THE SURPRISING GOLDFISH

There was a lovely goldfish in the round glass bowl in the nursery. It belonged to Ronnie and Sue. They were very fond of Finny, the goldfish.

The bowl stood on the top of the book-case and Finny swam round and round it, looking out into the nursery to see all that went on there. He liked seeing the children playing. He liked watching the toys.

The toys liked Finny too. He would stare at them with big, unblinking eyes, waving his finny tail to and fro. He would poke his nose between the green weed in his bowl and make them laugh.

Sometimes the golliwog would climb up to the rim of the big glass bowl and talk to Finny.

"Why don't you come out and play? Isn't it dull in there?"
The Surprising Goldfish

Then Finny would talk back in a funny, bubbly voice.

"Golliwog, I should die if I came out of the water. I can only breathe in water. I am not made like you, you know. I have to be in water or else I should die."

Sometimes the golly would dangle his black feet in the water and Finny would dart at them and pretend to nibble them. Golly thought he was a very nice fish, and very beautiful.

Once the teddy bear took the little floating duck and set her on the top of the water in the goldfish bowl. Finny did like that. The duck floated merrily there, bobbing up and down when Finny made a ripple.

"It's very nice to have you here, little duck," said Finny. "Come under the water and swim with me."

"Well, I'd like to," said the tiny duck, "but, you see, I am only made to float on top of the water. Pull me down—and you will see that I pop right up to the top again!"

So Finny pulled her down into the water—but as soon as he let her go, she popped straight up to the top! It was quite a funny game to play.
Tales After Supper

One day the black kitchen cat came into the nursery and had a look round. There was no one there at all. The children were out. Fluffy was just going out by the window when he caught sight of Finny swimming slowly round and round his bowl.

What could it be in the bowl? Fluffy had never seen a goldfish before. He jumped up on to the book-case and watched Finny swimming round and round.

He put out a paw and patted the glass. Finny backed away in alarm. What was this big black creature with bright green eyes staring at him? He didn’t like it.

Fluffy looked into the top of the bowl and saw the goldfish from the top. He put his paw down and it touched the water. Fluffy didn’t like water. He drew his paw back and shook it. Then he heard a noise and jumped down from the book-case. He sprang out of the window and disappeared into the bushes.

The golliwog went and sat on the rim of the goldfish bowl. “I didn’t like that creature,” said Finny. “He put his paw in and tried to catch me. Don’t let him come again.”

“I can’t stop him,” said the golliwog. “He is
The Surprising Goldfish

a big, live cat, and none of us toys can stop him coming. But don’t worry, maybe he will never come back again.”

But Fluffy did come back. He remembered the bright goldfish, and when the nursery was empty again, two days later, the cat came back, padding softly into the nursery.

He jumped up on to the book-case. He looked at Finny, swimming slowly round and round. He patted the glass again. Then once more he put his paw in.

Finny was very frightened. He backed away as far as he could. He got down to the very bottom of the bowl. But Fluffy meant to get him this time. He put his paw in still farther. He became used to the feel of the water and didn’t mind it any more.
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Finny tried to swim away from that big paw. But Fluffy put out his claws, and caught hold of the terrified fish. In a trice he lifted him up, and got him right out of the bowl. Finny wriggled strongly, and Fluffy pounced on him as he came out. The bowl went over!

Crash! It fell to the floor! It did not break, but it fell on to its side and all the water poured out at once! Finny fell to the floor, too, and landed with such a bump that he bounded high into the air.

Fluffy was frightened when he saw what he had done. He didn’t pounce on the goldfish again, but fled out of the door. Poor Finny was left jumping on the carpet, trying to breathe!

The toys rushed out of the toy-cupboard. “Get me back into ‘my bowl of water, quick!” panted Finny. “I shall die if I don’t breathe. Quick, oh quick!”

The golliwog and the bear tried their hardest to get the bowl standing up properly again, but they couldn’t. It was too big and heavy for them.

“Big doll, come and help!” called the golly. So the big doll came—but although she was big
The Surprising Goldfish

she wasn’t very strong, and she wasn’t really much use.

“All together—PUSH!” said the golliwog—and they pushed. But the bowl slid a little way along the carpet, on its side, and didn’t stand up.

Poor Finny was gasping and wriggling on the carpet. “I shall die! I’m nearly dead! I shall die! Save me, save me!”

“There’s a bowl of flowers on the table!” said the golly, after thinking very hard for a moment. “It’s full of roses—but it’s got water in it too. Can we possibly manage to lift the goldfish up and put him there, while we make the bowl stand up properly and fill it with water?”

Well, it was the only thing to do. So the big doll, and golly and the teddy together lifted up the poor panting goldfish, and carried the slippery fish carefully to the table. They clambered up to the seat of a chair. It was very difficult, for the goldfish was so slippery. Then they climbed up the table-cloth to the top of the table. By this time the goldfish was almost dead.

They walked to the bowl of roses. They lifted up the fish and slipped him in. He fell to the
bottom and then rose to the top. He turned on his side and lay there quite still.

"He's dead," said the golly sadly. "We are too late."

"It's very, very sad," said the bear.

"One of his fins is moving!" said the big doll suddenly. And so it was! Then his other fin moved. Then his tail fin wriggled, and then Finny took an enormous breath and swam round the bowl, trying not to scratch himself on the prickly stems of the roses!

"I'm all right!" he called in his bubbly voice. "Had a bit of a shock, that's all! Thanks very much."

Then the toys heard the children and their mother coming back and they hurried down to the floor. Ronnie and Sue came in with their mother, and the first thing they saw was the upset goldfish bowl on the floor. Sue gave a
The Surprising Goldfish

loud cry and burst into tears. “Fluffy has knocked over the bowl and eaten Finny! Oh, Mother, he has!”

Well, Mother tried to comfort Sue and Ronnie, but they were very unhappy. It was only when they were sitting down to their tea, still feeling miserable, that they saw a most peculiar thing. They stared and they stared.

“Sue,” said Ronnie at last. “Do you see what I see. Do you see Finny in the bowl of roses, swimming round and round?”

“Yes!” cried Sue. “Oh, Mother, do look! How did Finny get there? Did he jump up from the floor on to the table and put himself in the bowl of roses?”

“Well, what a very surprising goldfish!” said Mother, astonished. “I simply can’t understand it! I do wish someone would tell’me how Finny got into my bowl of flowers!”

Well, the toys could have told her. Sue caught a twinkle in the teddy bear’s eye, and she felt sure he knew the secret. She filled the glass bowl with water again, and put Finny into it. He swam happily round and round, quite pleased with himself to think he had had such an adventure.
Tales After Supper

And if you ever meet Sue and Ronnie, and they tell you about their surprising goldfish, you can laugh and say: "Well, I can tell you what happened that afternoon!" Won't they be surprised?
OH! WHAT A BIG STORY

Quick-Eyes was a pixie who didn’t always tell the truth. His mother was very upset about this.

“Quick-Eyes, don’t you know that no one will trust you if you don’t tell the truth?” said his mother. “It’s a terrible thing not to be trusted, really terrible.”

“Well, I won’t tell stories any more,” said Quick-Eyes. But he often said that, and he didn’t keep his word.

“One story leads to another,” his mother often told him. “One day, Quick-Eyes, you will find that you have told a story that makes you tell many more—and then goodness knows what might happen to you!”

Quick-Eyes didn’t believe this. Children often
Tales After Supper

don’t believe their mothers when they say things like this, but, of course, they are perfectly true. And one day Quick-Eyes did tell a story that led to bigger and bigger ones. I’ll tell you all about it.

Well, it happened that one morning Quick-Eyes was playing with a ball in the sitting-room. Now he was not allowed to play with a ball indoors, because sooner or later a ball always bounces against something, knocks it over and breaks it.

And that is just what happened this time. Quick-Eyes’ ball bounced against his mother’s tall blue vase and knocked it off the book-case. It fell to the ground.

Crash! It broke into twenty pieces. Quick-Eyes stared in horror. He heard his mother coming and very quickly he popped his ball into his pocket. His mother came into the room and stared in anger at her beautiful broken vase.

“Quick-Eyes! Did you break that? Oh, you naughty little thing!”

Quick-Eyes told a story then, as quick as lightning. He said the first thing that came into his head.

“Tibbles did it. I saw her. She came in at
the window, jumped up on the book-case, slid along a little way, knocked off the vase—and it broke."

"Oh, the bad cat!" cried his mother. "Where is she? I shall spank her for that. Where is she, Quick-Eyes?"

"She went out of the window again," said Quick-Eyes, which was another naughty story, because, as we know, Tibbles had never been in!

"Well, you go and find Tibbles for me and bring her into the kitchen," said her mother. "I will spank her properly. Go along now—go and find her at once."

Quick-Eyes went into the garden. Naughty as he was, he didn’t want Tibbles the cat to be spanked for something she hadn’t done. No, he really couldn’t bear that. So he didn’t look for her, but only pretended to.

Presently his mother called him. "Quick-Eyes! Why haven’t you found Tibbles? Bring her to me at once."

Then Quick-Eyes told an even bigger story. "I can’t get her for you," he said. "She was afraid of being spanked, and she jumped down the well. I can’t possibly get her."

"Jumped down the well!" cried his mother,
in horror. "Poor Tibbles! She will never be able to get out by herself. She may drown. Go and tell Mister Flap over the way, and ask him to bring his ladder here at once. He can put it down the well, and go down and rescue poor Tibbles."

Oh, dear! How awful to go and ask Mister Flap to bring a ladder and go down a well for a cat that wasn't there! Quick-Eyes stood and stared at his mother, wondering what to say, and she became impatient.

"Will you go, Quick-Eyes? Do you want Tibbles to drown down the well?"

"No, I don't," said Quick-Eyes, and he ran out of the door, down the front path and into the road. He went to Mister Flap's house—but he didn't go in. He just stayed there a minute or two, and then went back home, without speaking to Mister Flap at all.

"Well," said his mother, "is Mister Flap coming?"

"He says he has lent his ladder to Dame Slow-One," said Quick-Eyes. Oh, what a big story again! It was a wonder that Quick-Eyes could make so many stories in one morning.

"Oh, dear!" said his mother. "Well, you
Oh! What a Big Story

must hurry off to Dame Slow-One then and
tell her what has happened and bring back the
ladder yourself. Quick now, go at once, or poor
Tibbles will certainly be drowned, if she isn’t
already.”

Off went Quick-Eyes again. Oh, dear, he was
getting himself in a muddle! Dame Slow-One
hadn’t got the ladder, so it wasn’t a bit of use
asking her—and anyway Tibbles wasn’t down
the well! Why ever had he said such a silly
thing?

Quick-Eyes trotted down to Dame Slow-One
and then trotted back again without going to
see her at all. He went to the kitchen.

“Bless us all!” said his mother, seeing that he
hadn’t got the ladder. “Where’s the ladder,
Quick-Eyes?”

“Dame Slow-One is sorry, but she’s picking
her plums, and can’t spare the ladder just at
present,” said Quick-Eyes. What a dreadful
story that was!

His mother stared at him in amazement.

“Picking her plums? I am afraid Dame Slow-
One is being rude and unkind to me. I shall
speak to her about it when I see her.”

“No, don’t do that,” said Quick-Eyes in alarm.
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"Perhaps it wasn't plums she said. No, now I come to think of it she said she was picking her gooseberries, and needed the ladder for them."

"A ladder for picking gooseberries!" cried his mother, more puzzled than ever. "But gooseberries grow on bushes, not trees. Well, well—it's quite plain that Dame Slow-One doesn't want me to have the ladder. We'd better borrow a rope, I think. Ours isn't long enough, so go to Father Grey-Head and ask him to lend you his nice long rope."

There was nothing for it but for Quick-Eyes to go off to Father Grey-Head's. He was getting very tired by now of trotting here, there and everywhere all for nothing. He ran down to Father Grey-Head's cottage. Father Grey-Head was in his garden, but, of course, Quick-Eyes didn't ask him for his rope. What was the good of going down the well on a rope to find a cat that wasn't there? No good at all.

He ran back to his own home. His mother called to him. "Where's the rope, Quick-eyes?"

"Father Grey-Head says he is very sorry, but he has used his rope to tie up a very fierce stray dog," said Quick-Eyes. Good gracious, that was a bigger story than ever! As if old Father Grey-
Oh! What a Big Story

Head would go tying up fierce dogs! Why, he crossed over to the other side of the road if he saw a puppy. He couldn’t bear dogs!

Quick-Eyes’ mother looked most surprised. "What! Father Grey-Head has tied up a fierce stray dog! What an extraordinary thing! I shouldn’t have thought he would ever have dared to do that. Well, well, well—whatever are we going to do about poor old Tibbles? I’ll go to the well and call down it. Maybe I’ll hear her meow. If I don’t, I’m afraid she’ll have been drowned by now."

So Quick-Eyes’ mother hurried to the well and looked down it. It was dark and deep and she could see nothing. She called loudly.

"Tibbles! Tibbles! Are you there? Puss, puss, puss! Poor, poor, puss!"

Then she listened. But not the tiniest mew came up from the well—which wasn’t surprising of course, considering that there was no cat there!

"Oh, dear," sighed Quick-Eyes’ mother. "I’m afraid Tibbles is drowned after all. Puss, puss, puss!"

Tibbles was asleep on the wall nearby in the sun. She heard someone calling her, woke up, jumped down and ran to where Quick-Eyes’
mother leaned over the well. She jumped up on to the mother's shoulder.

"Oh! Oh!" cried Quick-Eyes' mother, in a fright. "Oh, it's Tibbles! You weren't down the well, puss! You must have got out by yourself. Oh, dear, you gave me such a fright that I very nearly fell down the well myself!"

His mother called Quick-Eyes. "Look," she said. "Tibbles must have got out of the well by herself. And she isn't a bit wet. Isn't that extraordinary?"

"Well, I expect she lay down in the sun to dry herself," said Quick-Eyes, feeling thankful that things had come right in the end. His mother seemed so glad that Tibbles wasn't drowned that she had quite forgotten to spank her! So, that was all right.

But that afternoon Quick-Eyes' mother went out to a tea-party—and at the party were Mister Flap, Dame Slow-One and Father Grey-Head. Quick-Eyes' mother spoke to them at once.

"Tibbles wasn't drowned after all!"

They all looked at her in astonishment. "Well, I didn't even know she might have been!" said Mister Flap.

"Yes, you did!" said Quick-Eyes' mother. "I
Oh! What a Big Story

sent Quick-Eyes over to you this morning to borrow your ladder to put down the well—and you told him you had lent it to Dame Slow-One.”

Mister Flap looked amazed. “I didn’t see Quick-Eyes this morning, and certainly I hadn’t lent my ladder to any one,” he said.

So Quick-Eyes’ mother turned to Dame Slow-One. “Well, didn’t you tell Quick-Eyes that you couldn’t lend him the ladder because you were using it to pick gooseberries?” said Quick-Eyes’ mother.

Dame Slow-One laughed. “You might have known that was a story!” she said. “I didn’t see him this morning, and I had borrowed no ladder, neither did I pick any gooseberries.”

Then Quick-Eyes’ mother turned to Father Grey-Head. “How is the fierce stray dog you tied up?” she said.

Father Grey-Head thought she must be a little mad. “I know nothing of any fierce stray dog,” he said.

“But Quick-Eyes said you couldn’t lend us your rope to put down the well, because you had used it to tie up a fierce stray dog!” she said.
Tales After Supper

"My rope is coiled up in my shed," said Father Grey-Head. "And there is no stray dog in my yard. I think, Dame, that your son Quick-Eyes has been telling you story after story. We will go back with you and find out."

So Father Grey-Head, Dame Slow-One and Mister Flap went back with Quick-Eyes' mother to see Quick-Eyes. And didn't he look blue when he saw them all coming, looking serious and solemn!

"Why did you tell all these bad, wicked stories?"
Oh! What a Big Story

asked his mother, crossly. Quick-Eyes began to cry.

“Well,” he sobbed, “you see it wasn’t Tibbles that broke your vase—it was my ball! I knew you’d be cross, Mother, so I said it was Tibbles. And you sent me to find her to be spanked. But I didn’t want her to be, so I said she had jumped down the well.”

“Two big stories,” said his mother:

“Then you sent me to Mister Flap for his ladder, but I knew Tibbles wasn’t down the well, so I said he’d lent the ladder to Dame Slow-One. And you sent me to her and I said she wanted it for picking fruit. And you sent me to Father Grey-Head for his rope and I said he had used it to tie up a fierce stray dog. That’s all.”

“Five enormous stories, one leading to another,” said Father Grey-Head. “That’s the worst of telling one fib—you so often have to tell others to hide the first fib. Dame, I think that Quick-Eyes should have five spankings, one for each story. You shall give him two, and we will each give him one. Then maybe he will remember that it is best to speak the truth!”

So, very solemnly, Mister Flap, Dame Slow-
Tales After Supper

One, Father Grey-Head, and his mother all spanked Quick-Eyes, and he cried and cried.

"Oh, oh, how silly I have been!" he wept. "If I had told the truth and owned up to breaking the vase, I would only have had one small spanking—but because I told a story about it, I have had five big ones. I will never, never tell a story again!"

Well, I hope he won't. But it isn't so easy to get out of a bad habit, is it!
BILLY-BOB HAS AN ADVENTURE

Once Billy-Bob wanted to go to some woods he knew, to pick bluebells.

"Can I go, and take Belinda too?" he asked.

"No. It's too far to walk, Billy-Bob," said Mother.

"Well, Mother, the bus goes, you know," said Billy-Bob. "Couldn't I go in the bus with Belinda? You let us go down to the village alone. Couldn't we go in the bus alone, if I take great care of Belinda?"

Mother thought about it and then she said yes! Billy-Bob and Belinda were simply delighted.

"You have to begin going about by yourselves sometime or other," said Mother. "And now that you are getting a big boy, Billy-Bob, it is time you took Belinda here and there,
and really learnt how to look after a sister. Boys should always take care of girls, you know."

"I know that," said Billy-Bob. "Oh Mother, what fun! I shall love to catch the bus with Belinda, and bring her back. Can we take a picnic-lunch with us?"

Mother said yes. So the next day she packed up a basket of sandwiches, two rosy apples, two pieces of cake, and a bottle of milk and a cup. Billy-Bob was to carry it. The bus went at ten o'clock from the corner, and he was to catch it with Belinda.

So at five minutes to ten both he and Belinda were waiting patiently for the bus. It came along and Billy-Bob helped Belinda in. The
**Billy-Bob Has an Adventure**

conductor was surprised to see him all alone with his sister.

"My word, you're growing up, aren't you?" he said,

"I am, rather," said Billy-Bob, feeling important. The conductor took four pennies from Billy-Bob and gave him tickets. Belinda wanted to hold hers, so Billy-Bob let her.

"It's a pity we couldn't have taken Wags with us," said Belinda, who loved their little dog. "But I suppose you couldn't very well have looked after a little girl and a dog, too, Billy-Bob!"

The bus rattled on down the lanes, and at last came to the bluebell woods. Billy-Bob got out and helped Belinda down. Then they went into the woods.
Tales After Supper

“We must catch the bus that goes back at three o’clock, Belinda,” said Billy-Bob, looking at his watch. “That’s the last one back to-day, so we mustn’t miss it. Come along—let’s find that little stream we once saw here, and take off our shoes and socks and paddle in it.”

They had a lovely time. They paddled. They sailed boats made of bits of wood. They watched a moor-hen wit’1 eleven babies. They had a lovely lunch, and ate every single thing Mother had packed up for then.

“I wish I knew why sandwiches and cake taste so different out-of-doors,” said Belinda.

“It’s because we are so hungry,” said Billy-Bob. “Now, Belinda, we had better pick big bunches of bluebells for Mother and Auntie Sue and old Mrs. Lucy. Look—there are some beauties over there!”

They began to pick the bluebells, which shone like a blue mist between the trees. They picked so many—and yet there seemed just as many left, for in that bluebell wood there were thousands and thousands of the shimmering blue flowers. Belinda shook each one to see if the little bells rang or jingled, but not one did.

“Now we’ll have a rest before we set off for
Billy-Bob Has an Adventure

the bus," said Billy-Bob, looking at his watch. "We’ve got plenty of time!"

So they sat with their backs against a tree and rested, and Billy-Bob told Belinda a long story. Then he looked at his watch again—and stared in alarm.

"Belinda! My watch has stopped! It says exactly the same time as when I looked at it before! Good gracious me, I hope it isn’t past three o’clock! Come along quickly!"

The two children ran through the bluebell wood as fast as they could, carrying their heavy load of flowers. They came to the bus-stop in the lane—and there, rumbling down the hill in the distance, was the bus! They had just missed it!

“Oh, Belinda! It’s gone! It must be past three o’clock!" cried Billy-Bob in dismay. Belinda screwed up her nose and began to cry. She was tired now, and wanted to go home.

“I hate your silly watch!” she said, with the tears running off her freckled nose.

“Belinda, don’t be a baby. We must try and walk home,” said Billy-Bob, taking Belinda’s hand. “It didn’t seem very far in the bus. Don’t cry like that. Mother won’t let us go out alone any more if you make such a fuss.”

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"Well, I don't want to go out alone any more if we have to walk home!" wailed Belinda. Billy-Bob didn't say any more. He just wiped Belinda's eyes for her, took hold of her hand very firmly and began to walk with her down the lane.

But, you know, after they had walked about a mile, poor Belinda was so tired that she really couldn't walk another step. She sat down in the lane and looked so white and sad that Billy-Bob was quite frightened.

He was tired, too. He thought it would be a good thing to have a nice rest. Then perhaps they would both feel able to walk for miles. He looked around for some where nice to rest in.

He saw a cart, full of soft hay, in a field nearby. He pulled Belinda to her feet and took her to the cart. He helped her up into the hay and made a lovely soft bed for her. Belinda was pleased.

"This is lovely, Billy-Bob," she said, and cuddled right down. Billy-Bob cuddled down too. The hay smelt sweet, though it was last year's.

In two minutes' time both the children were
fast asleep! The were so sound asleep that they didn’t hear the farmer come along to the cart with his horse. They didn’t hear the creak of the gate as it opened. They didn’t feel the cart moving along beneath them.

Out into the country lane went the cart. The horse clip-clopped slowly along. The farmer whistled a little tune as he walked beside it. He hadn’t seen the children on top of the hay. The wheels rumbled and creaked—but still the children didn’t wake up!

At last Billy-Bob yawned, opened his eyes, and stretched out his arms. At first he thought
he was in bed at home. Then he saw the bright blue sky above him and he was most astonished. Where could he be? He rolled over and saw Belinda, still fast asleep.

Then he remembered. Of course, they had climbed up on to some hay in a cart—and they must have fallen asleep. But then Billy-Bob felt the jerking of the cart as it went along, and he sat up in alarm. The cart was moving! It was taking them somewhere! Oh, dear oh dear, what an alarming adventure this was!

Billy-Bob saw the horse. He saw the farmer and heard his whistle. He saw the hedges moving by—and he called out in alarm:

"Hie! Where are we going?"

The farmer turned round and stared in surprise at Billy-Bob. Then Belinda awoke and sat up, too. The farmer was even more astonished.

"Hey! Where did you come from?" he shouted, and stopped his horse at once.

"We missed the bus at the corner of the bluebell woods, and we walked till we came to this cart of hay," shouted back Billy-Bob. "We wanted a rest—but we didn’t know the cart was going anywhere."

"Where do you live? asked the farmer.
Billy-Bob Has an Adventure

"Oh, a long, long way away," said Billy-Bob dolefully. "We live in Derry Village."

"Well, bless us all, if that isn’t queer! I’m passing through Derry Village with this cart of hay!" cried the farmer. "So just stay there, and you’ll be right as rain!"

And off went the cart again, with the horse clip-clip-clopping, and the farmer whistling beside it. Billy-Bob and Belinda were thrilled. This was much, much better than going back home by bus! For one thing, the cart went slowly enough for them to see everything they passed. The bus always went too quickly.

It was a lovely ride, and at last they came to Derry Village. And there was their own dear little white house standing in its gay garden—and there was Mother waiting at the gate, looking very anxious because the last bus had gone by, and no children had been in it.

"Mother! Mother! Here we are!" shouted Billy-Bob and Belinda, clambering down from the cart with their bluebells. "Thank you, Farmer, for a lovely ride."

"You’re welcome," said the farmer, and went whistling on his way, with the old brown horse clip-clopping beside him.
Tales After Supper

Mother listened to all their adventures, and Billy-Bob looked at her anxiously at the end.

"You won't say we are too little to go out alone, will you?" he asked. "Everything would have been all right if only my watch hadn't stopped!"

"Well, remember to wind it up next time!" said Mother, with a laugh.

"Anyway, I'm glad we missed the bus, because it was much more fun to catch a haycart!" said Belinda. And it certainly was!
MISTER TWISTY’S COUGH-SWEETS

Mister Twisty sat in his house and stirred a queer mixture in his cooking-bowl. It didn’t smell very nice, and that wasn’t surprising as Mister Twisty has just put in any old thing to cook. It would taste sweet because there was sugar in it, but the rest was simply rubbish.

Mister Twisty was making cough-sweets. He stood and grinned to himself as he stirred the mixture.

“I shall make a lot of money out of these cough-sweets!” he said to himself. “I shall make the sweets—let them cool—pack them into paper bags—go to the market and sell them.
I shall make a lot of money and buy myself a much better home, and perhaps a donkey to ride about on."

When the sweets were ready, Mister Twisty looked at them. They were a strange brown-orange colour and smelt queer. Mister Twisty put six in a paper-twist and then another six and another and another. Soon he had enough to fill his tray, and he arranged all the bags of sweets on it.

"Now off to market!" he said. "Ha, ha! I shall sell all these paper bags of cough-sweets before night—and none of them will make anyone's cough or cold better!"

Soon he was at the market. Ducks and hens quacked and clucked. Sheep baaed, cows mooed, and a lost goat strayed and butted anyone who wasn’t looking. Mister Twisty chose a good place right in the very middle of the market, and stood there, with his tray of sweets swung from his shoulders.

Then he began to shout in a very, very peculiar voice. Oh, a most peculiar voice indeed! It was very hoarse, as if he had a bad cold, and Mister Twisty kept coughing and coughing as he shouted. This was strange because Mister Twisty’s voice
had been quite all right at home, and he hadn’t coughed once until he came to the market.

“Buy, buy, buy,!” shouted Mister Twisty in his husky, hoarse voice. Cough, cough, cough! “Won’t you buy my wonderful cough-sweets? They will put your voice right in the twink of an eye, send your colds away, and make your cough better!”

Here Mister Twisty began to cough again. Cough, cough, cough! It was really painful to hear him. Then he sneezed. Then he blew his nose with a noise like a trumpet and began to shout again, hoarsely and huskily:

“Do buy my wonderful cough-sweets! They will put your voice right and stop your cough at once! Who has a cold? Who is sneezing? Come and buy my sweets and you will be better at once!”

Mister Twisty soon had a crowd round him.
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One or two people began to laugh. It seemed funny to hear someone selling wonderful cough-sweets when he had such a hoarse voice, such a bad cough, and such sneezing fits!

"You’ve a bad cold, Mister!" cried some one.

"Don’t like that cough of yours, Mister!" cried someone else.

"Hey! Why don’t you try your wonderful, marvellous cough-sweets on yourself?" cried a third voice.

"Yes! Why don’t you?" cried every one, laughing. "If you say they send away coughs and colds and put your voice right, well, eat some yourself! Why should we buy from somebody who doesn’t ‘even try his own goods?"

"Now, folks, now, folks, have patience!" said Mister Twisty, still in a very hoarse voice. "I will certainly try my own cough-sweets on myself. Yes, I certainly will. And then we shall see what they do to cure me! My voice is certainly hoarse, my cough’s bad, and I almost sneeze my head off—a-tish-ooo! A-tish-ooo!"

"Go on—take some of your own cough-cure, Mister!" cried every one.

Mister Twisty coughed badly again. Then he picked up a paper bag of sweets, and undid it. He
Mister Twisty's Cough-Sweets

took out one of the sweets and popped it into his mouth. He sucked it hard. He chewed it up. He swallowed it down. And then he spoke again.

"There, friends! Isn't that marvellous? Hear my voice—it is perfectly all right!"

Every one listened to him in amazement. His voice was clear—it wasn't a bit hoarse or husky. They didn't know, of course, that he had purposely spoken hoarsely before. They really thought that the sweet had cured his bad voice.

"There now!" said Twisty. "Not only is my voice cured, but my cough is gone too! Isn't that marvellous? And I'm not sneezing any more! Ah, folks, now you see what wonderful sweets these are!"

Of course, Twisty had coughed and sneezed on purpose before, and it was quite easy for him to stop when he wanted to. He beamed round at every one, and they stared back at him in surprise.

"How much are they?" called some one.

"A shilling a bag," said Twisty.

"They're dear," said the voice. "But if they cure colds like that, all of a sudden, I'll have some! Here's a shilling!"

A shilling rattled down on the tray. Twisty
grinned and handed out a bag of his sweets. More shillings were handed up and in two minutes Twisty had sold every single one of his bags. How pleased he was!

He soon disappeared from the market and went to spend some of the money. He bought himself a new yellow shirt, and he was so pleased with it that he put it on at once. He thought himself so fine in it that he didn’t put on his coat again, but walked around showing off his fine shirt, carrying his coat over his arm.

The wind blew cold. Twisty shivered, but he felt so grand in his new shirt that he wouldn’t put his coat on. So, of course, he caught a simply dreadful cold—a real one this time that made him cough and sneeze properly. Poor Twisty!

He went to his aunt’s house nearby, for he really felt ill. She put him to bed at once.

“You have got a cold!” she said. “But never
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mind, Twisty, I can cure you in a few minutes! Just wait a moment. Mrs. Gobbo gave me a wonderful cold-cure to-day, and you shall have it."

Twisty's aunt went out of the room. She soon came back with some sweets, and she popped three into Twisty's mouth. They tasted horrid—but he had to suck them. Then she gave him three more, and then three more, and Twisty simply hated them.

"I can't think why your cold doesn't go," said his aunt, puzzled. "You know, Mrs. Gobbo bought these cough-sweets in the market to-day, and paid a shilling a bag for them. She said the man who sold them cured his cold with them in about half a minute!"

Twisty sat up in bed in dismay. "A shilling a bag!" he groaned. "Oh, my—I must have eaten nine of my own horrid, rubbissy sweets! They'll make me ill—really ill! I'm feeling dreadfully ill already! Fetch a doctor, quick!"

Well, the sweets did make him ill, for they were full of rubbish. The doctor came and gave him some nasty medicine. And poor Twisty had to pay him all the money he had taken for selling his cough-sweets, and some more besides!
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"My goodness!" he groaned. "I'll never play tricks like that again. This serves me right. I was dishonest and my own dishonesty is punishing me!"

So it was, wasn't it—and it nearly always does. I rather think Twisty will be careful in future, don't you?
CHINKY AND THE POPPY

Once there was a small elf called Chinky. She was so small that she could easily ride on a butterfly’s soft back, or sit on a daisy’s golden centre. She had a lovely time riding the white cabbage butterflies, and dipping her thin little arm into the mouth of a snapdragon flower to find the nectar hidden there.

On day she sat on a swinging leaf and talked to a brown and yellow fly above her head.

“You look like a bee,” she said, “but I don’t believe you are!”

“I’m not,” said the fly, and he flew a little lower down. “I’m only pretending to be a bee, so that the birds will not eat me. They don’t
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eat bees, you know, because bees have a sting."

"Haven't you a sting?" asked Chinky, looking hard at the back of the gay fly.

"No, I haven't," said the fly. "But don't tell anyone, will you? You see, if I dress myself exactly like a bee I am safe. I buzz around the world, and everyone says: 'Oh, here comes a bee'—but really I'm only a harmless fly!"

"That's rather clever of you," said the elf, swinging up and down on the leaf. "Nobody will catch you, and you will have a long and merry life."

But just then there was a movement in the damp grass below, and the big bulging eye of a green frog looked up. He had heard every word!

"Cr-r-r-roak!" he said. "So he's a fly, not a bee, is he? All right—just see me catch him!"

"Can't catch me! Can't catch me-eeeee!" hummed the fly hovering around the frog's head. The elf gave a squeal.

"Don't be silly! Don't go near him! Don't you know that he has a long tongue fixed to the front of his mouth, so that he can flick it out a long way! It's a very sticky tongue, too, and he'll catch you. Fly higher! Fly higher!"

The fly heard and was scared. He darted high
Chinky and the Poppy

into the air—only just in time, for the frog shot out his long, sticky tongue, and very nearly caught him.

"Z-z-z-z-z-zz!" said the fly, angrily, and flew up into the air and over the hedge.

"Nasty little spoil-sport," said the green frog to the elf. Chinky made a face at him, which was silly of her, because it made the frog very angry.

"You are small enough for a frog to eat, little Chinky!" said the frog, and his big eyes glared at her. "I shall catch you on the sticky end of my tongue—and gobble you up!"

Chinky jumped off the leaf with a scream. The frog shot out his tongue and just missed her. She ran away between the grasses as fast as ever.
she could. The frog leapt after her. He could jump very well indeed—very high, as high as the tallest grass there. The elf ran and ran, panting for breath. She was very frightened.

She came to the edge of the ditch. There was a cornfield beyond, with red poppies gleaming here and there.

"Help! Help!" called Chinky, hearing the frog leaping along behind her. A tall red poppy waved silken petals to her.

"Chinky! Jump inside me and I'll hide you with my petals!"

Chinky jumped—and the poppy took her into its middle, and folded scarlet petals over her tiny body. But the frog had seen where she went, and he stood below, shaking the stalk of the poppy as hard as ever he could.

"He's shaking me out, he's shaking me out!" cried Chinky, holding on to the black stamens inside the poppy for all she was worth. The black pollen flew out and covered her from head to foot. She was soon as black as a sweep, for the pollen inside poppies is like soot.

The frog gave an extra big shake, and poor Chinky was jerked right out of the poppy. The frog looked up—and saw a completely black
Chinky and the Poppy

creature flying towards him. He stared in surprise and fright.

“A black imp!” he cried. “A black imp!”

Now the blackimps are mischievous, and all creatures of the fields and woods are afraid of them. The frog leapt away fast, afraid that the black imp would catch him and tease him. But it was only Chinky, of course, covered with the black pollen from the poppy!

She laughed when she saw the frog leaping away and ran after him a little way. “Now you know how horrid it is to be chased!” she called, and went back to the red poppy.

“I’m very sooty,” she said.

“It’s going to rain,” said the poppy. “The drops will wash you clean. Look out—here comes the first one.”

Plop! A big raindrop fell beside the elf, and then another and another. One fell on her head, and ran down her tiny body, washing away the sooty pollen. In a moment or two she was quite clean again.

She leaned against the poppy stem, sheltering beneath the wide scarlet petals. “Thank you so much for letting me hide inside you,” she said. “I wish I could do something for you in return.”
"You can," said the poppy. "And I'll tell you what it is! You know, very soon my red petals will fall to the ground, and so will my black stamens. All that will be left of will be my little green middle. But that is the most important part of me."

"Why?" asked Chinky, in surprise.

"Because I keep my seeds there," said the poppy. "Didn't you know that? Yes—I keep my seeds there, and they slowly ripen in these hot summer days. Then, when they are black and dry and ripe, little holes, like windows, open all round my head, and the wind shakes them out."

"It all sounds very clever," said the elf.

"Now listen," said the poppy, "I am growing in the corn, and my seeds will be ripe before the corn is cut. The wind cannot get down to me to shake my seeds out when they are ripe, because the tall corn is above my head. I cannot bear my seeds to be wasted, little elf—so please will you come back in a few week's time, and shake my stalk for me—very hard indeed, just as the frog did just now? Then my seeds will fly out of my head, and will fall to the ground to grow into bright red poppies next year."

"Of course I'll come," said Chinky. "It
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would be a lovely thing to do. I’ll watch your seeds fly out. It will be fun!"

"I hope you’ll know me," said the poppy. "I shan’t have any red petals, you know—I’ll only be just a round head—not even green, as I am now, but hard and brown."

"I’ll know you all right," said Chinky. "Goodbye till then!"

Off she went to tell her adventures to the white butterflies. If you want to see her, you’ll know what to do—watch the red poppy in the cornfield, and when its seeds are ready to be shaken out, Chinky will be there, shaking the stem as hard as ever she can. I’d love to see her, wouldn’t you?
THE CLOCKWORK MOUSE IN TROUBLE

There were a great many toys in Billy’s nursery. There were big and little dolls, engines, bricks, bears, toy animals—and a clockwork mouse.

The clockwork mouse was a merry little fellow. He had a key in his side and when he was wound up he ran all over the place as fast as could be, just like a real mouse. Everyone loved him.

Then one day a family of real mice came to live behind the nursery wall. There was a hole in the corner of the room, and at night the mice came out of this hole to play in the nursery, and to pick up any crumbs that Billy had dropped on the floor.

But the dolls didn’t like the mice at all. They pretended that they were afraid of them. They
The Clockwork Mouse in Trouble

had once seen Nurse jump out of her chair, and heard her squeal loudly when she saw a mouse—so they thought it was the right thing to do.

The little clockwork mouse was cross.

"Why are you so silly about my friends?" he said to the big dolls. "Those mice won't hurt you. They are dear little things. You are being silly."

"You are not to talk to us like that," said the biggest doll, called Angelina. "We don't like those mice. We shall chase them out of the nursery every time they come."

So, whenever the real little mice popped their heads out of their hole, the big dolls ran at them, and chased them back. Angelina banged the mother-mouse on the nose with a spoon, and the mother-mouse squealed with pain.

"How unkind you are!" said the clockwork mouse, angrily. "You know they are my friends. And you know, too, that they don't have very
much to eat because Nurse sweeps the carpet so carefully every day there is hardly ever a crumb left for the mice. And she keeps the cupboard door shut so that not even the smallest mouse can get in.”

“A good thing, too.” said Angelina, unkindly. “Perhaps if they can’t find any food here, they will go.”

“But I don’t want them to go,” said the clockwork mouse with tears in his eyes. “They are my friends. It is true that I am only clockwork and they are real, but still I think mouse thoughts, and understand mouse ways, so I am very happy to have them here.”

“I shall chase them away every time they come,” said Angelina. And she kept her word. She even got the golliwog to stand by the hole with a little watering-can to pour water on them when they came out.

One of the baby mice was soaked, and he got a bad cold. The clockwork mouse was very upset.

“If you won’t let my friends come into the nursery I shall have to go and see them down in their hole,” he said. “To-night I will go. I dare say I may find it a bit hard to squeeze through
The Clockwork Mouse in Trouble

the hole, because I am fat—but I expect I can manage."

He got stuck half-way in the hole but the other mice managed to pull him through all right. They were delighted to see him, especially the little mouse with a cold.

"I'm sorry we can't offer you any food," said the mother-mouse, "but except for a bit of bacon-rind one of us found down in the kitchen we haven't had anything to eat for a day or two."

The clockwork mouse had a lovely time down in the hole. He gave his key to the baby mouse who had a cold, and let him play with it. The mouse was pleased.

The little mice took the clockwork mouse down all their holes, and showed him how they
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got about behind the wall. They met other mice, who were not very pleased to see them.

"You see, we each live behind a different room," said the mother-mouse, "and we are supposed to get our food out of that room—not out of any other. Each family of mice has its own room—but, oh dear, the nursery is not a very good room to have, because Nurse keeps it so very clean. We thought it would be a splendid room to run out in and pick up bits and pieces—but except when Nurse has her day out, and the floor isn't swept, we don't find anything!"

The clockwork mouse enjoyed his visit. He heard the golliwog calling down the hole, and he knew it was time to go.

"Clockwork mouse! It will soon be morning. You must come back at once!" called the golliwog.

"Good-bye," said the mouse. "I must go. I will come again to-morrow."

He ran up the passage to the hole in the nursery wall. He ran across the floor to the toy cupboard, got into it, cuddled among the toys and fell asleep.

The next night he wanted to go and see his
The Clockwork Mouse in Trouble

mouse-friends—but he couldn’t move. His clockwork had run down. He needed to be wound up again.

He called the golliwog.

“Golly! Wind me up, will you?”

The toys often wound up the clockwork mouse when he needed it. The golly came to him to turn his key and wind him up.

“Why, clockwork mouse, where’s your key?” he asked in surprise. “It isn’t in the hole in your side.”

“No, it isn’t,” said the toys, standing round and staring. “Have you lost it?”

“Oh, tails and whiskers, I know what I’ve done with it!” said the clockwork mouse, in a fright. “I lent it to the baby mouse to play with and I forgot to ask him for it back. So he has still got it, down the mouse-hole!”

“Good gracious!” said Angelina. “Whatever will you do?”

“He’d better go down the mouse-hole and get it,” said the golliwog. Angelina gave a sniff.

“How very, very silly you are, golly! If the clockwork mouse can’t run because he isn’t wound up, how can he go and fetch his key?”

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"I didn't think of that," said the golliwog, and he would have blushed red, if his face hadn't been black. "Well, perhaps the mice will come out of their hole to-night and bring back the key."

"No, they won't," said the mouse sadly. "You see, they are afraid to come out now, golly, ever since you stood outside with that watering-can."

The golly felt ashamed. "Angelina told me to do that," he said. Then Angelina felt ashamed, too, and very sorry. It would be dreadful if the little clockwork mouse, whom they all loved, should never be able to run about again, because his key was down a mouse-hole and couldn't be got back.
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The mice didn't come out of the hole with the key. They were too afraid—and besides, they felt sure that their clockwork friend would never have left his key behind if he were going to need it so soon.

Everyone in the nursery was upset. "This is dreadful," said the fat teddy bear. "Why did we scare those mice away? Now we have brought unhappiness to the clockwork mouse we love. There he lies, in the toy cupboard, not able to run about, or play games or anything. Angelina, it is mostly your fault this happened. Just think of some plan, please!"

So Angelina thought and thought, and at last an idea came.

"We are all too big to go down the mouse-hole," she said. "I couldn't possibly get down, and neither could you, golly. And certainly fat Teddy couldn't. But I know who could."

"Who?" said everyone.

"The three doll's house dolls," said Angelina.

"They are very tiny."

So the golly called out the three doll's house dolls from their dear little house, and spoke to them.

"Tiny dolls, will you go down the mouse-
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hole and get the clockwork mouse’s key for him?"

"We are afraid," said the tiny dolls.

"There is nothing to be afraid of," said Angelina. "I only pretended to be afraid of the mice. I was silly. You go, tiny dolls—and as a reward you shall use the little stove in your doll’s house for cooking! You have always wanted to, and we have never let you because we were afraid you might set the house on fire. But the golly can fill his watering-can with water and stand by to see that nothing gets on fire."

Now the doll’s house dolls had always wanted to cook on their little stove. It was such a good stove. They looked at one another in joy.

"All right," they said. "We will go down the mouse-hole and fetch the key."

"And tell the mice they can safely come into the nursery," said Angelina. "Tell them we are sorry we scared them away. We will be kind to them now."

So the three doll’s house dolls, holding hands tightly, went down the mouse-hole. The mice were very surprised to see them, and very sorry to know that the clockwork mouse missed his key so much.
The Clockwork Mouse in Trouble

The baby mouse gave it up at once. The three doll's house dolls loved him. He was really sweet.

"Angelina is going to let us cook on our little stove," they told the mice. "We shall make cakes and puddings. If you will bring the baby mouse to see us when his cold is better we will give you each a cake."

Well, wasn't that lovely! The mice beamed with delight and promised to come. Then up the passage back to the hole went the doll's
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house dolls, feeling quite excited with their adventure.

The mouse was soon wound up again, and didn’t he rush up and down the carpet for joy! “You will need winding up again, silly,” said the golliwog.

Now the real little mice come into the nursery every night and play, and nobody minds them, not even Angelina.

And when the doll’s house dolls cook on their little stove, the little mice run into the kitchen there at once—and so does the clockwork mouse too. They each have a cake or a bit of pudding—and don’t they enjoy it, all sitting happily together round the kitchen table.

I would like to see them, wouldn’t you?

THE END