and held him over the Dragon’s mouth.

“Now, I shall stay like this, Bubbles,” she said, “for exactly two minutes by the clock, and we’ll see what’ll happen.”

But holding her hand high up like this was very much more tiring than Doods had imagined it could be, and before half a minute was up her arm was aching dreadfully. The hands of the clock seemed to be creeping round at a snail’s pace.

“I’m sure the clock is slow,” said Doods. “I *can’t* hold my arm up much longer, Bubbles—well, I’ll wait another half-minute.”

Doods had never known such a slow half-minute in the whole of her life, but it came to an end at last, and with a great sigh of relief Doods let her hand fall.

“Well, the Dragon didn’t swallow it, after all,” she said.

But she spoke too soon. As her tired arm fell limply to her side, her elbow struck the Dragon on the head.

“Oh, my funny-bone!” she shrieked, letting go of the Elephant altogether. “Oh, Bubbles!”



She danced round the room, half laughing and half screaming till the horrid feeling (*you* know what it's like, don't you?) had gone. Then she turned to look for the Elephant.

"Where's it gone, Bubbles?" she cried.

"Ve Dwagon swallered it," Bubbles answered solemnly. He had been watching the whole scene with great interest, but had made no remark up to this.

"Did he really?" said Doods; "weil, I thought he would. But it wasn't quite fair, because I knocked my elbow, and I suppose that sent the Elephant into the Dragon's mouth."

She paused, and then a sudden idea struck her.

"Unless," she went on, growing very excited all at once, "unless, Bubbles, *the Dragon nudged my elbow himself!* What d'you think of that? I wonder if he could have done it. You know, Bubbles, I'm beginning to think there's something awful about that Dragon."

Both the children stared at the Dragon hard, but the Dragon never moved.

“I wonder if he *can* move?” said Doods.

“I wonder,” echoed Bubbles.

“I believe he can,” went on Doods, “I’m not going near him again.”

“I call it foolhardy—it oughtn’t to be allowed,” said the Frog, who was looking very pale. “Not that the Elephant’s any loss; but suppose that girl was to take it into her head to hold something really valuable” (he was evidently thinking of himself) “over the Dragon’s mouth, of course the Dragon would swallow it in the same way.”

“I don’t see how we could stop her,” said the Man in the Moon; “it seems to me we can’t do anything.”

“That’s just it,” said the Frog, “that’s what I complain of. None of you seem to have any brains.”

“Well, what would you do?” asked the Man in the Moon.

“What’s the use of my telling you?” said the Frog; “you should think out plans for yourself. Why, I’ve got a dozen plans—but here’s nurse.”

And at that moment in came nurse with six bright pennies—the children’s weekly pocket-money—jingling in her hand.

“Here’s darling nurse,” cried Doods, jumping up and running towards her, “with our pocket-money. How nice! I’d almost forgotten it was pocket-money day.”

But nurse was looking very solemn.

“It’s just as well then, Miss Doods, that you did forget,” she said, “for you won’t be disappointed. You’re going to begin saving to-day.”

The children’s faces fell.

“Yes,” went on nurse, “your pocket-money goes into the money-box this very minute.”

Neither Doods nor Bubbles had quite taken in the fact that their pocket-money was really to be given to the Dragon till they actually saw their pennies disappearing down his throat.

“But you’re putting them all in,” cried Doods.

“You’re quite right, Miss Doods,” said nurse, letting the pennies go clinking down into the Dragon’s mouth.

“Can’t we have even one penny each?” said Doods desperately.

“Not a halfpenny,” said nurse firmly.

“Then it’s a horrid — horrid — horrid shame!” cried Doods, stamping her foot.

“Now, Miss Doods,” said nurse, “please behave like a little lady. Your pocket-money’s gone, and there’s an end of it.”

“I call it mean and horrid,” cried Doods defiantly.

“It’s your papa’s order,” said nurse, “as you know very well.”

“I don’t care,” said Doods rebelliously; “and I shall be just as naughty now as ever I can be!”

“Well,” said nurse, “I shall have to speak to your mamma, for you’re too much of a handful for me. I can’t think what’s come over you lately.”

“I hope she does tell mamma,” said Doods, as nurse left the room; “what’s



“I shall be just as naughty now as ever I can be!”

the good of getting pocket-money if you *don't* get it? It's ridiculous, isn't it, Bubbles?”

“It’s—it’s beastible,” said Bubbles.

“Horrid old Dragon!” said Doods; “he’s at the bottom of it all. I’m certain, now, he did nudge my funny-bone so as to get the Elephant. I hate him! He’s swallowed all our things—he swallowed the Wooden Soldier and the Frog’s key, and Noah and Noah’s animals, and the Jack-in-the-Box and the Elephant, and now our pocket-money. Bubbles!”—she stopped, and looked impressively at her brother—“I believe he’ll swallow us if he stays here much longer. There’ll be nothing else for him to swallow, and he’ll be hungrier than ever. Isn’t it awful?”

“It’s beastible!” said Bubbles again, and Doods began to think out all the naughtiest things she could do.

## II

# The Story of the Dragon of Twothalia

**T**HERE wasn't anything particularly naughty to do for the moment—at least Doods couldn't think of anything aggravating enough, so she got out her book of fairy tales and began to turn over the pages. Bubbles, sitting a little way off on the floor, watched her anxiously.

“There's an awful lot about dragons in this book,” said Doods suddenly.

“Is there?” asked Bubbles eagerly. He was never tired of hearing about dragons and ogres.

“I think I shall read you this one,” said Doods, with a glance towards the Dragon on

the mantelpiece, "because—because it's got a good moral. You see," she went on, lowering her voice, "it's about a dragon who was very good once and became very wicked and got most fearfully punished. If I read it to you, Bubbles, it's quite likely that our Dragon may be able to hear it, and p'r'aps it'll frighten him and stop him from swallowing things."

Bubbles looked rather frightened himself at this, but he said nothing, and Doods began the story.

Once upon a time there lived a dragon who was quite the nicest dragon that ever lived. You will know how nice he was when I tell you that he never ate anybody except wicked people, such as witches and wizards, and naughty children who never would do what they were told. Of course, sometimes he would eat a good person by mistake, but we all make mistakes now and then, and he was so dreadfully sorry about it, and was so annoyed with himself when



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he found out what he had done, that nobody could be angry with him for very long.

He lived, like nearly all other dragons, in a big cave half-way up a mountain, not very far from Twothalia, which was a town where a great many people dwelt. He had chosen this place on purpose, because there are always lots of wicked persons in a big town, and so he could always be sure of getting a good dinner every day.

And as soon as the King and the people of Twothalia found that he only ate the wicked ones, they were very pleased at his coming. For one thing, it saved them a lot of trouble. You see, if anyone did anything wrong or wicked, instead of sending him to prison and having to keep him there for years, they simply sent him to the dragon's cave, and that was the end of *him*.

So everybody was satisfied, and things were very pleasant all round. But one day, when the King had taken his seat on the throne as usual, the Prime Minister appeared

before him with a broad smile on his fat face.

“Please your Majesty,” he said, “I am happy to tell you that there are no cases for you to try to-day.”

“Good gracious!” cried the King. “This is very unusual. What does it mean?”

“Why, may it please your Majesty,” answered the Prime Minister, “the fact is that all the wicked citizens have been eaten up and only the good ones left. So your Majesty will be glad to know that you are the King of the most virtuous people in the world.”

The Prime Minister was not quite right really, for the fact of the matter was that the people had begun to see it was no use being wicked if you had to be eaten up by a dragon, and so they had all decided to be very good indeed. However, the result was the same, and the King was so pleased that he ordered a public holiday that very day.

He also sent a special messenger to the dragon to tell him the good news, and to

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thank him for the way he had helped to make the people so virtuous. But the messenger must have lost his way, because he never came back, though that didn't matter much, as luckily the King had plenty of other special messengers in the palace.

However, two days later there was great excitement in the town, and when the King heard the noise he put his head out of the palace window and asked what the matter was. And he was very much surprised when he was told that the dragon had come to Twothalia and wanted to see him.

"Dear me!" said the King, quite flurried at the news, "this is very irregular. But—well, yes—I suppose I'd better see him. Show him into the Big Hall."

So the dragon was shown into the Big Hall. He was looking rather thin and tired, but he smiled pleasantly and returned the King's bow very politely.

"Well," said the King in a friendly way, "and what can I do for you?"

"Why," answered the dragon, "I'm sorry

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to trouble you, but the fact is, I've had nothing to eat for two days. I thought I'd mention it, as there's probably been a mistake somewhere."

"But, my dear fellow," cried the King in astonishment, "didn't you get my message? I sent a special messenger to you with the good news. I'm afraid he must have got lost, as he never came back."

The dragon looked rather blank at that.

"You don't mean to say that that chap was really your special messenger!" he cried. "I took him for some rascal who was having a game with me. You see, when he came and said that there were no wicked people left in such a big place as Twothalia, I naturally thought he wasn't telling the truth, and as I can't stand people who don't speak the truth, of course I ate him up at once."

"Dear me," said the King, "this is very unfortunate. But don't distress yourself, please. It's my fault; I ought to have sent two or three special messengers, so that you could have had no doubt about their story."



So the Dragon was shown into the big hall . . . He smiled pleasantly,  
and returned the King's bow very politely.



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“I wish you had,” said the dragon regretfully.

“My dear fellow,” said the King kindly, “you really mustn’t let a trifle like this weigh on your mind. I assure you no one will think the worse of you for a little mistake of this kind. We all make mistakes, you know, even the best of us. Why, only a fortnight ago I sent a poor chap to you to be eaten because he had stolen a leg of mutton, and we found out afterwards that he was the wrong man.”

“Oh, did you?” said the dragon, his great eyes beginning to gleam. “Then where’s the right one?”

“You had him the next day,” said the King. “So you see I did all I could to put the matter straight.”

“That may be,” said the dragon, “but, unluckily for you, it didn’t put the matter straight. Why,” he went on, getting quite excited, “you not only caused that poor innocent man to be eaten, but you made me eat him. And how many other mistakes of that

kind have you made without finding them out? Tell me that!"

The King looked about him rather nervously and began to fidget on his throne.

"I—I assure you——" he was beginning, when the dragon cut him short.

"Never mind," he said impatiently, "you've owned up to one of the worst crimes a king can commit. You're an unjust king — that's what you are — and an unjust king is the worst of men. You're not fit to be a king and I'm going to eat you up."

He moved a little nearer as he spoke, but the King, who was not always so stupid as he looked, suddenly had a bright idea.

"Stop a moment," he cried; "you say I'm a bad king. But if I wasn't a king, you wouldn't say I was a bad man, would you?"

"Oh, as a man you may be all right," answered the dragon. "Still, that's nothing to do with the——"

But the King had already risen as fast as his trembling knees would let him.



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“I call everybody to witness,” he said, taking off the crown very quickly and cleverly, “that I resign the throne in favour of the Prime Minister.”

And before the dragon could do anything he had tumbled down the steps of the throne and hidden himself in the crowd. Meanwhile the Prime Minister, who was very fat and pompous, waddled up the steps and put the crown on his head and smiled a broad fat smile on the dragon.

“Now then,” he said pleasantly, “have you anything more to say?”

But by this time the dragon had got over his surprise and he smiled back quite cheerfully.

“Well, to tell you the truth,” he said, “I think you’ll make a rather nicer meal than the old King. You’re so much fatter, you see.”

The Prime Minister’s face turned very green.

“But—but you haven’t any reason to eat *me*,” he stammered. “I’ve only just been made king.’

“I know that,” said the dragon, with a cunning look; “but don’t you see that as king you’re responsible for all the old King’s acts? A king is quite a different sort of being from a man. It doesn’t matter in the least who the king is—he’s got to be eaten, that’s the main point.”

But even before the dragon had finished speaking the Prime Minister had bounded from the throne like an india-rubber ball.

“I resign,” he cried, “I resign in favour of the Home Secretary.”

But the Home Secretary was even quicker at resigning than the Prime Minister had been. He resigned in favour of the Chancellor, and the Chancellor at once resigned in favour of the Chief Butler, and so it went on. It made really quite a funny round game, but the dragon got rather bored at last.

“I wish you’d hurry up and finish,” he said. “Someone’s got to be king, and the sooner you settle who it’s to be, the sooner we shall all be satisfied.”

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Just then there was some excitement at the back of the Hall, and presently a fine handsome young officer stepped forward.

“I’m willing to be king,” he said, “on one condition.”

The old King’s daughter, the Princess of Twothalia, was standing by the throne, and the young officer looked at her so earnestly as he spoke that her face got quite red. What was more, he looked so brave and splendid and was so big and handsome that she couldn’t help falling in love with him on the spot.

“The throne’s yours,” said the old King impatiently, “on your own terms. Only hurry up for goodness’ sake. Don’t forget the dragon hasn’t dined for two days.”

“The condition is,” said the young officer quietly, “that the Princess, your daughter, consents to marry me.”

“Good gracious me!” cried the old King. “What ridiculous nonsense! Of course she can *consent* to marry you, but I don’t see how there’s to be a wedding after you’re eaten up.”

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“What does the Princess say?” asked the youth, taking no notice of the old King’s words.



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Then the Princess stepped forward. She was rather nervous at having to speak

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before so many people, but she was looking very beautiful, with her wonderful blue eyes and glorious golden hair that rippled over her shoulders and down her back almost to the ground.

“I will marry you,” she said in a sweet, clear voice, “because you are a brave man. And if you die for your country, I will never marry any other man as long as I live.”

Everybody cheered wildly at this, and for the moment they almost forgot that their new King was to be eaten up in a very few minutes. But presently the dragon coughed gently.

“I don’t like to interrupt you,” he said, “but business is business, and—er—dinner is dinner. I’m sorry to have to eat such a brave man, but it’s your own fault, you know.”

“I shall be ready in a moment,” answered the new King, as he went up the steps of the throne. And when he had put on the royal robes and the crown he looked every inch a king and handsomer than ever.

“And now,” he said, taking the sceptre and turning to the dragon, “I’m ready to discuss the matter of your dinner.”

“Oh, bosh!” cried the dragon, who really had had a good deal to put up with that afternoon; “there’s nothing to discuss. You know very well I’m only waiting to eat you up.”

“Ah, to be sure,” said the new King very politely, “but don’t let us have any misunderstanding about it. It’s because I’m King you want to eat me, isn’t it?”

“Of course it is,” said the dragon; “we settled that point long ago.”

“Then I’m afraid I must trouble you to wait a little longer,” went on the new King, “because there’s an important legal question to be settled first. We mustn’t act rashly, you know. We should both be sorry if we found out too late that there had been any mistake.”

“I—er—suppose so,” said the dragon doubtfully, and the new King turned to the crowd of courtiers and told the Lord Chief Justice to fetch the Book of the Laws.

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“Now,” he said, when the Lord Chief Justice had come back with the Book, “kindly read Law One out loud so that everybody can hear it.”

The Lord Chief Justice arranged his wig, fixed his spectacles firmly on his nose, and opened the book amid dead silence.

“Law One,” he read in his most impressive voice, “ahem—Law One—The King can do no wrong.”

“There you are,” said the new King, smiling pleasantly at the dragon; “you’ve nothing against me as a man, and I don’t see how you can eat me as a king, because you see by the law that everything the king does must be right.”

There was tremendous cheering from everybody when they heard this, and the dragon’s face fell.

“This—this requires thinking about,” he said at last in a feeble voice.

“Of course it does,” said the young King kindly. “You go home and think about it for as long as you like, and when you’ve

done thinking come back and tell me the result.”

So the dragon went off very limply and still very hungry and sat down in his cave to think it out. And the more he thought it over the more confused he got till, what with having nothing to eat and too much to think about, he lost his temper altogether and began to eat everybody he could find, whether they were good or bad.

But this was more than the people of Twothalia could stand, so one fine day they set off with their young King at their head for the dragon's cave. When they got there, they found him lying fast asleep, so of course everybody wanted to kill him at once. But the young King said, “No, it wouldn't be right to kill him while he was asleep.”

“We'll tie him up with cords,” he said, “so that he can't hurt anybody or get away, and then we'll take him back to Twothalia and——”

Doods had just got to this point in the



story when the door of the nursery opened and in bustled nurse. She seemed in a dreadful hurry.

“Time for bed!” she cried, “time for bed. Come along, Master Bubbles.”

“Oh, wait a minute, nurse,” cried Doods, “I’m just finishing this story, and the end’s *most* important.”

“Then you must finish it another time,” said nurse, who wasn’t in the best of tempers; “you’ve always got some excuse or other ready. I’m all behindhand as it is.”

“Oh, indeed,” said Doods scornfully; “and whose fault is that?”

Nurse looked at her in despair.

“Upon my word, Miss Doods,” she cried, “you’re enough to upset the patience of a Job. Wherever you get your rude manners from is more than I can tell. I don’t know what to do with you, and that’s the truth.”

“Then you’re not fit to be our nurse,” answered Doods calmly, getting up and putting the book into the cupboard. “But, as it happens, you’re only punishing poor Bubbles.

*I know the end of the story, and he doesn't, and now I shan't tell him."*

A loud wail of distress at once broke from the unhappy Bubbles, and nurse, catching him up in her arms, tried to soothe him with promises and kisses.

"Never mind," she said caressingly, "I'll tell it to you myself, you poor dear. As for you, Miss Doods, you're a good-for-nothing little imp. I only wonder your papa hasn't sent you to boarding-school long ago."

Doods laughed scornfully, and then with slow and stately steps followed nurse and Bubbles into the other room.

### III

## The End of the Story of Twothalia

“**Y**ES,” said the Frog thoughtfully, staring at nothing in particular, “that story ended quite properly. That is how all dragons should be treated.”

All the Toys in the nursery looked at him respectfully, but no one dared to say anything.

“Yes,” he repeated firmly, “*all* dragons. The people of Twothalia were quite right. Quite right.”

“What do you mean?” asked the Man in the Moon at last, not because he wanted to know in the least, but he fancied that the Little Princess was looking very curious indeed.

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“What do I mean?” repeated the Frog scornfully. “What do you suppose I mean?”

“I don’t know,” said the Man in the Moon.

“Of course you don’t,” said the Frog, “you aren’t clever enough. But as a matter of fact, I was simply thinking what a very good way that was of getting rid of the dragon.”

“But what was the way?” asked the Little Princess, unable to restrain her curiosity any longer. “You see we don’t know what they did. We’ve never heard the end of the story.”

“Neither have I,” said the Frog solemnly.

“Then how ever did you guess it?” asked the Little Princess.

The Frog yawned. “I didn’t guess it,” he said, speaking very slowly, “but there’s only one thing that really clever people could do with a dragon after they had taken him away from his cave. Don’t you think so?” he added, turning suddenly to the Man in the Moon.

“I—I don’t know,” stammered the Man in the Moon, feeling dreadfully puzzled and rather confused too at being spoken to so suddenly. “I don’t think——”

“Ah, that’s just the trouble,” interrupted the Frog in a very mild, tired voice, exactly as though he were talking to a small child who *could not* understand what it was told; “now I do. I think for days together sometimes. Some days I think of one thing, and other days I think of other things. But we were talking of the dragon of Twothalia. Now if you’ll only think for a moment, you’ll see there was only one possible thing to do with him.”

He stopped speaking, and all the Toys began to try to think very hard. Presently the Man in the Moon looked up.

“I expect they killed him,” he said.

“Wrong,” said the Frog calmly.

“How do you know I’m wrong?” asked the Man in the Moon, feeling very much annoyed.

“How do I know anything?” asked the Frog in his turn.

"I don't know," said the Man in the Moon; "that's just the point."

"Of course it is," retorted the Frog; "you don't know, and I do. So hold your tongue."

It was dreadfully aggravating, but the Man in the Moon tried to keep his temper for the sake of the Little Princess, who hated to hear people quarrelling. Besides, he really didn't know what to say. Presently the Frog spoke again.

"You may each have three guesses," he said, with an important air, "and the one who makes the best guess——"

"Yes," cried all the Toys eagerly, as the Frog paused.

"I shall consider the cleverest among you," he added.

There was dead silence for a few minutes. Presently the Little Princess spoke—very timidly, as the Man in the Moon could not help noticing. "Perhaps they let him go again," she said. "You see, they might have found out that he was feeling a little ashamed

of himself after all, and perhaps he promised never to eat anyone up again."

The Frog shook his head slowly and thoughtfully.

"It's a very clever guess," he said, "very clever—much cleverer than *his*"—he nodded towards the Man in the Moon—"but it isn't quite right. You've forgotten that dragons never feel ashamed of themselves. Besides, he wouldn't have kept his promise. No, they didn't let him go again. That wouldn't have been right. But I don't suppose any of you would ever guess what really happened, not if you were to go on guessing for a thousand years."

"Then hadn't you better tell us?" asked the Man in the Moon impatiently.

"Certainly not," said the Frog sharply.

"Won't you tell *me*?" asked the Little Princess in a pleading voice.

But the Frog shook his head.

"No, I really couldn't," he said slowly. "In the first place it's too dreadful, though it was only what any dragon would deserve.

And secondly—well, secondly, I don't think you'd quite understand."

"Mustn't it be awful to be so clever?" said the Little Princess in a low voice to the Man in the Moon. But the Man in the Moon pretended not to hear, for he was feeling quite certain that the Frog really knew no more of the end of the story than anybody else did. But he didn't like to tell the Little Princess so.



## IV

### “ Fairy Gossamer ”

“ I WONDER what the Dragon thinks of it all?” said the Man in the Moon to himself. “ I’ll go and see him.”

So he climbed up to the mantelpiece, where the Dragon welcomed him with a friendly smile.

“ I thought you’d come,” said the Dragon, “ if only to blow me up ’

“ The fact is,” said the Man in the Moon, “ things are getting serious. Everybody is in a dreadful temper, and nearly all the toys are swal—I mean, lost. The children are always quarrelling, and none of us know what to do.”

The Dragon chuckled. “ I really can’t

help it," he said in excuse, "but the way all you people are worrying over trifles is delicious."

"I don't call them trifles," said the Man in the Moon, a little put out.

"Ah, you'll think them trifles some day," said the Dragon; "still, I dare say you're feeling rather angry with me."

"I'm not," said the Man in the Moon, "but you see when anything goes wrong, it's always something to do with you; so you can't expect to be liked, can you?"

"I'm not anxious to be liked," said the Dragon. "You're the only sensible person in the place, and I've explained everything to you before. You know, the whole thing reminds me of what happened to Fairy Gosamer."

"What was that?" asked the Man in the Moon.

"Don't you know?" said the Dragon, looking rather surprised.

"Well, you see," the Man in the Moon explained, "I'm rather new to everything down

here. In fact, I never even knew there was a Fairy Gossamer.”

“Fairy Gossamer,” said the Dragon, “had a great many adventures. I might tell you about them some day, but there’s no time just now. However, I’ll tell you this one, because it’s rather peculiar and very like—like what’s happening here.”

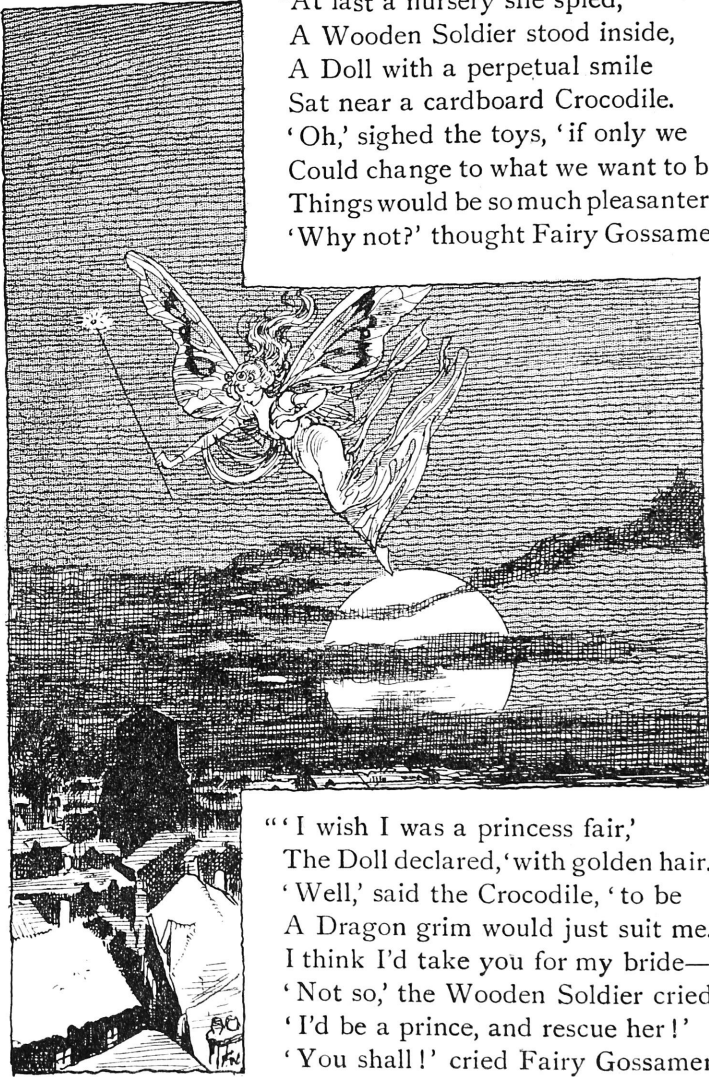
“I should like to hear it,” said the Man in the Moon.

“It’s in verse,” the Dragon said, looking at the Man in the Moon doubtfully.

“That can’t be helped,” said the Man in the Moon, and he felt at once that he had said the wrong thing. However, the Dragon made no remark and only grinned a little more broadly, and then began as follows:—

“One Christmas Eve into our town  
 The Fairy Gossamer flew down.  
 ‘One wish,’ she said, ‘I’ll grant to-night  
 And make at least one Christmas bright.’  
 But everywhere the fairy went  
 She found the people quite content.  
 ‘I can’t make *them* much happier,  
 I see,’ said Fairy Gossamer.

“At last a nursery she spied,  
A Wooden Soldier stood inside,  
A Doll with a perpetual smile  
Sat near a cardboard Crocodile.  
‘Oh,’ sighed the toys, ‘if only we  
Could change to what we want to be,  
Things would be so much pleasanter!’  
‘Why not?’ thought Fairy Gossamer.



“‘I wish I was a princess fair,’  
The Doll declared, ‘with golden hair.’  
‘Well,’ said the Crocodile, ‘to be  
A Dragon grim would just suit me.  
I think I’d take you for my bride—’  
‘Not so,’ the Wooden Soldier cried,  
‘I’d be a prince, and rescue her!’  
‘You shall!’ cried Fairy Gossamer.

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“ She waved her wand—a word she said  
And lightly touched them on the head,  
And where the nursery had stood  
There frowned a castle in a wood.  
Inside a smiling dragon kept  
A fair princess who sat and wept :  
And there was none to pity her.  
‘ Poor thing ! ’ said Fairy Gossamer.

“ But in the twinkling of an eye  
A brave young prince came spurring by.  
He thundered at the castle gate,  
Not for a moment would he wait.  
‘ Come out, you dragon, ’ loud he cried,  
‘ You have my princess there inside.  
I’ve come to fight, and rescue her.’  
‘ Bravo ! ’ cried Fairy Gossamer.

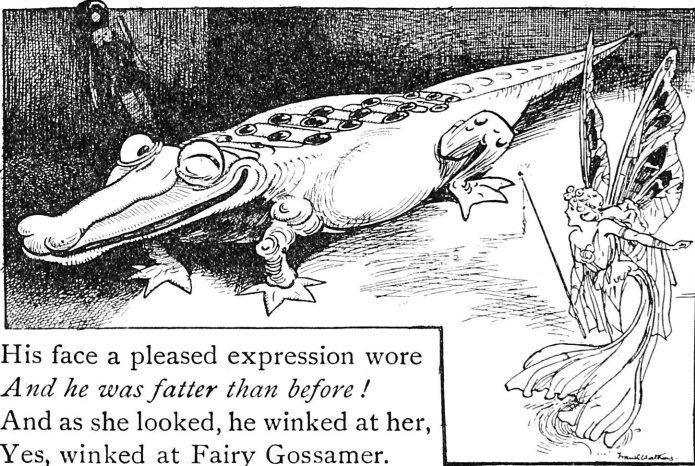
“ Outside the dragon popped his head,  
‘ She cannot see you now, ’ he said,  
‘ You should have been here earlier,  
I’ve just this moment eaten her.  
Still, ’ he continued, with a grin,  
‘ If you would like to, pray come in.  
I dine at seven, my dear sir——’  
‘ The brute, ’ cried Fairy Gossamer.

“ She waved her wand—the castle fled  
And back the nursery came instead.  
The Wooden Soldier, as before,  
Was standing on the nursery floor,

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But where the little Doll had been  
No little Doll was to be seen.  
There wasn't any trace of her.  
'She's gone,' cried Fairy Gossamer.

"She searched the nursery inside out,  
The Doll was gone, without a doubt.  
But she observed the Crocodile  
Had got a knowing sort of smile ;



His face a pleased expression wore  
*And he was fatter than before !*  
And as she looked, he winked at her,  
Yes, winked at Fairy Gossamer.

"The Fairy gasped—'Oh dear, oh dear,'  
She said, 'why did I interfere?  
That Doll has gone for good, it's plain  
No spell can charm her back again.  
Such wickedness I cannot stand.'  
And off she flew to fairyland.  
It was a horrid shock for her,  
Poor blundering Fairy Gossamer."

The Man in the Moon was looking very troubled indeed by the time the Dragon finished.

“Was it too long?” the Dragon inquired anxiously.

“Oh, no,” said the Man in the Moon, “I was only thinking of the moral.”

“Don’t be frightened—there isn’t a moral,” said the Dragon.

“But there is,” said the Man in the Moon, “for me, at any rate, because if you come to think of it, I’ve come into this nursery in pretty much the same way as Fairy Gossamer did—to try to put things right. And, what’s worse, things are happening just as they happened to her.”

“Oh, come now,” said the Dragon, “that’s all rubbish, you know. Of course, you’re not exactly on my side, but even if I could have swallowed all those things on purpose, I shouldn’t have done it because of you. It would have been just the same whether you had come or not.”

The Man in the Moon shook his head in a very low-spirited manner.

“Well, I’m sorry I told you about Fairy Gossamer,” went on the Dragon, “I never thought you’d take it in that way.”

“It’s opened my eyes,” said the Man in the Moon dismally.

“Nonsense,” said the Dragon briskly, “there’s a big difference. The Doll disappeared for good inside the Crocodile, but all these things that people have been kind enough to shove down my throat will all get out when the little door in my back is opened.”

“That’s true,” said the Man in the Moon a little less dismally; “but when will that be?”

“I’ve told you before, it’ll be sooner than you think,” said the Dragon, with another grin.

And with this scrap of comfort the Man in the Moon had to be satisfied.



## V

### A Great Effort

**T**HE Man in the Moon returned to find the Little Princess and the Frog talking everything over very earnestly. The Toys (those that were left) were listening respectfully. It was plain something must be done; the only question was—what?

“Give 'em some good advice,” said the Frog, “they won't follow it.”

“Who won't?” asked the Man in the Moon.

“The children,” answered the Frog, with a touch of contempt in his voice.

“*I* know,” cried the Little Princess suddenly, “we'll write an Address to them—that's the proper thing to do—and leave it where they'll see it.”

The Man in the Moon thought this a very clever idea. "The only thing is," he said—"who's going to write it?" "We will," the Little Princess replied, "all of us together." So they set to work. But somehow it was much harder than they thought it would be. The right words wouldn't come as easily as they ought to have done, and the Little Princess and the Man in the Moon were in despair.

"Take my advice," said the Frog, "and write it in poetry. Poetry's ever so much easier to write. It doesn't matter what you put in as long as it rhymes."

"Isn't that rather hard, though?" the Man in the Moon asked, "I mean the rhyming part."

"Not a bit," said the Frog. "Besides, you'll find heaps of rhymes in that girl's book of poetry—you've heard her reading it out loud often enough."

"It'll be splendid!" cried the Little Princess. "How *do* you think of such clever ideas?"

“Oh, they just come,” answered the Frog,  
“I’ve got plenty more.”



So the Man in the Moon and the Little Princess tried again, and this time they did better—at least they managed to get out these three verses (the rhymes they took out of Doods’s book of poetry).

We Toys have had a talk to-night,  
And as we’ve found some ink,  
We take the liberty to write  
And tell you what we think.

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Our style may not be very good,  
But then our hearts are true,  
Though only made of tin or wood  
They still can feel for you.

We were a pleasant little town  
Until the Dragon came,  
But now the nursery's upside down,  
It is a wicked shame.

“That’s all very well,” said the Frog impatiently, “but what they want is advice, not all that nonsense about hearts being true and its being a wicked shame. Now here’s something sensible for you.

“We have been thinking ever since  
And, after thinking twice,  
We’ve gone to an enchanted prince  
And this is his advice.”

“What do you mean by ‘after thinking twice’?” asked the Man in the Moon.

“That’s a poetical way of putting it,” replied the Frog—“it means second thoughts are best, and so that was the best thing to have done.”

“I see,” said the Man in the Moon, “but

what about the enchanted prince? That isn't true."

The Frog looked at him pityingly.

"And this is his advice,"

he repeated firmly.

"When nurse is busy doing things  
Just lock the nursery door,  
And take the Dragon by his wings  
And BANG him on the floor!"

"But he'd break!" cried the Little Princess, "he's nearly all china, you know."

"Of course he'd break," said the Frog, "and a good thing for everyone. But you may make your minds easy. Those children would never do it—people never do take good advice. And now you can finish the address for yourselves, that's the only really important part."

The Little Princess looked at the Man in the Moon doubtfully.

"I think we ought to soften it down a little," she whispered; "because though the Frog is, of course, *quite* right, I shouldn't

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like to see the Dragon smashed into little bits even though he has swallowed so many of the Toys and all the pocket-money.”

So she added the following verses :—

It seems a dreadful thing to do  
To end it in this way,  
So we shall leave it all to you,  
And only wish to say :

Whatever this advice may mean,  
No matter how it ends,  
We'll be, as we have always been,  
Your very faithful friends.

“There,” said the Little Princess, “isn't that good?”

“It's beautiful,” said the Man in the Moon, and he really thought it was.

“Now the next thing to be done,” continued the Little Princess, “is to write it out nicely on a clean piece of paper and leave it on the table for the children to see. And,” she added, “if they *do* smash the Dragon, they'll get their pocket-money back at any rate.”

So she copied out the verses, while the Man in the Moon and the Toys looked on admiringly. Then they were left on the table, and the whole nursery went comfortably off to sleep.





# The Sixth Day

Winning Back  
The Lost Kingdom



# I

## Queen Mamma

**W**HEN they woke up the fire was lighted in the grate and nurse was busy dusting the room. It was nearly breakfast-time, though Doods and Bubbles had not come in yet.

“Now,” thought the Man in the Moon, “I mustn’t miss seeing what the children do when they read that Address. I hope they won’t smash the Dragon, though, because——Hullo!”

He might well say “hullo!” He could see that nurse had not yet dusted the table where the Toys were, but strange to say the Address had disappeared.

“Wherever can it have got to?” thought the Man in the Moon.

“What’s the matter?” said the Little Princess, coming up with a smile.

“That Address—it’s gone!” cried the Man in the Moon.

“Gone!” repeated the Little Princess. “Where has it gone?”

“That’s what I can’t make out,” said the Man in the Moon; “I can’t see it anywhere.”

And search as they would, the Address was nowhere to be found.

“It’s no good trying to find it, either,” said the Frog. “I know where it’s gone.”

“Where?” cried the Man in the Moon and the Little Princess together.

“The Dragon’s eaten it, of course,” said the Frog, “anybody could have told that. I knew he would if you left it on the table.”

“Then why didn’t you say so before” cried the Man in the Moon indignantly.

“What’s the use of giving good advice to people who never take it?” asked the Frog. “You might have known it yourself.”

“Then,” said the Man in the Moon dejectedly, “there’s nothing more to be done.”

We've tried everything, and it's no use. I'm not surprised at the Dragon's swallowing it, though ; I'd have done the same myself."

"It's a nasty mean trick," said the Frog, looking up at the mantelpiece where the Dragon sat smiling and placid, "only a dragon would have thought of it. I hope it disagrees with him."

"Never mind," said the Little Princess cheerfully, trying to console the Man in the Moon, who was looking very low-spirited indeed, "perhaps it's just as well."

"It's that last verse I was thinking about," he said mournfully, "it was so beautiful—I should have liked the children to have seen it."

At that moment Doods and Bubbles came rushing in to breakfast.

"Now, Miss Doods, and you, Master Bubbles," said nurse, "I want you to try and be very good this morning, because your mamma is coming in to see you after breakfast."

"Did you hear that?" cried the Little

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Princess, clapping her hands excitedly, "Mamma is coming. Now everything will be all right!"

"Who is Mamma?" asked the Man in the Moon.

"Don't you know?" said the Little Princess, looking at him in surprise, "I thought everybody knew that. She's the Queen—the Queen of everything."

"Of the nursery too?" the Man in the Moon asked.

"Yes, of the nursery too," said the Little Princess. The Man in the Moon was more puzzled than ever.

"But I thought this was *your* Kingdom," he said.

"So it is in a way," answered the Little Princess, "but—oh, how can I make you understand? She's the real queen, you know, and I'm just a princess—and only a make-believe one at that," she added, with rather a sad smile.

"You will always be a real princess to me," said the Man in the Moon.

But before the Little Princess could reply, the door of the nursery opened and Mamma came in.

Many wonderful things had happened to the Man in the Moon since his fall, but almost the most wonderful, he thought, was that first sight of Mamma. She was tall and stately, it is true, but it was her face that attracted the Man in the Moon. He thought he should never be tired of looking at it—such a sweet, gentle, kind face with such a winning, tender smile.

“Yes,” he murmured to himself, “the Little Princess is right, she *is* a queen. I should have known that anywhere.”

Meanwhile Doods and Bubbles had rushed into Mamma’s arms, and Mamma’s face lit up with a radiant smile.

“Well, my pets,” she said, kissing them, “I’ve come to have a talk with you on something very important.”

So she sat down by the fire and took Bubbles on her lap, while Doods sat on the hearth-rug with her eyes fixed on Mamma’s face.

“You know, my darlings,” began Mamma, “that a few days ago papa thought you ought to be saving some of your pocket-money instead of spending it all in sweets every week. Now nurse tells me that you don’t like this at all—we hardly thought you would at first—and I’m *afraid* you’ve been giving her some trouble in consequence.”

“Yes,” said Doods, looking at the floor.

“I thought you were both rather young to begin saving,” went on Mamma, “but papa thought we might try at any rate. Well, it hasn’t been a great success, has it?”

“No,” said Doods, with her eyes still on the floor.

“So,” said Mamma, “we have decided not to bother you any more just now. Some day when you’re older, perhaps, we will try another plan.”

Bubbles clapped his hands.

“I’m *so* glad,” he cried. “Aren’t ’oo glad too, Doods?”

“Very glad,” replied Doods, but she seemed ill at ease all the same.



“What will ve Dwagon do?” asked Bubbles, turning his beaming face to Mamma.

“Oh, the Dragon!” said Mamma, with a smile, “he’s a very great personage indeed. Uncle Joe was here yesterday. He came into the nursery while you were out and happened to see the Dragon. You know Uncle Joe’s very clever, and he told us that the Dragon is very, very old indeed, and is very valuable—too valuable to keep in the house at all. Fancy that! He mustn’t be used as a money-box any more, so we’re going to send him to a museum.”

“He swallered all our fings,” said Bubbles.

“He swallowed your pocket-money, didn’t he?” said Mamma, laughing. “Never mind, darling, you shall have it all back. Look, I’ve got the key.”

And she showed them the key that opened the door in the Dragon’s back.

“My sodger’s in vare, too,” said Bubbles, and he told Mamma of all the things that the Dragon had got inside him.

“Dear me!” said Mamma, with another

laugh; "he must be a very hungry Dragon. Never mind, we'll open him now and get back all our treasures."

She went to the mantelpiece and took the Dragon down and set him on the table. Then she fitted the key into the lock, turned it, and opened the door.

The Man in the Moon happened to catch the Dragon's eye at this moment, and he saw the Dragon was looking at him with a comical expression on his face. "I told you so," he seemed to say.

Meanwhile Mamma was taking out the various things that the Dragon had swallowed at different times. She laughed again as she saw the number of things there were inside him.

"Indeed he *was* a hungry Dragon," she said; "I had no idea he could swallow such a lot of things. Here's the Elephant and the Jack-in-the-Box and Noah and some of Noah's animals. What a hungry Dragon! And here's your Wooden Soldier, Bubbles."

Bubbles uttered a cry of delight and clasped

his beloved Wooden Soldier tight in both hands. The Wooden Soldier was a little duller than when the Dragon had swallowed him, but otherwise he was looking very well.

“And here is your pocket-money,” continued Mamma, “not *very* much saved yet, is there?” she said, with another of her bright smiles—“and that’s all.”

“But where’s the Address?” said the Man in the Moon to the Little Princess. “I don’t see it.”

Mamma had certainly not taken it out of the Dragon, and there was just as certainly nothing left inside him.

“He couldn’t have swallowed it after all,” said the Little Princess thoughtfully, “yet what could have become of it?”

Neither of them could understand it. It was a mystery.

“Look at the Elephant,” said the Frog, “he’s fast asleep again. Wake up, old flop-foot,” he cried.

The Elephant opened his eyes and blinked at them drowsily.

“How did you like it?” said the Frog.

“Like what?” asked the Elephant in his hoarse voice, after thinking a moment.

“Being inside the Dragon,” shouted the Frog, adding under his breath, “you old fool.”

“No, no,” said the Elephant, “you’re mistaken. I never took the Dragon’s side.”

“Bother!” said the Frog, “he’s deafer than ever. I asked you,” he went on in a loud sort of scream, “how you liked being inside the Dragon.”

The Elephant looked at him in a mild, dreamy surprise.

“Inside the Dragon!” he repeated. “I was never inside the Dragon.”

“Yes, you were,” roared the Frog, “you’ve been there a long time. The Dragon swallowed you.”

“Tut-tut,” said the Elephant, “don’t try and have a game with me, just because I’m getting a bit old.”

“You *were* inside,” screamed the Frog desperately. “Wasn’t it all dark when you woke?”

“Oh, a joke!” said the Elephant; “well, I think it’s a very bad one. Don’t try any more on me.”

And he went on grumbling to himself in a low voice.

“Well,” said the Frog, “I believe the old duffer’s been asleep in there the whole time and knew nothing at all about it.”

“And now, dears,” went on Mamma, as she put back the Dragon on the mantelpiece, after carefully locking the little door in his back, “don’t touch him again. A man will be coming this afternoon to pack him up, and remember he’s very valuable, and mustn’t be broken on any account.”

## II

### The Frog is Annoyed

“**I**’M going to be very good now, Bubbles,” said Doods, after Mamma had kissed them and left the nursery. “I’ll read you something out of *The Little Princess*.”

But the book was nowhere to be found. High and low Doods searched, but in vain.

“Have you seen my book, *The Little Princess*, nurse?” asked Doods.

“To be sure I have,” said nurse; “I threw it into the dustbin.”

“Oh, nurse!” cried Doods; “whatever for?”

“Well, Miss Doods,” said nurse, “you flung it into the grate the other day, and it was so black and dirty, I thought you didn’t want it any more.”

There was no help for it, and Doods had to confess it was her own fault.

“What shall we do, Bubbles?” said Doods. “We can’t play with the Dragon—we might break him. I’m sorry he’s going now, aren’t you?”

“Vewwy sowwy,” said Bubbles, “I like him now—he’s a dear Dwagon.”

And for a minute or two they became quite sorrowful to think they were going to lose him so soon.

“Of course, he swallowed a lot of things besides our pocket-money,” said Doods, “but we were wrong to blame him—it wasn’t his fault. But what shall we play with, Bubbles?”

“Let’s play wiv ve Fwog,” suggested Bubbles, “he can hop now we’ve got ve key.”

“Do you know, Bubbles,” said Doods, “I don’t like that Frog. Mechanical frogs are stupid things. I read a piece of poetry in my book this morning about one, and you’d be surprised to hear how conceited they are. I’ll read it to you now.”

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So Doods got her poetry book and read  
the following verses to Bubbles:—

“ There once was a frog painted yellow and green,  
Who was quite the most wonderful frog ever seen.  
You had only to wind him up well with a key,  
And the way he would jump was a wonder to see.  
So he said to himself, ‘ It’s a bit of a bore  
To spend all one’s life on the nursery floor.  
I ought to be swimming about in a brook  
Like the frogs in the nursery picture-book.  
Yes, I really must do it by hook or by crook !  
I will hop till I drop on a suitable nook,  
And I’ll sit on a log  
Like the genuine frog  
Whose pictures I’ve seen in the nursery book.’





“So he wandered away, this mechanical frog,  
Till at length he arrived at a promising bog.  
But when he jumped in with a splash and a flop  
His colour came off and his spring seemed to stop.  
And the other frogs jeered as he floundered about  
Till he finally managed to jerk himself out.  
And quoth he, ‘I consider the joke very poor,  
And I think I’ll go back to my nursery floor.’  
So he started away, feeling lumpy and sore,  
But a duck, by ill luck, lay in wait on the shore ;  
She wanted to sup,  
So she gobbled him up.  
And he never got back to his nursery floor.”

“Upon my word,” said the Frog, as Doods finished, “there’s been enough nonsense talked in the nursery to-day to last us the rest of our lives.”

“I don’t see it,” said the Man in the Moon, as nobody else made any reply.

“Nobody supposed you would,” retorted the Frog. “Still, anyone with the ordinary amount of brains would know that those verses, for instance, were pure twaddle. There’s no meaning in them at all. However, I was thinking more of the rubbish that’s been talked about the Dragon. You

heard them call him valuable, I suppose? Valuable, indeed—ha! ha!”

“Well, they ought to know,” said the Man in the Moon. “He’s very old, you see, and that makes him valuable.”

“That shows how much you know about it!” cried the Frog. “When I get old, what do you suppose they’ll do? Why, paint me up and pretend I’m new. Then I shall be twice as valuable. As to that Dragon, the only valuable part of him was the pocket-money he swallowed, and he hasn’t even that left now. I knew they’d find him out.”

“I won’t have a word said against the Dragon,” interrupted a loud voice suddenly.

The Man in the Moon looked round, and to his astonishment saw it was the Wooden Soldier who was speaking.

“The Dragon’s a capital fellow—we get on very well together.”

“What do you mean by interrupting?” said the Frog angrily.

“I’ve just as much right to talk as you,” said the Wooden Soldier boldly.

"Hear, hear!" put in the Elephant in a hoarse whisper.

"Much use *his* saying 'hear, hear!'" said the Frog, "when he can't hear a word."

"I can tell you," went on the Wooden Soldier, "the Dragon told me a few things about *you* while I was—ahem!—staying with him."

"Don't be impudent," cried the Frog, trembling with rage; "you deserve to be sent to a museum, like the Dragon."

The Wooden Soldier looked at the Frog doubtfully.

"Don't you remember the story of the dragon of Twothalia?" said the Frog. "Well, *that's what they did to him.*"

The Wooden Soldier looked startled.

"Yes," went on the Frog triumphantly, "they sent him to a museum. But there, I don't suppose you even know what a museum is."

"It's a sort of toy-shop, I think," said the Wooden Soldier.

The Frog gave a disagreeable laugh.

"A museum," he said, "is a dark place where useless things—such as dragons—are kept shut up. They are never allowed to go out, and anyone who likes can go and stare at them. Toy-shop, indeed—if that's your idea of a toy-shop, I'm sorry for you."

The Wooden Soldier looked crushed. The Frog always seemed to know so much more than he did, which was very irritating.

"But is a museum really such a horrid place?" said the Little Princess, who had overheard the Frog's last remark.

"It's worse," said the Frog, "than the lumber-room."

"Oh, that poor Dragon!" cried the Little Princess. "I'm so sorry for him."

"He deserves all he'll get," said the Frog.

"Don't say that," the Little Princess pleaded. "Of course, if he had really swallowed the Address——"

"I told you he did," the Frog interrupted.

"Well, if he did swallow it," the Little Princess continued, "it was very mean of

him. But, you know, it wasn't inside him when Mamma opened the door."

"That's his artfulness," said the Frog.

Suddenly the Man in the Moon was struck with a brilliant idea.

"Why not come with me and ask him?" he said.

The Little Princess agreed eagerly.

"How stupid of me not to think of that—at least, I mean, how clever of you to think of it," she said, "we'll go this very moment."

### III

## Mamma Finds a Book

**J**UST then the door of the nursery opened, and Mamma came back. She was holding a very dirty crumpled book in her hand.

“What do you think has been found in the dustbin?” she said; “that nice book, Doods, that I gave you last year—*The Little Princess*. How careless of nurse to let it be thrown away. It’s quite ruined.”

“It wasn’t nurse, Mamma,” said Doods, looking very red and uncomfortable; “I threw it away myself.”

“Into the dustbin?” said Mamma, in a horrified voice.

“Not exactly that,” Doods answered; “but it was the same thing. I threw it into the grate because one day I was reading it to

Bubbles, and we quarrelled about it, and I said it was the book's fault—though, of course, I knew it wasn't—and so we threw it away. And, oh! Mamma," finished Doods, "I've been such a naughty girl all the week. You don't know how naughty I've been—haven't I, Bubbles?"

"No," said Bubbles stoutly, "*I*'se been naughty."

Mamma's face was very grave, but not at all angry. "Tell me all about it," she said.

So Doods told everything—how she had flung the book away in a temper and quarrelled so many times with Bubbles, and been such a trouble to everyone generally.

"I seemed to be always cross with everybody about everything," said Doods, "and I can't think why, Mamma. I know I'm not a very good little girl, but I've never been quite so naughty before."

"So's I," said Bubbles; "p'w'aps it was ve Dwagon."

"Nurse said something about the Man in the Moon coming down the chimney and

making children naughty," said Doods; "but that's not true, is it, Mamma?"

"I don't think either the Dragon or the Man in the Moon had very much to do with it," said Mamma, with a grave smile; "it all began with being discontented, didn't it?—and wishing for what you couldn't get. Then, without exactly knowing it, you probably got dissatisfied with yourself for being cross and quarrelsome, and that made you still more quarrelsome, because you didn't go the right way to stop it."

"And what was the right way, Mamma?" asked Doods.

"Why, this is the right way," said Mamma—"to come and tell me all about it as soon as you are really sorry, and that would be at once, wouldn't it? Now, I'm quite sure my little girl won't be tiresome any more, will she?"

"But I ought to be punished, oughtn't I?" said Doods.

"Well," said Mamma, "you shall keep this dirty crumpled book as a punishment to re-



mind you of the time when you were such a naughty little girl.”



“ We both love *The Little Princess*, don't we? ”

Doods took the book eagerly.

“ But that isn't a punishment at all ! ” she

cried. "We both love *The Little Princess*, don't we, Bubbles?"

"'Course we does," agreed Bubbles.

"It's our nicest book," went on Doods, "and now it'll be nicer than ever, though it's so dirty."

"Very well, dears," said Mamma, "keep on trying to be good, and if you *do* happen to be naughty—and we are all naughty sometimes, you know—come and tell me at once, and we'll see if we can't make it all right."

Once more she kissed them, and went away.

"There's no one like Mamma," said Doods: "she's never cross, and she always knows just what's the right thing to do. I'm sure I should be the wickedest person on earth without Mamma. And now, Bubbles," she went on, "I really am going to be most awfully good, and to start with I'll read you *The Little Princess* right through. She was very good, you know. And afterwards we'll have a game all about her, and you shall be a dragon and a prince, and everything you like."

So Doods read on, and as she read, both the children's hearts warmed again to the Little Princess. They followed her adventures, were sorry for her troubles, and were glad when, at the end, she was made happy.

And now, Bubbles," cried Doods, closing the book and putting it away very carefully, "now we will have *such* a game!"

"And will I be ve Dwagon?" asked Bubbles, his eyes wide open, and Doods kissed him for reply.

## IV

### Another Talk with the Dragon

“**I** AM so happy,” said the Little Princess.  
“I can hardly believe it’s true!”

But it was quite true—here she was, taken back into her own kingdom with her real subjects (as she had called them when she first spoke of them to the Man in the Moon) at her feet.

And the Toys were so pleased too! And who could wonder at it? For was she not the sweetest and dearest and most lovable princess that ever lived? Of course she was.

As for the Man in the Moon, he was wild with delight. And he was puzzled too. Here had he and all the others been trying the whole time to get the Little Princess taken back, and lo and behold! Mamma had walked

into the nursery, and with a few words, so it seemed to him, had put everything right.

"She certainly is a most wonderful queen," thought the Man in the Moon.

So he was quite taken aback when the Little Princess suddenly turned to him.

"And how can I ever thank *you*?" she said, with tears in her eyes.

"Why, I—I did nothing," stammered the Man in the Moon; "I tried hard enough, but everything I did seemed to go wrong somehow."

"You mustn't say that," said the Little Princess; "you worked harder than anyone. It wasn't your fault that the children quarrelled."

"I hope not," said the Man in the Moon; "nurse said it was, you know, but——"

"But Mamma knows better, doesn't she?" interrupted the Little Princess, with a smile that made the Man in the Moon quite happy again.

"And there's my Frog, too," said the Little Princess, turning to the Mechanical Frog;

“he was always ready with such good advice. I don’t know what we should have done without him.”

The Frog, who had been looking a little sulky, the Man in the Moon thought, now put on an important air and cleared his throat.

“The mistake everybody made,” he said, “was in not taking my advice oftener. Or perhaps it would have been better to have left the whole thing to me from the start. I had a dozen plans all ready—I told you that long ago, didn’t I?” he asked, appealing to the Man in the Moon.

“Yes,” admitted the Man in the Moon, “you certainly told me you had dozens of plans—but you didn’t tell me what they were.”

“Of course not,” said the Frog. “Don’t you see how much better they worked out by keeping them dark? That’s the golden rule—work quietly and say nothing. Now where *you* went wrong was in talking too much. You can’t work and talk at the same time.

Oh, yes, I know you did your best, and of course you haven't had my experience. Let this be a lesson to you."

The Man in the Moon gasped, but before he had time to reply (and he had certainly meant to say something) the Little Princess interrupted them.

"Shall we go and see the Dragon?" she said. "You know you promised to take me, and I should like to talk to him before he goes."

The Man in the Moon was only too pleased, particularly as he noticed how sulky the Frog looked at the suggestion.

So they set off together, climbed up the mantelpiece, and were soon beside the Dragon.

"The Little Princess wishes to make your acquaintance," said the Man in the Moon, presenting her to the Dragon.

The Little Princess was just a wee bit nervous (what princess wouldn't be who was brought face to face with a dragon?)—but when she peered into his face and saw his

broad welcoming smile she felt quite at home at once.

“I came,” she said—and she was still a little shy though not a bit frightened—“because I was so sorry that I had thought so badly of you when you first came and—and I wanted to make it right before you left.”

The Dragon took this speech just in the way the Man in the Moon knew he would.

“From all I have heard of you,” said the Dragon politely, “this is just what I might have expected. But I am only too glad to have been in your bad books since it has given me the pleasure of meeting you.”

“Oh, well,” said the Little Princess, with a shy laugh, “that’s a very nice thing to say, but it really doesn’t excuse me. It was very horrid indeed and I won’t let you say it wasn’t.”

“Well, well,” said the Dragon, “I shall always be glad to think we parted friends.”

“And there’s another thing,” went on the Little Princess; “you know we wrote an Address to the children just after you’d—er





They climbed up  
the mantelpiece.



—swallowed their pocket-money. I'm afraid it had some rather unkind advice about you in it and it disappeared, so the children never saw it. We—at least some of us—thought that perhaps you might have swallowed it too. Please don't think that I thought so, but we—the Man in the Moon and I—hoped you might know what had become of it.”

The Dragon smiled more than ever.

“There isn't any mystery about it,” he said. “You'd hardly left that Address on the table and gone away when the maid came in to light the fire. As she opened the door, the paper blew into the grate, and when she laid the fire, she used that bit of paper without even looking to see if anything was written on it. So of course it was burnt to ashes.”

“Then it's all right,” cried the Little Princess.

“I thought it was rather a pity myself,” said the Dragon. “I had been wondering what the children would think of it, when they read it.”

“I'm glad they never did read it,” said the

Little Princess—"it told them to smash you to bits. How dreadful!" and she gave a little shudder, but the Dragon's broad smile only grew broader.

"When you're as old as I am," he said. "you won't mind trifles like that."

"Oh—and I forgot," said the Little Princess, "they're going to do something almost as bad. They're going to send you to a museum, it's a shame, a horrid shame."

The Dragon burst into a hearty laugh.

"Excuse me," he said, "but I couldn't help it. Whatever put that into your head? No no, it's not a shame. On the contrary, a museum will just suit me down to the ground. Nothing to do, you know, but sit still and look pleasant all day long. What could be more lazy and delightful?"

"I'm glad of that," said the Little Princess. "I shouldn't have liked to think you'd been sent to a place where you weren't quite happy and comfortable. But I mustn't stop any longer. Good-bye. I shall always think well of dragons—now."

“I cannot think better of princesses than I have done since I came here,” the Dragon replied politely, still smiling as the Little Princess and the Man in the Moon went away.

“It’s very curious about the museum,” remarked the Little Princess, “it isn’t often the Frog makes a mistake, is it?”

But the Man in the Moon really could not answer that question, so he said nothing.

## V

### The Last of the Frog

**D**OODS and Bubbles had finished their game, and were sitting by the fire waiting for tea.

“I’m feeling rather sad,” said Doods. “Not sorry, you know, but *nicely* sad. Doesn’t it make you feel sad sometimes, Bubbles, looking at the fire about tea-time?”

“No,” said Bubbles, “only hungwy.”

“Well, then,” said Doods, “I shall read you something sad from my book of poetry—something very pretty and very sad.”

“Is it as pitty as Higly-Pigly?” asked Bubbles.

“Oh, it’s quite different,” said Doods impatiently. “Here it is. Now you must understand, Bubbles, that it’s supposed to be



Doods and Bubbles had finished their game and were sitting by the fire waiting for tea





a grown-up person telling a story to a little girl.”

Bubbles resigned himself to hear it with an uninterested look on his face.

“It’s called,” said Doods—

“AN OLD STORY.

“Now you shall have a story, dear,  
You’ve never read in fairy books ;  
So sit upon the hearthrug here  
And watch how red the fire looks,  
And where the glowing embers show  
A knight and maid of long ago.

He loved her as a true knight should  
With love no length of years could dim,  
And she was pure and sweet and good,  
And yet she did not care for him.  
Love never came at call, you know,  
Either to-day or long ago.

So one sad eve he took his lance  
And rode away alone, unseen,  
And, as he thought of what might chance  
And dreamed of all that might have been,  
There dropped upon his saddle-bow  
A snow-white flower—long ago,

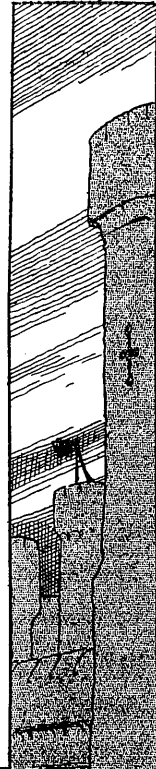
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He knew whose hand had flung the gift—  
Whose pity almost bade him stay,  
So for the last time did he lift  
His eyes to hers, then rode away  
Into the crimson sunset's glow  
And the magic lands of long ago.

He never made a glorious name,  
Not for his deeds the trumpets blew,  
Yet to whatever land he came  
Something of good he strove to do ;  
To right some wrong—to soothe some woe—  
He fought unnoticed long ago.

And when in one grim stubborn fight  
He fell, no hero laurel-crowned,  
But just a simple, unknown knight,  
Hidden beside his heart they found  
Withered and dead, yet white as snow,  
The flower she gave him long ago.

\* \* \* \*



Why, dear, your cheeks are wet with tears!  
Yet is the tale so very sad?  
Think how through all those lonely years  
He kept her memory and was glad.  
Then smile away your tears and so  
Forget my tale of long ago."

"You'se cryin', too," said Bubbles, staring hard at Doods.

"I'm not," said Doods in an indignant though rather choky voice; "and anyhow, I think it is a very sad story. But you're not old enough to understand it," she added in a superior tone.

"I *does* understand it," said Bubbles, "but Higly-Pigly was much sadder—ever so much. He was dwounded."

"I shan't read you anything more," said Doods, "you're perfectly absurd."

But though Doods did not know it, she had had two very attentive listeners—the Man in the Moon and the Little Princess.

Whether Doods was crying or not, the Little Princess certainly was. "I think it's a very sad story," she said, "I never heard it before. I'm so glad it isn't true."

The Man in the Moon looked at her curiously. He wasn't very wise, but he knew that the story was true, and that was just what made it so sad. But he never told the Little Princess so.

Meanwhile Bubbles had caught sight of the Dragon, and suddenly remembered that in a few minutes it would be taken away for good to the museum.

"I hope vey'll take care of him," thought Bubbles; "p'w'aps he'll be hungwy. I'll give him sumfing to eat before he goes. What do dwagons eat, Doods?" he said aloud.

"Frogs," said Doods, without looking up from her book. "Don't bother, Bubbles."

Then followed a tragedy which has never been forgotten in the nursery to this day. Bubbles clambered on to a chair to reach up to the table, where the Frog sat, thinking deeply as usual, with the other Toys scattered about. Bubbles paid no attention to the others, but with astonishing boldness grasped the Frog firmly by his throat.

The Toys looked on in amazement, and wondered how the Frog could permit this insult. But the Frog did nothing. Whether he was so taken by surprise that he had no time to form a plan, or whether he was fast asleep and knew nothing at all about it, will never be known. All the Toys saw was that he made no effort to free himself.

“Vare!” said Bubbles, bearing the Frog triumphantly to the Dragon; “vare’s summing for ’oo to eat, *dear* Dwagon.”

And to the horror of all the Toys, he shoved the Frog right down the Dragon’s throat. As the Frog’s legs disappeared, Bubbles chuckled. So did the Man in the Moon.

“I’m glad of it,” cried the Wooden Soldier, who had suddenly grown very valiant, “it serves him right. That Frog was an impostor—an impostor. He didn’t even kick.”

“How dare you talk like that!” cried the Little Princess, turning on the Wooden Soldier so suddenly that he went quite pale with fright; “he died like a hero. I

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always thought he was an enchanted prince,  
and now I know it. No common frog could



“He died like a hero.”

have died so nobly. Don't you see that he  
didn't resist because he thought it was for

my sake?" And the Little Princess hid her face in her hands.

The Man in the Moon drew a long breath. "Well, I did think that would have shown her what a humbug he was," he thought, "but perhaps it is better that she should never know."

But whatever the Little Princess might think or say, most of the Toys agreed with the Wooden Soldier. You see, the Frog had never been really popular in the nursery. One or two of the Toys, out of loyalty to the Little Princess, perhaps, argued that only a real hero could have fallen in such a quiet, brave manner. So quite a fierce dispute arose as to whether the Frog was a magnificent hero or a magnificent humbug, and the question was never properly settled to the entire satisfaction of everybody.

And you will notice as you grow older that such things occur quite often in real life.

The Dragon was just being taken away to the museum when the Man in the Moon approached him cautiously.

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“Did he taste good?” asked the Man in the Moon in a low voice, and with an anxious glance at the Little Princess.

“Very good,” answered the Dragon cheerfully, with a malicious gleam in his eye. “Good-bye.”



## VI

### The Man in the Moon gets a Message

**T**HE Man in the Moon had left the nursery and gone out to have a think—a good long think. It was just such a night as the night on which he had fallen off the moon. The snow was still thick on the ground, covering everything like a great white counterpane, and far up in the sky hung the moon, shining as brightly as ever.

“I wonder what Mother Goose is doing,” thought the Man in the Moon as he sat down on a log and looked up at the sky, “how long ago it seems that I fell off the moon—years and years.”

And what a lot had happened since he had met the Little Princess in the wood!

“And to think it’s all come right at last,” he went on. “I never thought it would—till Mamma came. I wonder what would have happened if she hadn’t come at all—something dreadful, I’m sure. I’m glad the Little Princess will be happy now.”

He gazed across the snow, picturing her to himself as he had first seen her—sitting on the trunk of a fallen tree, alone and disconsolate, and crying because she had lost her kingdom.

“Yes, I’m very glad she will be happy now,” he repeated—yet his eyes were full of tears as he said it—“and then there’s the Dragon too. I always liked the Dragon from the first time I talked to him. I wonder if he was the Dragon of the Picture-book, not the last part, of course; but then I don’t believe the last part belonged to the story at all. And to think the Frog is inside him. That’s another thing I’m glad about. The Wooden Soldier was quite right—that Frog was an impostor—the Dragon said so too. The funny thing is that the Little Princess

never saw it. And I'm glad the children got their pocket-money back. And I'm glad the Wooden Soldier and the other Toys got out safely. And I'm glad the Frog can never get out. There are quite a lot of things to be glad about, if you think of it. I'm glad I fell off the moon, if it comes to that. I should never have met the Little Princess if I'd stayed up there."

He looked up at the moon again.

"I really shouldn't mind if I never went back," he continued, "there's much more to be done down here. Perhaps Mother Goose will forget all about me and never throw her broomstick down at all. That would be nice—quite a happy ending."

He whistled gaily to himself at the idea.

"It would be a happy ending all round. The Dragon's happy, the Toys are happy, the children are happy, the Little Princess is happiest of all. I should be happy down here too. A happy ending for everybody—just like a fairy tale."

He laughed quietly, feeling very happy

himself at the idea. Just then he caught sight of a black object lying in the snow some little distance away. He wondered why the snow had not covered it up, like everything else, and then feeling suddenly curious as to what it could be, he got up and walked towards it, whistling gaily.

“A happy ending for everybody,” he repeated as he bent down to examine the black object.

It was Mother Goose's broomstick.



## VII

### The Man in the Moon says Good-bye

**T**HE Man in the Moon went back to the nursery very slowly and thoughtfully. The Toys were still in a great state of excitement over all that had happened that day, and the Little Princess looked very happy indeed.

“She doesn’t seem to feel the Frog’s loss very much,” thought the Man in the Moon; “I wonder if she ever really was in love with him. He was generally wrong in what he thought.”

Just then the Little Princess caught sight of him, and turned to him with a gay smile, but the smile left her face as she saw how very grave and solemn he looked.

“Is anything the matter?” she asked gently.

“No—nothing in particular,” answered the Man in the Moon, “only—I’ve come to say good-bye.”

“Good-bye!” repeated the Little Princess in astonishment; “but you’re not going away?”

“Oh, but I am,” the Man in the Moon replied. “Mother Goose has thrown her broomstick down, and I must go back on it. Besides, there’s no reason for my staying here any longer.”

“But I—we all want you to stay!” cried the Little Princess; “even the Frog—but I forgot, the Frog isn’t here any more.”

“I’m sorry that he’s gone,” said the Man in the Moon—“at least,” he added, feeling that that wasn’t quite the truth, “I’m sorry for your sake. I meant to tell you that before.”

“Why for my sake?” asked the Little Princess; “you needn’t be.”

“I thought you were so fond of him,” said the Man in the Moon.

“I thought him very clever,” said the Little Princess, “but I think I was a little frightened of him, too.”

“Then you’re not sorry he’s gone?” inquired the Man in the Moon, in surprise.

“I was at first,” the Little Princess said, “but after all, I’ve been thinking he was always such a philosopher, he’ll be happier by himself inside the Dragon than he ever was with us in the nursery. We weren’t quite clever enough for him, you know. And now only think what a lot of things he can think about with nobody to bother him. I’m sure he’s quite happy.”

“I’m very glad to hear you say that,” said the Man in the Moon.

“And now, must you really go?” asked the Little Princess wistfully.

“Yes,” said the Man in the Moon firmly, “I really must.”

“Then you must see the children before you go—they’re my ‘real subjects’ again now,” added the Little Princess, with a sad smile.

So, just as they had done on the night the Man in the Moon first came, the two of them stole gently into the night nursery, where Doods and Bubbles lay sleeping in their little white cots. The window-blinds were up, and the moonlight streamed in upon the floor.

The Little Princess bent over the two sleeping figures. "Look," she said, pointing at Doods.

The Man in the Moon crept up and looked. Doods was sleeping soundly, and in her hand she clutched the dirty, torn, and crumpled pages of her fairy book, *The Little Princess*.

The Little Princess's eye shone as she saw how tightly Doods was clasping the book, and she and the Man in the Moon stood looking at the two sleeping figures for a long while in silence.

"Isn't it curious," said the Little Princess at last, "to think that they know nothing at all about it?—all our part, I mean."

"I'm glad Mamma said it wasn't my fault," the Man in the Moon said.





The Princess comes back to her kingdom.



“I dare say they’re dreaming about us though,” went on the Little Princess. “I hope they are.”

“And I hope they’re dreaming nice things of us,” said the Man in the Moon; “I don’t want them to think of me as nurse did.”

“They won’t do that,” said the Little Princess. “Mamma put that all right.”

“Yes,” said the Man in the Moon, “just as she did everything else. Still, it’s good-bye to them now as well.”

“Let’s go back to the other nursery,” said the Little Princess; “you haven’t said good-bye to the Toys yet, you know.”

“You must say good-bye for me,” said the Man in the Moon. “I want to say good-bye to you here—here where your real subjects are. This is your real kingdom, isn’t it?”

“I shall lose them, though, some day,” said the Little Princess. “I see that now. They won’t always remain children.”

“But you’ll have others,” said the Man in the Moon, “I’ve learnt that, too. You’ll

always have some real subjects. But here we are talking and talking——”

“And what?” said the Little Princess, for the Man in the Moon had stopped.

“And I’m no nearer getting back to the moon than I was before,” he went on, and the Little Princess smiled as she remembered her own words when they met in the wood.

“But it isn’t good-bye for good, is it?” she asked softly.

“I’m afraid it will be good-bye for good,” said the Man in the Moon slowly, “but—but on clear moonlight nights I hope you will sometimes look up to the moon, and then perhaps you will think of me for a moment. And you may be sure I shall be thinking of you.”

The Little Princess’s eyes were full of tears.

“Good-bye,” she said, “I shall always think of you, and—and I shan’t believe it’s to be good-bye for good, whatever you say.”

The Man in the Moon tried to answer, but something seemed to be choking him, and

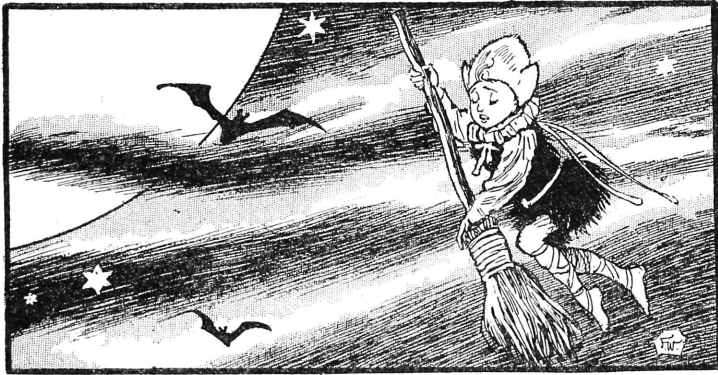


But on clear moonlight nights I hope you will sometimes look up to the moon, and then perhaps you will think of me for a moment."



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his voice wouldn't come. He stood looking at the Little Princess for a moment, then he turned away and went out into the cold, moonlight night, where Mother Goose's broomstick lay amid the snow.



## VIII

### What Mother Goose Said

“**S**O you’ve come back,” said old Mother Goose pleasantly. She was in a very good humour, for she had finished her sweeping for some time to come.

“Yes, I’ve come back,” said the Man in the Moon.

“And what have you been up to all the time?” asked Mother Goose; “were you lonely?—did you like it?”

“Not lonely,” said the Man in the Moon, as his thoughts flew back to the nursery; “not a bit lonely.”

“Ah!” said Mother Goose, peering at him curiously over her horn-rimmed spectacles; “I see you’ve been through some adventures.”





He told her all that had happened.



“Yes,” said the Man in the Moon, sighing, “a lot.”

Mother Goose looked at him kindly. “Tell me all about them,” she said.

The Man in the Moon felt grateful to her. It was just what he wanted—to talk over all that had happened to him with someone, even if it was only old Mother Goose.

So he told her how, after falling off the moon, he came to the wood and met the Little Princess, and went back with her to her kingdom. And how he saw the Frog and the Elephant and the Wooden Soldier and the other toys. And all about the Dragon and Doods and Bubbles. Then he told her all that had happened in the nursery—how the Dragon had swallowed nearly all the toys and all the pocket-money, and how the nursery was turned upside-down till Mamma came and put everything right.

He told her about nurse, too, and the Frog’s fate, and he repeated “Higgledy-Piggledy” and “Fairy Gossamer,” and the first part of the “Picture-book Dragon,” and

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as much as he could remember of the other pieces, all of which pleased Mother Goose very much.

“Ah!” she said at the end, “I should have liked to have been with you and seen that Little Princess of yours. A sweet little thing, I dare say.”

“She was enchanting,” cried the Man in the Moon.

“Very likely,” said Mother Goose, “but I think the Dragon was the best of them all. I should have got on with him very well. Indeed, I might go and see him one of these days; in the summer, perhaps, when there’s no sweeping to be done.”

“I should like to see him again, too,” said the Man in the Moon.

“So you shall,” said Mother Goose heartily, “we’ll go and visit him together.”

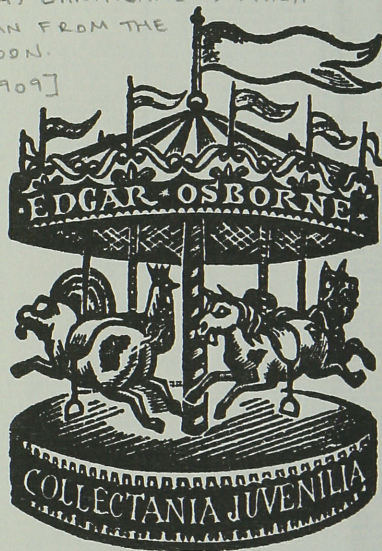
“And the Little Princess?” asked the Man in the Moon boldly.

But Mother Goose only smiled in a very knowing manner.

THE END



(SA) CARMICHAEL, PHILIP  
MAN FROM THE  
MOON.  
[1909]



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