## Noen tips om bruken av ressurspakken

Pakken inneholder DVD, CD og teksthefte. Dette materialet i ressurspakken er tenkt brukt når elevene ikke har tilgang til datamaskiner. Tekstene supplerer og utfyller stoffet på nettet og kan brukes som tilleggsmateriale til dette.

Det er ikke laget oppgaver til tekstene i ressurspakken, Men de kan danne grunnlag for skriftlige oppgaver og kanskje aller best for samtaler i klassen.

De fleste tekstene er utdrag fra kjente verker og kan brukes til å inspirere elevene til å lese mer av dette stoffet på egen hånd, noen av verkene fins også i sin helhet på nettet.

Den opprinnelige språkformen er beholdt, noe som kanskje gjør at de eldste tekstene oppleves som litt vanskelige.

Flere av tekstene på Cd-en handler om krig og fred. Disse kan samlet brukes til et prosjekt om dette temaet. Elevene kan i grupper ta for seg de enkelte tekstene og drøfte dem og så legge resultatet fram for de andre elevene. Når alle gruppene har lagt fram sine resultater, drøftes temaet i klassen. Som en del av "grupperapportene" bør selve tekstene framføres, gjerne fra Cd-en, men enda bedre om de leses av elevene.

Også andre tekster kan bygges sammen til liknende prosjektarbeid. En kan for eksempel ta for seg personene Gulliver, Robinson, Long John Silver og Robin Hood (ev. også Little John) og presentere dem. Her kan gruppene kanskje finne fram mer stoff om "sin" person for å utvide det bildet som tegnes. Kanskje fins de fire aktuelle bøkene i engelsk utgave i skolens bibliotek eller kan skaffes. Noen av disse tekstene finne på nettet og kan lastes ned på forhånd dersom en ikke har bøkene tilgjengelig. Dette gjelder også andre tekster som er nevnt her.

Det er også mulig å trekke inn helter fra det virkelige liv, f. eks. er Florence Nightingale representert i utvalget på Cd-en.

I utvalget fins det både en historie om Robin Hood (CD) og en reportasje om "Robin Hood Country" (DVD). Med disse som utgangspunkt kan en drøfte myter, legender og sagn om slike helter og eventuelt også dere tilknytning til geografiske steder. Hvor mange av disse heltene har faktisk levd og hvordan er historiene blitt til og hvorfor har de fått slik popularitet?

Det fins mange helteskikkelser som kan trekkes inn i et slikt prosjekt, både historiske og sagnskikkelse og litterære helter. I tekstene i nettopplegget møter vi Rob Roy, Sherlock Holmes, Miss Marple, Sam Spade, Huck Finn, Horatio Nelson og flere. Og hvorfor ikke bringe inn legendene om Kong Arthur og ridderne av det runde bord? I den sammenheng kan en også trekke inn Hal Fosters tegneseriehelt Prince Valiant som er plassert inn som en av Kong Arthurs riddere.

Tekstene i ressurspakken kan også brukes til utvide kjennskapet til enkelte forfattere. Robert Louis Stevenson er i nettekstene representert med et utdrag fra en spøkelseshistorie, og i ressurspakken fins det to utdrag fra *Treasure Island*, etter på CD og ett på DVD. Dessuten er noen korte biografiske opplysninger tatt med i forfatteroversikten til DVDen. Dette kan utvides med tekster fra *Kidnapped*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* og *Travels with a Donkey*.

Det er også mulig å bruke ressurspakken til drøfting av ulike sjangere. Noen av tekstene på Dvd-en er f.eks. hentet fra bøker der dyr er gitt menneskelige trekk og opptrer, tenker og

snakker som mennesker (*The Wind in the Willows* og *Watership Down*) Med disse som utgangspunikt kan en arbeide med denne type litteratur og for eksempel også trekke inn andre bøker; *Winnie the Pooh*, *Jonathan Seagull*, *The Jungle Book* og *101 Dalmatians*.

På Dvd-en fins også to tekster om barn som beveger seg inn i en fantasiverden, *Alice in Wonderland* og *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*. Disse kan danne utgangspunkt for en samtale om denne type litteratur som en også kan utvide ved å ta med *The Hobbit* fra Dvd-en og *Gulliver's Travels* fra Cd-en. Og da er ikke veien lang til moderne fantasilitteratur som *The Lord of the Rings*, og hvorfor ikke ta med superpopulære *Harry Potter*.

Utdraget fra *Robinson Crusoe* kan danne utgangspunkt for en samtale om mennesket og naturen, og den bølgen som var moderne da Robinson ble til. Andre bøker har gjennom tidene behandlet øde-øy-temaet på forkjellige måter, og en kan trekke inn *The Swiss Family Robinson* og *Lord of the Flies*.

I våre dager er Robinson-konseptet igjen populært og har gitt oppgav til flere realityserier med og uten Robinson i tittelen. Det internasjonale radiokonseptet "På en øde øy" erogå  igjen populært, og dette kan brukes i klassen ved at elevene får velge bøker og plater som de vil ta med på en øde øy og så får de fortelle om bøkene og spille noen av platene og begrunne sitt valg.

En kan også ta for seg poesitekstene som fins på Cd-en og la disse danne utgangspunkt for et arbeid med poesi. Verktøyet er brukt på forskjellig måte i tekstene, men i tilnærmet samme hensikt. De kan også sammenliknes med poesitekstene i nettutvalget, f. eks kan diktet *To My Love* sammenliknes med *My Love is a Red Red Rose* og kanskje kan en våge den dristige sammenlikningen mellom hvordan poetene ser verden i de to tekstene *View from Westminster Bridge* og *View from a Wheelchair*.

Vil en bruke tekstene til å ta opp samfunnsspørsmål er dokumentarreportasjene på Dvd-en anvendelige. Mye kan drøftes med utgangspunkt i reportasjen om "A British Farm".
Vil en arbeide med innslaget om britisk presse, er det fint om elevene tar med seg forskjellige engelske aviser og magasiner. Med utgangspunkt i reportasjen og det medbrakte materialet kan en drøfte britisk presse og internasjonal presse i sin alminnelighet.

En helt annen arbeidsmåte er å ta for seg noen av tekstene og la elevene omarbeide dem til dialoger og små samtales som så framføres i klassen.

Lykke til!

**Egil Eikvil**

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## The Crossing

**by Richard Adams**
from *Watership Down*
Chapter 8

The top of the sandy bank was good six feet above the water. From where they sat, the rabbits could look straight ahead upstream, and downstream to their left. Evidently there were nesting holes in the sheer face below them, for as the light grew they saw three or four martins dart out over the stream and away into the fields beyond. In a short time one returned with his back full, and they could hear the nestlings squeaking as he flew out of sight beneath their feet. The bank did not extend far in either direction. Upstream, it sloped down to a grassy path between the trees and the water. this followed the line of the river, which ran straight from almost as far away as they could see, flowing smoothly without fords, gravel shallow or plank bridges.
Immediately below them they lay a wide pool and here the water was almost still. Away to their left, the bank sloped down again into clumps of alder, among which the stream could be heard chattering over gravel. There was a glimpse of barbed wire stretched across the water and they guesses that this must surround a cattle-wade, like the one in the little brook near the home warren.
Hazel looked at the path upstream. "There's grass down there, " he said. "Let's go and feed". They scrambled down the bank and set to nibbling beside the water. Between them and the stream itself stood half-grown clumps of purple loosestrife and fleabane, which would not flower for nearly two months yet. The only blooms were a few early meadow-sweet and the patch of pink butterbur. Looking back it was in fact dotted thickly with martin' holes. There was a narrow foreshore at the foot of the little cliff and this was littered with the rubbish of the colony – sticks, droppings, feathers, a broken egg and a dead nestling or two. The martins were now coming and going in numbers over the water.
Hazel moved close to Fiver and quietly edged him away from the others, feeding as he went. When they were a little way off, and half-concealed by a patch of reeds, he said, "Are you sure we've got to cross the river, Fiver? What about going along the bank one way or the other?"
"No, we need to cross the river, Hazel, so that we can get into those fields – and on beyond them too. I know what we ought to be looking for – a high, lonely place with dry soil, where rabbits can see and hear all round and men hardly ever come. Wouldn't that be worth a journey?"
"Yes, of course it would. But is there such a place?"
"Not near a river – I needn't tell you that. Bur if you cross a river you start going up again, don't you? We ought to be on the top – on the top and in the open."
"But, Fiver I think they may refuse to go much further. And then again, you say all this and yet you say you're too tired to swim?"
"I can rest, Hazel, but Pipkin's in a pretty bad way. I think he's injured. We may have to stay here half the day." Well, let's go and talk to the others. They may not mind staying. It's crossing they're not going to fancy, unless something frightens them into it."
As soon as they had made their way back, Bigwig came across to them from the bushes at the edge of the path.
I was wondering where you'd got to," he said to Hazel. "Are you ready to move on?" "No, I 'm not answered Hazel firmly. "I think we ought to stay here until ni-Frith. That'll give everyone a chance to rest and then we can swim across to those fields.!
Bigwig was about to reply, but Blackberry spoke first. "Bigwig", he said, "why don't you swim over now, and then go out into the field and have a look round? The wood may not stretch very far one way or the other. You could see from there; and then we might know which would be the best way to go."

”Oh well”, said Bigwig rather grudgingly, ”I suppose There’s some sense in that. I’ll swim the embleer* river as many times as you like. Always glad to oblige.”
Without the slightest hesitation, he took two hops to the water, waded in and swam across the deep, still pool, They watched him pull himself out beside a flowering clump of figwort, gripping one of the tough stems in his teeth, shake a shower of drops out of his fur and scutter into the alder bushes. A moment later, between the nut-trees, they saw him running off into the field.
”I’m glad he’s with us.” said Hazel to Silver. Again he thought wryly of the Threarah. ”He’s the fellow to find out all we need to know. Oh, I say, look, he’s coming back already.”
Bigwig was racing beck across the field, looking more agitated than he had at any time since the encounter with Captain Holly. He ran into the water headlong and paddled over fast, leaving an arrow-head ripple on the calm, brown surface. He was speaking as he jerked himself out on the sandy foreshore.
”Well, Hazel, if I were you I shouldn’t wait until ni-Frith. I should go now. In fact, I think you’ll have to.”
”Why?” asked Hazel.
”There’s a large dog loose in the wood.”
Hazel started. ”What?” he said. ”How do you know?”
”When you get into the field you can see the wood sloping down to the river. Parts of it are open. I saw the dog crossing a clearing. It was trailing a chain, so it must have broken loose. It may be on the lendri’s scent, but the lendri will be underground by now. What do you think will happen when it picks up our scent, running from one side of the wood to the other, with dew on it? Come on, let’s get over quickly.”
Hazel felt at a loss. In front of him stood Bigwig, sodden wet, undaunted, single-minded – the very picture of decision. At his shoulder was Fiver, silent and twitching. He saw Blackberry watching him intently, waiting for his lead and disregarding Bigwig's. Then he looked at Pipkin, Huddled into a fold of sand, more panic-stricken and helpless than any rabbit he had ever seen. At this moment, up in the wood, there broke out an excited yelping and a jay began to scold.
Hazel spoke through a kind of light-headed trance. ”Well, You’d better get on, then” he said, ”and anyone else who wants to. Personally, I’m going to wait until Fiver and Pipkin are fit to tackle it.”
”You silly blockhead!” cried Bigwig. ”We’ll all be finished! We’ll –”
”Don't stamp about,” said Hazel. ”You may be heard. What do you suggest then?”
”Suggest? There’s no suggesting to be done. Those who can swim, swim. The others will have to stay here and hope for the best. The dog may not come.”
”I’m afraid that won’t do for me. I got Pipkin into this and I’m going to get him out.”
”Well, you didn’t get Fiver into it, did you? He got you into it.”
Hazel could not help noticing, with reluctant admiration, that although Bigwig had lost his temper, he was apparently in no hurry on his own account and seemed less frightened than any of them. Looking round for Blackberry, he saw that he had left them and was up at the top of the pool, where the narrow beach tailed away into a gravel spit. His paws were half-buried in the wet gravel and he was nosing at something large and flat on the water-line. It looked like a piece of wood.
”Blackberry, ” he said, ”can you come back here a moment?”
Blackberry looked up, tugged out his pawns and ran back.
”Hazel,” he said quickly, ”that’s a piece of flat wood – like that piece that closed the gap by the Green Loose above the warren – you remember? It must have drifted down the river. So it floats. We could put Fiver and Pipkin on it and make it float again. It might go across the river. Can you understand?”
Hazel had no idea what he meant. Blackberry’s flood of apparent nonsense only seemed to draw tighter the mesh of danger and bewilderment. As though Bigwig’s angry impatience, Pipkin’s terror and the approaching dog were

not enough to contend with, the cleverest rabbit among them had evidently gone out of his mind. He felt close to despair.
”Frithrah, yes, I see!” said an excited voice at his ear. It was Fiver. ”Quick, Hazel, don’t wait! Come on, and bring Pipkin!”
It was Blackberry who bullied the stupefied Pipkin to his feet and forced him to limp the few yards to the gravel spit. The piece of wood, hardly bigger than a large rhubarb leaf, was lightly aground. Blackberry almost drove Pipkin on to it with his claws. Pipkin crouched shivering and Fiver followed him aboard.
”Who’s strong?” said Blackberry. ”Bigwig! Silver! Push it out!”
No one obeyed him. All squatted, puzzled and uncertain. Blackberry buried his nose in the gravel under the landward edge of the board and raised it, pushing. The board tipped. Pipkin squealed and Fiver lowered his head and splayed his claws. Then the board righted itself and drifted out a few feet into the pool with the two rabbits hunched upon it, rigid and motionless. It rotated slowly and they found themselves staring back at their comrades.
”Frith and Inlé!” said Dandelion. ”They’re sitting on the water! Why didn't they sink?”
”They’re sitting on the wood and the wood floats, can’t you see? said Blackberry” ”Now we swim over ourselves. Can we start, Hazel?”
During the last few minutes Hazel had been as near to losing his head as he was ever to come. He had been at his wits’ end, with no reply to Bigwig’s scornful impatience except his readiness to risk his own life on company with Fever and Pipkin. He still could not understand what had happened, but at least he realized that Blackberry wanted him to show authority. His head cleared.
”Swim” he said. ”Everybody swim.”
He watched them as they went in. Dandelion swam as well as he ran, swiftly and easily. Silver, too, was strong.
The others paddled and scrambled over somehow and as they began to reach the other side, Hazel plunged. The cold water penetrated his fur almost at once. His breath came short and as his head went under he could hear a faint grating of gravel along the bottom. He paddled across awkwardly, his head tilted high out of the water, and made for the figwort. As he pulled himself out, he looked round among the sopping rabbits in the alders.
”Where’s Bigwig?” he asked.
”Behind you,” answered Blackberry, his teeth chattering.
Bigwig was still in the water, on the other side of the pool. He had swum to the raft, put his head against it and was pushing it forward with heavy thrusts of his back legs. ”Keep still,” Hazel heard him say in a quick, gulping voice. Then he sank. But a moment later he was up again and had thrust his head over the back of the board. As he kicked and struggled, it tilted and then, while the rabbits watched from the bank, moved slowly across the pool and grounded on the opposite side. Fiver pushed Pipkin on to the stones and Bigwig waded out beside them, shivering and breathless.
”I got the idea once Blackberry had shown us,” he said. ”But it’s hard to push it when you’re in the water. I hope it’s not long to sunrise. I’m cold. Let’s get on.”
There was no sign of the dog as they made haste through the alders and up the field to the first hedgerow. Most of them had not understood Blackberry’s discovery of the raft and at once forgot it. Fiver, however, came over to where Blackberry was lying against the stem of a blackthorn in the hedge.
”you saved Pipkin and me, didn’t you?” he said. ”I don’t think Pipkin’s got any idea what really happened; but I have.”
”I admit it was a good idea,” replied Blackberry. ”Let’s remember it. It might come handy again some time.”

## The Never Bird

**by Sir James Matthew Barrie**

The last sounds Peter heard before he was quite alone were the mermaids retiring one by one to their bedchambers under the sea. He was too far away to hear their J doors shut; but every door in the coral caves where they live rings a tiny bell when it opens or closes (as in all the nicest houses on the mainland), and he heard the bells.

Steadily the waters rose till they were nibbling at his feet; and to pass the time until they made their final gulp, 1 he watched the only thing moving on the lagoon. He thought it was a piece of floating paper, perhaps part of r the kite, and wondered idly how long it would take to | drift ashore.

Presently he noticed as an odd thing that it was undoubtedly out upon the lagoon with some definite purpose, for it was fighting the tide, and sometimes winning; and when it won, Peter, always sympathetic to the weaker side, could not help clapping; it was such a gallant piece of paper.

It was not really a piece of paper; it was the Never bird, making desperate efforts to reach Peter on her nest. By working her wings, in a way she had learned since the nest fell into the water, she was able to some extent to guide her strange craft, but by the time Peter recognized her she was very exhausted. She had come to save him, to give him her nest, though there were eggs in it. I rather wonder at the bird, for though he had been nice to her, he had also sometimes tormented her. I can suppose only that, like Mrs Darling and the rest of them, she was melted because he had all his first teeth.

She called out to him what she had come for, and he called out to her what was she doing there; but of course neither of them understood the other's language. In fanciful stories people can talk to the birds freely, and I wish for the moment I could pretend that this was such a story, and say that Peter replied intelligently to the Never bird; but truth is best, and I want to tell only what really happened. Well, not only could they not understand each other, but they forgot their manners.

“I - want - you - to - get - into - the – nest” the bird called, speaking as slowly and distinctly as possible, “and— then - you — can - drift - ashore, but—I - am - too - tired- to — bring - it—any—nearer - so — you — must—try—to -swim - to - it.”

“What are you quacking about?” Peter answered. “Why don't you let the nest drift as usual?”

“I - want - you –“ the bird said, and repeated it all over.

Then Peter tried slow and distinct.
“What - are - you - quacking - about?” and so on.

The Never bird became irritated; they have very short tempers.
“You dunderheaded little jay,” she screamed, “why don't you do as I tell you?”

Peter felt that she was calling him names, and at a venture he retorted hotly:
“So are you!”

Then rather curiously they both snapped out the same remark:
“Shut up!”

“Shut up!”

Nevertheless the bird was determined to save him if she could, and by one last mighty effort she propelled the nest against the rock. Then up she flew; deserting her eggs, so as to make her meaning clear.
Then at last he understood, and clutched the nest and waved his thanks to the bird as she fluttered overhead. It was not to receive his thanks, however, that she hung there in the sky; it was not even to watch him get into the nest; it was to see what he did with her eggs.

There were two large white eggs, and Peter lifted them up and reflected. The bird covered her face with her wings, so as not to see the last of her eggs; but she could not help peeping between the feathers.

I forget whether I have told you that there was a stave on the rock, driven into it by some buccaneers of long ago to mark the site of buried treasure. The children had discovered the glittering hoard, and when in mischievous mood used to fling showers of moidores, diamonds, pearls and pieces of eight to the gulls, who pounced upon them for food, and then flew away, raging at the scurvy trick that had been played upon them. The stave was still there, and on it Starkey had hung his hat, a deep tarpaulin, watertight, with a broad brim. Peter put the eggs into this hat and set it on the lagoon. It floated beautifully.

The Never bird saw at once what he was up to, and screamed her admiration of him; and, alas, Peter crowed his agreement with her. Then he got into the nest, reared the stave in it as a mast, and hung up his shirt for a sail. At the same moment the bird fluttered down upon the hat and once more sat snugly on her eggs. She drifted in one direction, and he was borne off in another, both cheering.

Of course when Peter landed he beached his barque in a place where the bird would easily find it; but the hat was such a great success that she abandoned the nest. It 1 drifted about till it went to pieces, and often Starkey came to the shore of the lagoon, and with many bitter feelings, watched the bird sitting on his hat. As we shall not see | her again, it may be worth mentioning here that all Never ' birds now build in that shape of nest, with a broad brim 1 on which the youngsters take an airing.

Great were the rejoicings when Peter reached the -i home under the ground almost as soon as Wendy, who had been carried hither and thither by the kite. Every boy had adventures to tell; but perhaps the biggest adventure of all was that they were several hours late for bed. This so inflated them that they did various dodgy things to get staying up still longer, such as demanding bandages; but Wendy, though glorying in having them all home again safe and sound, was scandalized by the lateness of the hour, and cried, “o bed, to bed,” in a voice that had to be obeyed. Next day, however, she was awfully tender, and gave out bandages to every one; and they played till bedtime at limping about and carrying their arms in slings.

## Mistress Mary Quite Contrary

**by Frances Hodgson Burnett**
from *The Secret Garden*
Chapter 2

Mary had liked to look at her mother from a distance, and she had thought her very pretty, but as she knew very little of her, she could scarcely have been expected to love her or to miss her very much when she was gone. She did not miss her at all, in fact, and as she was a self-absorbed child she gave her entire thought to herself, as she had always done. If she had been older she would no doubt have been very anxious at being left alone in the world, but she was very young, and as she had always been taken care of, she supposed she always would be. What she thought was that she would like to know if she was going to nice people, who would be polite to her and give her her own way as her Ayah and the other native servants had done.
She knew that she was not going to stay at the English clergyman's house where she was taken at first. She did not want to stay. The English clergyman was poor and he had five children all nearly the same age and they wore shabby clothes and were always quarrelling and snatching toys from each other. Mary hated their untidy bungalow and was so disagreeable to them that after the first day or two nobody would play with her. By the second day they had given her a nickname which made her furious.
It was Basil who thought of it first. Basil was a little boy with impudent blue eyes and a turned-up nose, and Mary hated him. She was playing by herself under a tree, just as she had been playing the day the cholera broke out. She was making heaps of earth and paths for a garden and Basil came and stood near to watch her. Presently he got rather interested and suddenly made a suggestion.

«Why don't you put a heap of stones there and pretend it is a rockery?» he said. «There in the middle,» and he leaned over her to point.
«Go away!» cried Mary. «I don't want boys. Go away!»
For a moment Basil looked angry, and then he began to tease. He was always teasing his sisters. He danced round and round her and made faces and sang and laughed.
Mistress Mary, quite contrary, How does your garden grow? With silver bells, and cockle shells, And marigolds all in a row.
He sang it until the other children heard and laughed, too; and the crosser Mary got, the more they sang «Mistress Mary Quite Contrary»; and after that as long as she stayed with them they called her «Mistress Mary Quite Contrary» when they spoke of her to each other, and often when they spoke to her.
«You are going to be sent home,» Basil said to her, «at the end of the week. And we're glad of it.»
«I'm glad of it, too,» answered Mary. «Where is home?»
«She doesn't know where home is!» said Basil, with seven-year-old-scorn. «It's England, of course. Our grandmamma lives there, and our sister Mabel was sent to her last year. You are not going to your grand-mamma. You have none. You are going to your uncle. His name is Mr. Archibald Craven.»
«I don't know anything about him,» snapped Mary.
«I know you don't,» Basil answered. «You don't know anything. Girls never do. I heard Father and Mother talking about him. He lives in a great, big, desolated old house in the country, and no one goes near him. He's so cross he won't let them, and they wouldn't come if he would let them. He's a hunchback, and he's horrid.»

«I don't believe you,» said Mary; and she turned her back and stuck her fingers in her ears, because she would not listen any more.

But she thought over it a great deal afterward; and when Mrs. Crawford told her that night that she was going to sail away to England in a few days and going to her uncle, Mr Archibald Craven, who lived at Misselthwaite Manor, she looked so stony and stubbornly uninterested that they did not know what to think about her. They tried to be kind to her, but she only turned her face away when Mrs Crawford attempted to kiss her, and held herself stiffly when Mr Crawford patted her shoulder.
«She is such a plain child,» Mrs Crawford said pityingly afterward. «And her mother was such a pretty creature. She had a very pretty manner, too, and Mary has the most unattractive ways I ever saw in a child. The children call her «Mistress Mary Quite Contrary», and though it's naughty of them, one can't help understanding it.»
«Perhaps if her mother had carried her pretty face and her pretty manner oftener into the nursery, Mary might have learned some pretty ways, too. It is very sad, now the poor beautiful thing is gone, to remember that many people never even knew that she had a child at all.»
«I believe she scarcely ever looked at her,» sighed Mrs Crawford. «When her Ayah was dead there was no one to give a thought to the little thing. Think of the servants running away and leaving her all alone in that deserted bungalow. Colonel McGrew said he nearly jumped out of his skin when he opened the door and found her standing by herself in the middle of the room.»
Mary made the long voyage to England under the care of an officer's wife, who was taking her children to leave them in a boarding-school. She was very much absorbed in her own little boy and girl, and was rather glad to hand the child over to the woman Mr Archibald Craven sent to meet her in London. The woman was his housekeeper at Misselthwaite Manor, and her name was Mrs Medlock.

She was a stout woman, with very red cheeks and sharp black eyes. She wore a very purple dress, a black silk mantle with jet fringes on it, and a black bonnet with purple velvet flowers which stuck up and trembled when she moved her head. Mary did not like her at all, but as she very seldom liked people, there was nothing remarkable in that; besides which it was very evident Mrs Medlock did not think much of her.
«My word! she's a plain little piece of goods!» she said. «And we'd heard that her mother was a beauty. She hasn't handed much of it down, has she, ma'am?»
«Perhaps she will improve as she grows older,» the officer's wife said good-naturedly. «If she were not so sallow and had a nicer expression, her features are rather good. Children alter so much.»
«She'll have to alter a good deal,» answered Mrs. Medlock. «And there's nothing likely to improve children at Misselthwaite - if you ask me!»
They thought Mary was not listening because she was standing a little apart from them at the window of the private hotel they had gone to. She was watching the passing buses and cabs and people, but she heard quite well and was made very curious about her uncle and the place he lived in. What sort of place was it, and what would he be like? What was a hunchback? She had never seen one. Perhaps there were none in India.
Since she had been living in other people's houses and had had no Ayah, she had begun to feel lonely and to think queer thoughts which were new to her. She had begun to wonder why she had never seemed to belong to anyone even when her father and mother had been alive. Other children seemed to belong to their fathers and mothers, but she had never seemed to really be anyone's little girl. She had had her servants, and food and clothes, but no one had taken any notice of her. She did not know that this was because she was a disagreeable child; but then, of course, she did not know she was disagreeable. She often thought that other people were, but she did not know that she was so herself.

She thought Mrs Medlock the most disagreeable person she had ever seen, with her common, highly coloured face and her common fine bonnet. When the next day they set out on their

journey to Yorkshire, she walked through the station to the railway carriage with her head up and trying to keep as far away from her as she could, because she did not want to seem to belong to her. It would have made her very angry to think people imagined she was her little girl.
But Mrs Medlock was not in the least disturbed by her and her thoughts. She was the kind of woman who would «stand no nonsense from young ones». At least, that is what she would have said if she had been asked. She had not wanted to go to London just when her sister Maria's daughter was going to be married, but she had a comfortable, well-paid place as housekeeper at Misselthwaite Manor, and the only way in which she could keep it was to do at once what Mr Archibald Craven told her to do. She never dared even to ask a question.
«Captain Lennox and his wife died of cholera,» Mr Craven had said in his short, cold way. «Captain Lennox was my wife's brother and I am their daughter's guardian. The child is to be brought here. You must go to London and bring her yourself.»
So she packed her small trunk and made the journey.
Mary sat in her corner of the railway carriage and looked plain and fretful. She had nothing to read or to look at, and she had folded her thin little black-gloved hands in her lap. Her black dress made her look yellower than ever, and her limp light hair straggled from under her black crepe hat.
«A more marred-looking young one I never saw in my life,» Mrs Medlock thought. (Marred is a Yorkshire word and means spoiled and pettish.) She had never seen a child who sat so still without doing anything; and at last she got tired of watching her and began to talk in a brisk, hard voice.
«I suppose I may as well tell you something about where you are going to,» she said. «Do you know anything about your uncle?»

«No,» said Mary.
«Never heard your father and mother talk about him?»
«No,» said Mary, frowning. She frowned because she remembered that her father and mother had never talked to her about anything in particular. Certainly they had never told her things.
«Humph,» muttered Mrs Medlock, staring at her queer, unresponsive little face. She did not say any more for a few moments, and then she began again.
«I suppose you might as well be told something - to prepare you. You are going to a queer place.»
Mary said nothing at all, and Mrs Medlock looked rather discomfited by her apparent indifference, but after taking a breath, she went on.
«Not but that it's a grand big place in a gloomy way, and Mr Craven's proud of it in his way - and that's gloomy enough, too. The house is six hundred years old, and it's on the edge of the moor, and there's near a hundred rooms in it, though most of them's shut up and looked. And there's pictures and fine old furniture and things that's been there for ages, and there's a big park round it and gardens and trees with branches trailing to the ground - some of them.» She paused and took another breath. «But there's nothing else,» she ended suddenly.
Mary had begun to listen in spite of herself. It all sounded so unlike India, and anything new rather attracted her. But she did not intend to look as if she were interested. That was one of her unhappy, disagreeable ways. So she sat still.
«Well, « said Mrs Medlock. «What do you think of it?»
«Nothing,» she answered. «I know nothing about such places.»
That made Mrs Medlock laugh a short sort of laugh.

«Eh!» she said. «But you are like an old woman. Don't you care?»
«It doesn't matter,» said Mary, «whether I care nor not.»
«You are right enough there,» said Mrs Medlock. «It doesn't. What you're to be kept at Misselthwaite Manor for I don't know, unless because it's the easiest way. He's not going to trouble himself about you, that's sure and certain. He never troubles himself about no one.»

She stopped herself as if she had just remembered something in time.
«He's got a crooked back,» she said. «That set him wrong. He was a sour young man and got no good of all his money and the big place till he was married.»
Mary's eyes turned towards her, in spite of her intention not to seem to care. She had never thought of the hunchback*! being married, and she was a trifle surprised. Mrs Medlock saw this, and as she was a talkative woman, she continued with more interest. This was one way of passing some of the time, at any rate.
«She was a sweet, pretty thing, and he'd have walked the world over to get her a blade o'grass she wanted. Nobody thought she'd marry him, but she did, and the people said she married him for his money. But she didn't - she didn't,» positively. «When she died —»
Mary gave a little involuntary jump.
«Oh, did she die?» she exclaimed, quite without meaning to. She had just remembered a French fairy story she had once read called Riquet a la Houppe. It had been about a poor hunchback and a beautiful princess, and it had made her suddenly sorry for Mr Archibald Craven.
«Yes, she died,» Mrs Medlock answered. «And it made him queerer than ever. He cares about nobody. He won't see people.

Most of the time he goes away, and when he is at Misselthwaite he shuts himself up in the West Wing and won't let anyone but Pitcher see him. Pitcher's an old fellow, but he took care of him when he was a child and he knows his ways.»
It sounded like something in a book, and it did not make Mary feel cheerful. A house with a hundred rooms, nearly all shut up and with their doors locked - a house on the edge of a moor - whatsoever a moor was - sounded dreary. A man with a crooked back who shut himself up also! She stared out of the window with her lips pinched together, and it seemed quite natural that the rain should have begun to pour down in grey slanting lines and splash and stream down the window-panes. If the pretty wife had been alive, she might have made things cheerful by being something like her own mother and by running in and out and going to parties as she had done in frocks «full of lace». But she was not there any more.
«You needn't expect to see him, because ten to one you won't,» said Mrs Medlock. «And you mustn't expect that there will be people to talk to you. You'll have to play about and look after yourself. You'll be told what rooms you can go into and what rooms you're to keep out of. There's gardens enough. But when you're in the house don't go wandering and poking about. Mr Craven won't have it.»
«I shall not want to go poking about,» said sour little Mary; and justsuddenly as she had begun to be rather sorry for Mr Archibald Craven, she began to cease to be sorry and to think he was unpleasant enough to deserve all that had happen to him.
And she turned her face towards the streaming panes of the window of the railway carriage and gazed out at the grey rain-storm which looked as if it would go on for ever and ever. She watched it so long and steadily that the greyness grew heavier and heavier before her eyes and she fell asleep.

## The Mock Turtle story

**by Lewis Carroll**
from *Alice in Wonderland*
Chapter IX

«You can't think how glad I am to see you again, you dear old thing!» said the Duchess, as she tucked her arm affectionately into Alice's, and they walked off together.

Alice was very glad to find her in such a pleasant temper, and thought to herself that perhaps it was only the pepper that had made her so savage when they met in the kitchen. «When I'm a Duchess,» she said to herself (not in a very hopeful tone though), «I won't have any pepper in my kitchen at all. Soup/does very well without — Maybe it's always pepper that makes people hot-tempered,» she went on, very much pleased at having found out a new kind of rule, « and vinegar that makes them sour - and camomile that makes them bitter - and - and barley-sugar and such things that make children sweet-tempered. I only wish people knew that: then they wouldn't be so stingy about it, you know --»

She had quite forgotten the Duchess by this time, and was a little startled when she heard her voice close by her ear. «You're thinking about something, my dear, and that makes you forget to talk. I can't tell you just now what the moral of that is, but I shall remember it in a bit.»

«Perhaps it hasn't one,» Alice ventured to remark.

«Tut, tut, child!» said the Duchess. «Every thing's got a moral, if only you can find it.» And she squeezed herself up closer to Alice's side as she spoke.

Alice did not much like her keeping so close to her; first, because the Duchess was very ugly; and secondly, because she was exactly the right height to rest her chin upon Alice's shoulder, and it was an uncomfortable sharp chin.

However, she did not like to be rude, so she bore it as well as she could. « The game seems to be going on rather better now,» she said,

«Tis so,» said the Duchess: «and the moral of it is --'Oh,'tis love, 'tis love, that makes the world go round!»

«Somebody said,» whispered Alice, «that it's done by everybody minding their own business!»

«Ah, well! It means much the same thing,» said the Duchess, digging her sharp little chin into Alice's shoulder as she added, «and the moral of that is - «Take care of the sense, and the sounds will take care of themselves»»
.
«How fond she is of finding morals in things!» Alice thought to herself.

«I dare say you're wondering why I don't put my arm round your waist,» the Duchess said after a pause: «the reason is , that I'm doubtful about the temper of your flamingo. Shall I try the experiment?»

«He might bite,» Alice cautiously replied, not feeling at all anxious to have the experiment tried.

«Very true,» said the Duchess: «flamingoes and mustard both bite. And the moral of that is - «Birds of a feather flock together»».
«Only mustard isn't a bird,» Alice remarked.

«Right, as usual,» said the Duchess: «what a clear way you have of putting things!»

«It's a mineral, I think,» said Alice.

«Of course it is,» said the Duchess, who seemed ready to agree to everything that Alice said; «there's a large mustard-mine near here. And the moral of that is - «The more there is of mine, the less there is of yours»».

«Oh, I know!» exclaimed Alice, who had not attended to this last remark. «It's a vegetable. It doesn't look like one, but it is.»

«I quite agree with you,» said the Duchess; « and the moral of that is –

«Be what you would seem to be» - or if you'd like it put more simply –

«Never imagine yourself not to be otherwise than what it might appear to others that what you were or might have been was not otherwise than what you had been would have appeared to them to be otherwise»».

«I think I should understand that better,» Alice said very politely, «if I had it written down: but I'm afraid I can't quite follow it as you say it.»

«That's nothing to what I could say if I chose,» the Duchefs replied, in a pleased tone.

«Pray don't trouble yourself to say it any longer than that,» said Alice.

«Oh, don't talk about trouble!»said the Duchess. «I make you a present of everything I've said as yet.»

« A cheap sort of present!» thought Alice. «Fm glad they donpt give birthday presents like that!» But she did not venture to say it out loud.

«Thinking again?» the Duchess asked,with another dig of her sharp little chin.

«I've a right to think,» said Alice sharply, for she was beginning to feel a little worried.

«Just about as much right,» said the Duchess, «as pigs have to fly; and the m—»
But here, to Alice's great surprise, the Duchess's voice died away, even in the middle of her favourite wor/d «moral», and the arm that was linked into hers began to tremble.

Alice looked up, and there stood the Queen in front of them, with her arms folded/frowning like a thunderstorm.

«A fine day, your Majesty !» the Duchess began in a low, weak voice.

«Now, I give you fair warning, » shouted the Queen, stamping on the ground as she spoke; «either you or your head must be off, and that in about hah0 no time! Take your choice !»

The Duchess took her choice, and was gone in a moment.

«Let's go on with the game,» the Queen said to Alice; and Alice was too much frightened to say a word, but slowly followed her back to the croquet ground.

The other guests had taken advantage of the Queen's absence, and were resting in the shade: however, the moment they saw her, they hurried back to the game, the Queen merely remarking that a moment's delay would cost them their lives.

All the time they were playing the Queen never left off quarrelling with the other players, and shouting, «Off with his head!» or «Off with her head!» Those whom she sentenced were taken into custody by the soldiers, who of course had to leave off being arches to do this, so that by the end of half an hour or so there were no arches left, and all the players, except the King, the Queen, and Alice, were in custody and under sentence of execution.

Then the Queen left off, quite out of breath, and said to Alice, « Have you seen the Mock Turtle yet?»
;
«No,» said Alice. «I don’t even know what a Mock Turtle
«It's the thing Mock Turtle Soup is made from,» said the Queen.
«I never saw one, or heard of one,» said Alice.

«Come on, then,» said the Queen, «and he shall tell you his history.»
As they walked off together, Alice heard the King say in a low voice, to the company generally, «You are all pardoned.» «Come, that's a good thing!» she said to herself, for she had felt quite unhappy at the number of executions the Queen had ordered.

They very soon came upon a Gryphon, lying fast asleep in the sun. (If you don’t know what a Gryphon is, look at the picture.) «Up, lazy thing!» said the Queen, «and take this young lady to see the Mock Turtle, and to hear his history. I must go back, and see after some executions I have ordered,» and she walked off, leaving Alice alone with the Gryphon.

Alice did not quite like the look of the creature, but on the whole she thought it would be quite as safe to stay with it as to go after that savage Queen: so she waited.

The Gryphon sat up and rubbed its eyes: then it watched the Queen till she was out of sight: then it chuckled. «What fun!» said the Gryphon, half to itself, half to Alice.

«What is the fun?»said Alice.

«Why, she,» said the Gryphon. «It's all her fancy, that: they never executes nobody, you know. Come on!»

«Everybody says, «Come on!», here,» thought Alice, as she went slowly after it: «I never was so ordered about in all my life, never!»

They had not gone fare before they saw the Mock Turtle in the distance, sitting sad and lonely on a little ledge of rock, and, as they came nearer, Alice could hear him sighing as if his heart would break. She pitied him deeply. «What is his sorrow?» she asked the Gryphon, and the Gryphon answered, very nearly in the same words as before, «It's all his fancy, that: he hasn't got no sorrow, you know. «Come on!»

So they went up to the Mock Turtle, who looked at them with large eyes full of tears, but said nothing.

«This here young lady,» said the Gryphon, «she wants for to know your history, she do.»

«I'll tell it her,» said the Mock Turtle in a deep, hollow tone: «sit down, both of you, and don^t speak a word till I've finished.»

So they sat down, and nobody spoke for some minutes. Alice thought to herself, «I donttt see he can ever finish, if he doesn't begin.» But she waited patiently.

«Once,» said the Mock Turtle at last, with a deep sigh, «I was a real Turtle.»

These words were followed by a very long silence, broken only by an occasional exclamation of «Hjckrrh!» from the Gryphon, and constant heavy sobbing of the Mock Turtle. Alice was very nearly getting up and saying, «Thank you, sir, for your interesting story,» but she could not help thinking there must bee7 more to come, so she sat still and said nothing.

«When we were little,» the Mock ^urtle went on at last, more calmly, though still sobbing^now and then, «we went to school in the sea. The master was an old turtle - we used to call him Tortoise —»

«Why did you call him Tortoise, if he wasn't one?» Alice asked.
«We called him Tortoise because he taught us,» said the Mock Turtle angrily: «really you are very dull!»

«You ought to be ashamed of yourself for asking such a simple question,» added the Gryphon; and then they both sat silent and looked at poor Alice, who felt ready to sink into the earth. At last the Gryphon said to the Mock Turtle, «Drive on, old fellow! Donjat be all day about it!» and he went on in these words: «Yes, we went to school in the sea, though you mayn't believe it —»

«I never said I didn't!» interrupted Alice. «You did,» said the Mock Turtle.

«Hold your tongue!» added the Gryphon, before Alice could speak again. The Mock Turtle went on: «We had the best of educations - in fact, we went on school every day-»

«Fve been to a day-school, too,» said Alice; «you needn't be so proud as all that.»

«With extras?» asked the Mock Turtle a little anxiously. «Yes,» said Alice, «we learned French and music.» «And washing?» said the Mock Turtle. «Certainly not!» said Alice indignantly.

«Ah! then yours wasn't a really good school,» said the Mock Turtle in a tone of great relief. «Now at ours they had at the end of the bill,

«French, music, and washing - extra.»

«You couldn't have wanted it much,» said Alice «living at the bottom of the sea.»

«I couldn't afford to learn it,» said the Mock Turtle with a sigh. «I only took the regular course.»

«What was that?» inquired Alice.

«Reeling and Writhing, of course, to begin with,» the Mock Turtle replied; «and then the different branches of Arithmetic - Ambition, Distraction, Uglification and Derision.»

«I never heard of «Uglification»» Alice ventured to say. «What is it?»
The Gryphon lifted up both its paws in surprise. «What! Never heard of uglifying!»it exclaimed. «You know what to beautify is, I suppose?»

«Yes,» said Alice doubtfully: «it means - to - make -anything - prettier.»

«Well, then,» the Glyphon went on, «if you donut know what to uglify is, you must be a simpleton.»

Alice did not feel encouraged to ask any more questions about it, so she turned to the Mock Turtle, and said, «What else had you to learn?»
«Well, there was Mystery,» the Mock Turtle replied, counting off the subjects on his flappers, «- Mystery, ancient and modern, with Seaography: then Drawling— the Drawling-master was an old conger-eel, that used to come once a week: he taught us Drawling, Stretching, and Fainting in Coils.»

«What was that like?» said Alice.

«Well, I can't show it you myself,» the Mock Turtle said, «I'm too stiff. And the Gryphon never learnt it.»

«Hadn't time,» said the Gryphon: «I went to the Classical master, though. He was an old crab, he was.»

«I never went to him,» the Mock Turtle said with a sigh: « he taught Laughing and Grief, they used to say.»

«So he did, so he did,» said the Gryphon, sighing in his turn; and both creatures hid their faces in their paws.

«And how many hours a day did you do lessons?» said Alice, in a hurry to change the subject.

«Ten hours the first day,» said the Mock Turtle: «nine the next, and so on.»
«What a curious plan!» exclaimed Alice.

«That's the reason they're called lessons,» the Gryphon remarked: «because they lessen from day to day.»

This was quite a new idea to Alice, and she thought it over a little before she made her next remark. «Then the eleventh day must have been a holiday!»

«Of course it was,» said the Mock Turtle.

«And how did you manage on the twelfth?» Alice went on eagerly.

«That's enough about lessons,» the Gryphon interrupted in a very decided tone: «teh1 her something about the games now.»

## Mr. Toad

**by Kenneth Grahame**
from *The Wind in the Willows*
Chapter 6

It was a bright morning in the early part of summer; the river had resumed its wonted banks and its accustomed pace, and a hot sun seemed to be pulling everything green and bushy and spiky up out of the earth towards him, as if by strings.
The Mole and the Water Rat had been up since dawn very busy on matters connected with boats and the opening of the boating season; painting and varnishing, mending paddles, repairing cushions, hunting for missing boathooks, and so on; and were finishing breakfast in their little parlour and eagerly discussing their plans for the day, when a heavy knock sounded at the door.
«Bother!» said the Rat, all over egg. «See who it is, Mole, like a good chap, since you've finished. »
The Mole went to attend the summons, and the Rat heard him utter a cry of surprise. Then he flung the parlour door open, and announced with much importance, «Mr Badger!»
This was a wonderful thing, indeed, that the Badger should pay a formal call on them, or indeed on anybody. He generally had to be caught, if you wanted him badly, as he slipped quietly along a hedgerow of an early morning or a late evening, or else hunted up in his own house in the middle of the wood, which was a serious undertaking.
The Badger strode heavily into the room, and stood looking at the two animals with an expression full of seriousness. The Rat let his egg-spoon fall on the tablecloth, and sat open-mouthed.
«The hour has come!» said the Badger at last with great solemnity.

«What hour?» asked the Rat uneasily, glancing at the clock on the mantelpiece.
«Whose hour, you should rather say,» replied the Badger. «Why, Toad's hour! The hour of Toad! I said I would take him in hand as soon as the winter was well over, and I'm going to take him in hand to-day!»
«Toad's hour, of course!» cried the Mole delightedly. «Hooray! I remember now! We'll teach him to be a sensible Toad!»
«This very morning,» continued the Badger, talking an armchair, «as I learnt last night from a trustworthy source, another new and exceptionally powerful motorcar will arrive at Toad Hall on approval or return. At this very moment, perhaps, Toad is busy arraying himself in those singularly hideous habiliments so dear to him, which transform him from a (comparatively) good-looking Toad into an Object which throws any decentminded animal that comes across it into a violent fit. We must be up and doing, ere it is too late. You two animals will accompany me instantly to Toad Hall, and the work of rescue shall be accomplished.»
«Right you are!» cried the Rat, starting up. «We'll rescue the poor unhappy animal! We'll convert him! He'll be the most converted Toad that ever was before we've done with him!»
They set off up the road on their mission of mercy, Badger leading the way. Animals when in company walk in a proper and sensible manner, in single file, instead of sprawling all across the road and being of no use or support to each other in case of sudden trouble or danger.
They reached the carriage-drive of Toad Hall to find, as the Badger had anticipated, a shiny new motor-car, of great size, painted a bright red (Toad's favourite colour), standing in front of the house. As they neared the door it was flung open, and Mr. Toad, arrayed in goggles, cap, gaiters, and enormous overcoat, came swaggering down the steps, drawing on his gauntleted gloves.

«Hullo! come on, you fellows!» he cried cheerfully on catching sight of them. «You're just $1'time to come with me for a jolly - to come for a jolly - for a - er - jolly —»

His hearty accents faltered and fell away as he noticed the stern unbending look on the countenances of his silent friends, and his invitation remained unfinished.
The Badger strode up the steps. «Take him inside,» he said sternly to his companions. Then, as Toad was hustled through the door, struggling and protesting, he turned to the chauffeur in charge of the new motor-car.
«Fm afraid you won't be wanted to-day,» he said. «Mr. Toad has changed his mind. He will not require the car. Please understand that this is final. You needn't wait.» Then he followed the others inside and shut the door.
«Now, then!» he said to the Toad, when the four of them stood together in the hall, «first of all, take those ridiculous things off!»
«Shan't!» replied Toad, with great spirit. «What is the meaning of this gross outrage? I demand an instant explanations
«Take them off him, then, you two,» ordered the Badger briefly.
They had to lay Toad out on the floor, kicking and calling all sorts of names, before they could get to work properly. Then the Rat sat on him, and the Mole got his motor-clothes off him bit by bit, and they stood him up on his legs again. A good deal of his blustering spirit seemed to have evaporated with the removal of his fine panoply. Now that he was merely Toad, and no longer the Terror of the Highway, he giggled feebly and looked from one to the other appealingly, seeming quite to understand the situation.
«You knew it must come to this, sooner or later, Toad,» the Badger explained severely.

«You've disregarded, all the warnings we've given you, you've gone on squandering the money your father left you, and you're getting us animals a bad name in the district by your furious driving and your smashes and your rows with the police. Independence is all very well, but we animals never allow our friends to make fools of themselves beyond a certain limit; and that limit you've reached.
Now, you're a good fellow in many respects, and I don't want to be too hard on you. I'll make one more effort to bring you to reason. You will come with me into the smoking-room, and there you will hear some facts about yourself; and we'll see whether you come out of that room the same Toad that you went in.»
He took Toad firmly by the arm, led him into the smoking-room, and closed the door behind them.
«That's no good!» said the Rat contemptuously. «Talking to Toad'11 never cure him. He'll say something.»
They made themselves comfortable in arm-chair and waited patiently. Through the closed door they could just hear the long continuous drone of the Badger's voice, rising and falling in waves of oratory; and presently they noticed that the sermon began to be punctuated at intervals by the long-drawn sobs, evidently proceeding from the bosom of Toad, who was a soft-hearted and affectionate fellow, very easily converted - for the time being - to any point of view.
After some three-quarters of an hour the door opened, and the Badger reappeared, solemnly leading by the paw a very limp and dejected Toad. His skin hung baggily about him, his legs wobbled, and his cheeks were furrowed by the tears so plentifully called forth by the Badger's moving discourse.
«Sit down there, Toad,» said the Badger kindly, pointing to a chair. «My friends,» he went on, «I am pleased to inform you that Toad has at last seen the error of his ways. He is truly sorry for his misguided conduct in the past, and he was undertaken to give up motor-cars entirely and for ever. I have his solemn promise to that effect.»

«That is very good news,» said the Mole gravely.
«Very good news indeed,» observed the Rat dubiously, «if you - if only --»
He was looking very hard at Toad as he said this, and could not help thinking he perceived something vaguely resembling a twinkle in that animal's still sorrowful eye.

«There's only one thing more to be done,» continued the gratified Badger. «Toad, I want you solemnly to repeat, before your friends here, what you fully admitted to me in the smoking-room just now. First, you are sorry for what you've done, and you see the folly of it all?»
There was a long, long pause. Toad looked desperately this way and that, while the other animals waited in grave silence. At last he spoke.
«No!» he said a little sullenly, but stoutly; «Tm not sorry. And it wasn't folly at all! It was simply glorious!»
«What?» cried the Badger, greatly scandalized. «You backsliding animal, didn't you tell me just now, in there —»
«O, yes, yes, in there,» said Toad impatiently. «I'd have said anything in there. You're so eloquent, dear Badger, and so moving, and so convincing, and put all your points so frightfully well - you can do what you like, with me in there, and you know it. But I've been searching my mind since, and going over things in it, and I find that I'm not a bit sorry or repentant really, so it's no earthly good saying I am; now, is it?»
«Then you don't promise,» said the Badger, «never to touch a motor-car again?»
«Certainly not!» replied Toad emphatically. «On the contrary, I faithfully promise that the very first motor-car I see, poop-poop! off I go in it!»
«Told you so, didn't I?» observed the Rat to the Mole.

«Very well, then,» said the Badger firmly, rising to his feet. «Since you won't yield to persuasion, we'll try what force can do. I feared it would come to this all along. You've often asked us three to come and stay with you, Toad, in this handsome house of yours; well, now we're going to. When we've converted you to a proper point of view we may quit, but not before. Take him upstairs, you two, and lock him up in his bedroom, while we arrange matters between ourselves.»
«It's for your own good, Toady, you know,» said the Rat the kindly, as Toad, kicking and struggling, was hauled up stairs by his two faithful friends. «Think what fun we shall all have together, just as we used to, when you've quite got over this -this painful attack of yours!»
«We'll take great care of everything for you till you're well, Toad,» said the Mole; «and we'll see your money isn't wasted, as it has been.»
«No more of those regrettable incidents with the police, Toad,» said the Rat, as they thrust him into his bedroom.
«And no more weeks in hospital, being ordered about by female nurses, Toad,» added the Mole, turning the key on him.
They descended the stair, Toad shouting abuse at them through the keyhole; and the three friends then met in conference on the situation.
«It's going to be a tedious business,» said the Badger, sighing. «I've never seen Toad so determined. However, we will see it out. He must never be left an instant unguarded. We shall have to take it in turns to be with him, till the poison has worked itself out of his system.»

One fine morning the Rat, whose turn it was to go on duty, went upstairs to relieve Badger, whom he found fidgeting to be off and stretch his legs in a long ramble round his wood and down his earths and burrows. «Toad's still in bed,» he told the Rat, outside the door. «Can't get much out of him, except «O, leave him alone, he wants nothing, perhaps he'll be better presently, it may pass off in time, don't be unduly anxious,» and so on. Now, you look out, Rat! When Toad's quiet and submissive, and playing at being the hero of a Sunday-school prize, then he's at his artfullest. There's sure to be something up. I know him. Well, now I must be off.»
«How are you to-day, old chap?» inquired the Rat cheerfully, as he approached Toad's bedside.
He had to wait some minutes for an answer. At last a feeble voice replied. «Thank you so much, dear Ratty! So good of you to inquire! But first tell me how you are yourself, and the excellent Mole?»

«O, we're all right,» replied the Rat. «Mole» he added incautiously, «is going out for a run round with Badger. They'll be out till luncheon-time, so you and I will spend a pleasant morning together, and I'll do my best to amuse you. Now jump up, there's a good fellow, and don't lie moping there on a fine morning like this!»

«Dear, kind Rat,» murmured Toad, «how little you realise my condition, and how very far I am from «jumping up» now - if ever! But do not trouble about me. I hate being a burden to my friends, and I do not expect to be one much longer. Indeed, I almost hope not.»
«Well, I hope not, too,» said the Rat heartily. «You've been a fine bother to us ah1 this time, and I'm glad to hear it's going to stop. And in weather like this, and the boating season just beginning! It's too bad of you, Toad! It isn't the trouble we mind, but you're making us miss such an awful lot.»
«I'm afraid it is the trouble you mind, though,» replied the Toad languidly. «I can quite understand it. It's natural enough. You're tired of bothering about me. I mustn't ask you to do anything further. I'm a nuisance, I know.»
«You are, indeed,» said the Rat. «But I tell you, I'd take any trouble on earth for you, if only you'd be a sensible animal.»
«If I thought that, Ratty,» murmured Toad, more feebly than ever, «then I would beg you - for the lasfeharaeter,- was to ~f run under bridges before Toad should sit at ease again in his ancestral Hall.
Meanwhile, Toad, gay and irresponsible, was walking briskly along the high road, some miles from home. At first he had taken bypaths, and crossed many fields, and changed his course several times, in case of pursuit; but now, feeling by this time safe from recapture, and the sun smiling brightly on him, and all Nature joining in a chorus of approval to the song of self-praise that his own heart was singing to him, he almost danced along the road in his satisfaction and conceit.
«Smart piece of work that!» he remarked to himself, chuckling. «Brain against brute force - and brain came out on the top - as it's bound to do. Poor old Ratty! My! won't he catch it when the Badger gets back! A worthy fellow, Ratty, with many good qualities, but very little intelligence and absolutely no education. I must take him in hand some day, and see if I can make something of him.»

Filled full of conceited thoughts such as these, he strode along, his head in the air, till he reached a little town, where .-the sjght of «The Red Lion,» swinging across the road halfway down the main street, reminded him that he had not breakfasted that day, and that he was exceedingly hungry after his long walk. He marched into the inn, ordered the best luncheon that could be provided at so short notice, and sat down to eat it in the coffee-room.
He was about half-way through his meal when an only too familiar sound, approaching down the street, made him start and fall a-trembling all over. The poop-poop! drew nearer and nearer, the car could be heard to turn into the inn-yard and come to a stop, and Toad had to hold on to the leg of the table to conceal his overmastering emotion.
Presently the party entered the coffee-room, hungry, talkative, and gay, voluble on their experiences of the morning and the merits of the chariot that had brought them along so well. Toad listened eagerly, all ears, for a time; at last he could stand it no longer. He slipped out of the room quietly, paid his bill at the bar, and as soon as he got outside sauntered round quietly to the inn-yard. «There cannot be any harm,» he said to himself, «in my only just looking at it!»
The car stood in middle of the yard, quite unattended, the stable-helps and other hangers-on being all at their dinner. Toad walked slowly round it, inspecting, criticizing, musing deeply. «I wonder,» he said to himself presently, «I wonder if this sort of car starts easily ?»
Next moment, hardly knowing how it came about, he found he had hold of the handle and was turning it. As the familiar sound broke forth, the old passion seized on Toad and completely mastered him, body and soul. As if in a dream he found himself, somehow, seated

in the driver's seat; as if in a dream, he pulled the levol and swung the car round the yard and out through the archway; and, as if a dream, all sense of right and wrong, all fear of obvious consequences, seemed temporarily suspended.

He increased his pace, and as the car devoured the street and leapt forth on the high road through the open country, he was only conscious that he was Toad once more, Toad at his best and highest, Toad the terror, the traffic-queller, the Lord of the lone trail, before whom all must give way or be smitten into nothingness and everlasting night. He chanted as he flew, and the car responded with sonorous drone; the miles were eaten up under him as he sped he knew not whither, fulfilling his instincts, living his hour, reckless of what might come to him.

«First-rate!» said the Chairman.
«— So you had better make it a round twenty years and be on the safe side,» concluded the Clerk

«An excellent suggestion!» said the Chairman approvingly. «Prisoner! Pull yourself together and try and stand up straight. It's going to be twenty years for you this tune. And mind, if you appear before us again, upon any charge whatever, we shall have to deal with you very seriously!»
Then the brutal minions of the law fell upon the hapless Toad; loaded him with chains, and dragged him from the Court House, shrieking, praying, protesting; across the market-place, where the playful populace, always as severe upon detected crime as they are sympathetic and helpful when one is merely «wanted,» assailed him with jeers, carrots, and popular catch-words; past hooting school children, their innocent faces lit up with the pleasure they ever derive from the sight of a gentleman in difficulties; across the hollow-sounding draw-bridge, below the spiky portcullis, under the frowning archway of the grim old castle, whose ancient towers soared high overhead; past guardrooms full of grinning soldiery off duty, past sentries who coughed in a horrid sarcastic way, because that is as much as a sentry on his post dare do to show his contempt and abhorrence of crime; up time-worn winding stairs, past men-at-arms in casquet and corselet of steel, darting threatening looks through their vizards; across courtyards, where mastiffs strained at their leash and pawed the air to get at him; past ancient warders, their halberds leant against the wall, dozing over a pasty and a flagon of brown ale; on and on, past the rack-chamber and the thumb-screw-room, past the turning that led to the private scaffold, till they reached the door of the grimmest dungeon that lay in the heart of the innermost keep. There at last they paused, were an ancient gaoler sat fingering a bunch of mighty keys.
«Oddsbodikins!» said the sergeant of police, taking off his helmet and wiping his forehead. «Rouse thee, old loon, and take over from us this vile Toad, a criminal of deepest guilt and matchless artfulness and resource. Watch and ward him with all thy skill; and mark thee well, greybeard, should aught untoward befall, thy old head shall answer for his - and a murrain on both of them!»

The gaoler nodded grimly, laying his withered hand on the shoulder of the miserable Toad, The rusty key creaked in the lock, the great door clanged behind them; and Toad was a helpless prisoner in the remotest dungeon of the best-guarded keep of the stoutest castle in all the length and breadth of Merry England.

## Lucy looks into a wardrobe

**by Clive Staples Lewis**
from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*
Chapter I

«Lucy looks into a wardrobe»
Once there were four children whose names were Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy. This story is about something that happened to them when they were sent away from London during the war because of the air-raids. They were sent to the house of an old Professor who lived in the heart of the country, ten miles from the nearest railway station and two miles from the nearest post office. He had no wife and he lived in a very large house with a housekeeper called Mrs. Macready and three servants. (Their names were Ivy, Margaret and Betty, but they do not come into the story much.)
He himself was a very old man with shaggy white hair which grew over most of his face as well as on his head, and they liked him almost at once; but on the first evening when he came out to meet them at the front door he was so odd-looking that Lucy (who was the youngest) was a little afraid of him, and Edmund (who was the next youngest) wanted to laugh and had to keep on pretending he was blowing his nose to hide it.
As soon as they had said good night to the Professor and gone upstairs on the first night, the boys came into the girls' room and they all talked it over.
«We've fallen on our feet and no mistake,» said Peter. «This is going to be perfectly splendid. That old chap will let us do anything we like.»
«I think he's an old dear,» said Susan.
«Oh, come off it!» said Edmund, who was tired and pretending not to be tired, which always made him bad-tempered. «Don't go on talking like that.»

«Like what?» said Susan, «and anyway, it's time you were in bed.»
«Trying to talk like Mother,» said Edmund, «And who are you to say when I'm to go to bed? Go to bed yourself.»
«Hadn't we all better go to bed?» said Lucy. «There's sure to be a row if we're heard talking here.»
«No there won't» said Peter. «I tell you this is the sort of house where no one's going to mind what we do. Anyway, they won't hear us. It's about ten minutes' walk from here down to that dining-room, and any amount of stairs and passages in between.»
«What's that noise?» said Lucy suddenly. It was a far larger house than she had ever been in before and the thought of all those long passages and rows of doors leading into empty rooms was beginning to make her feel a little creepy.»
«It's only a bird, silly,» said Edmund.
«It's an owl,» said Peter. «This is going to be a wonderful place for birds. I shall go to bed now. I say, let's go and explore to-morrow. You might find anything in a place like this. Did you see those mountains as we came along? And the woods? There might be eagles. There might be stags. There'll be hawks.»
«Badgers!» said Lucy. «Foxes!» said Edmund. «Rabbits!» said Susan.
But when next morning came there was a steady rain falling, so thick that when you looked out of the window you could see neither the mountains nor the woods nor even the stream in the garden.

«Of course it would be raining!» said Edmund. They had just finished breakfast with the Professor and were upstairs in the room he had set apart for them - a long, low room with two windows looking out in one direction and two in another.
«Do stop grumbling, Ed,» said Susan. «Ten to one it'll clear up in an hour or so. And in the meantime we're pretty well off. There's a wireless and lots of books.»

«Not for me,» said Peter; «Fm going to explore in the house.»
Everyone agreed to this and that was how the adventures began. It was the sort of house that you never seem to come to the end of, and it was full of unexpected places. The first few doors they tried led only into spare bedrooms, as everyone had expected that they would; but soon they came to a very long room full of pictures and there they found a suit of armour; and after that was a room all hung with green, with a harp in one corner; and then came three steps down and five steps up, and then a kind of little upstairs hall and a door that led out on to a balcony, and then a whole series of rooms that led into each other and were lined with books - most of them very old books and some bigger than a Bible in a church.
And shortly after that they looked into a room that was quite empty except for one big wardrobe; the sort that has a looking-glass in the door. There was nothing else in the room at all except a dead blue-bottle on the window-sill.
«Nothing there!» said Peter, and they all trooped out again -all except Lucy. She stayed behind because she thought it would be worth while trying the door of the wardrobe, even though she felt almost sure that it would be locked. To her surprise it opened quite easily, and two moth-balls dropped out.
Looking into the inside, she saw several coats hanging up -mostly long fur coats. There was nothing Lucy liked so much as the smell and feel of fur.

She immediately stepped into the wardrobe and got in among the coats and rubbed her face against them, leaving the door open, of course, because she knew that it is very foolish to shut oneself into any wardrobe. Soon she went further in and found that there was a second row of coats hanging up behind the first one. It was almost quite dark in there and she kept her arms stretched out in front of her so as not to bump her face into the back of the wardrobe.
She took a step further in - then two or three steps - always expecting to feel woodwork against the tips of her fingers. But she could not feel it.
«This must be a simply enormous wardrobe!»thought Lucy, going still further in and pushing the soft folds of the coats aside to make room for her. Then she noticed that there was something crunching under her feet. «I wonder is that more moth-balls ?» she thought, stooping down to feel it with her hands. But instead of feeling the hard, smooth wood of the floor of the wardrobe, she felt something soft and powdery and extremely cold. «This is very queer,» she said, and went on a step or two further.
Next moment she found that what was rubbing against her face and hands was no longer soft fur but something hard and rough and even prickly. «Why, it is just like branches of trees!» exclaimed Lucy. And then she saw that there was a light ahead of her; not a few inches away where the back of the wardrobe ought to have been, but a long way off. Something cold and soft was falling on her. A moment later she found that she was standing in the middle of a wood at night-time with snow under her feet and snowflakes falling through the air.
Lucy felt a little frightened, but she felt very inquisitive and excited as well. She looked back over her shoulder and there, between the dark tree-trunks, she could still see the open doorway of the wardrobe and even catch a glimpse of the empty room from which she had set out. (She had, of course, left the door open, for she knew that it is a very silly thing to shut oneself into a wardrobe.)

It seemed to be still daylight there. «I can always get back if anything goes wrong,» thought Lucy. She began to walk forward, crunch-crunch over the snow and through the wood towards the other light.
In about ten minutes she reached it and found it was a lamppost. As she stood looking at it, wondering why there was a lamp-post in the middle of a wood and wondering what to do next, she heard a pitter patter of feet coming towards her. And soon after that a very strange person stepped out from among the trees into the light of the lamp-post.
He was only a little taller than Lucy herself and he carried over his head an umbrella, white with snow. From the waist upwards he was like a man, but his legs were shaped like a goat's

(the hair on them was glossy black) and instead of feet he had goat's hoofs. He also had a tail, but Lucy did not notice this at first because it was neatly caught up over the arm that held the umbrella so as to keep it from trailing in the snow.
He had a red woollen muffler round his neck and his skin was rather reddish too. He had a strange, but pleasant little face, with a short pointed beard and curly hair, and out of the hair there stuck two horns, one o^|ach side of his forehead. One of his hands, as I have said, held the umbrella: in the other arm he carried several brownpaper parcels. What with the parcels and the snow it looked just as if he had been doing his Christmas shopping. He was a Faun.
And when he saw Lucy he gave such a start of surprise that he dropped all his parcels.
«Goodness gracious me!» exclaimed the Faun.

## The Beginning of Things

**by Edith Nesbit**
from *The Railway Children*

THEY WERE not railway children to begin with. I don't suppose they had ever thought about railways except as a means of getting to Maskelyne and Cook's, the Pantomime, Zoological Gardens, and Madame Tussaud's. They were just ordinary suburban children, and they lived with their Father and Mother in an ordinary red-brick-fronted villa, with coloured glass in the front door, a tiled passage that was called a hall, a bath-room with hot and cold water, electric bells, french windows, and a good deal of white paint, and "every modern convenience," as the house-agents say.

There were three of them. Roberta was the eldest. Of course, Mothers never have favourites, but if their Mother had had a favourite, it might have been Roberta. Next came Peter, who wished to be an engineer when he grew up; and the youngest was Phyllis, who meant extremely well.

Mother did not spend all her time in paying dull calls to dull ladies, and sitting dully at home waiting for dull ladies to pay calls to her. She was almost always there, ready to play with the children, and read to them, and help them to do their home-lessons. Besides this she used to write stories for them while they were at school, and read them aloud after tea, and she always made up funny pieces of poetry for their birthdays and for other great occasions, such as the christening of the new kittens, or the refurnishing of the doll's house, or the time when they were getting over the mumps.

These three lucky children always had everything they needed: pretty clothes, good fires, a lovely nursery with heaps of toys, and a Mother Goose wall-paper. They had a kind and merry nursemaid, and a dog who was called James, and who was their very own. They also had a Father who was just perfect—never cross, never unjust, and always ready for a game— at least, if at any time he was not ready, he always had an excellent reason for it, and explained the reason to the children so interestingly and funnily that they felt sure he couldn't help himself.

You will think that they ought to have been very happy. And so they were, but they did not know how happy till the pretty life in Edgecombe Villa was over and done with, and they had to live a very different life indeed.

The dreadful change came quite suddenly.
Peter had a birthday—his tenth. Among his other presents was a model engine more perfect than you could ever have dreamed of. The other presents were full of charm, but the Engine was fuller of charm than any of the others were.

Its charm lasted in its full perfection for exactly three days. Then, owing either to Peter's inexperience or Phyllis's good intentions, which had been rather pressing, or to some other cause, the Engine suddenly went off with a bang. James was so frightened that he went out and did not come back all day. All the Noah's Ark people who were in the tender were broken to bits, but nothing else was hurt except the poor little engine and the feelings of Peter. The others said he cried over it— but of course boys of ten do not cry, however terrible the tragedies may be which darken their lot. He said that his eyes were red because he had a cold. This turned out to be true, though Peter did not know it was when he said it, the next day he had to go to bed and stay there. Mother began to be afraid that he might be sickening for measles, when suddenly he sat up in bed and said:

"I hate gruel—I hate barley water—I hate bread and milk. I want to get up and have something real to eat."

"What would you like?" Mother asked.
"A pigeon-pie," said Peter, eagerly, "a large pigeon-pie. A very large one."
So Mother asked the Cook to make a large pigeon-pie. The pie was made. And when the pie was made, it was cooked. And when it was cooked, Peter ate some of it. After that his cold was better. Mother made a piece of poetry to amuse him while the pie was being made. It began by saying what an unfortunate but worthy boy Peter was, then it went on:

He had an engine that he loved
With all his heart and soul,
And if he had a wish on earth
It was to keep it whole.
One day—my friends, prepare your minds;
I'm coming to the worst—
Quite suddenly a screw went mad,
And then the boiler burst!
With gloomy face he picked it up
And took it to his Mother,
Though even he could not suppose
That she could make another;
For those who perished on the line
He did not seem to care,
His engine being more to him
Than all the people there.
And now you see the reason why
Our Peter has been ill:
He soothes his soul with pigeon-pie
His gnawing grief to kill.
He wraps himself in blankets warm
And sleeps in bed till late,
Determined thus to overcome
His miserable fate.
And if his eyes are rather red,
His cold must just excuse it:
Offer him pie; you may be sure
He never will refuse it.

Father had been away in the country for three or four days. All Peter's hopes for the curing of his afflicted Engine were now fixed on his Father, for Father was most wonderfully clever with his ringers. He could mend all sorts of things. He had often acted as veterinary surgeon to the wooden rocking-horse; once he had saved its life when all human aid was despaired of, and the poor creature was given up for lost, and even the carpenter said he didn't see his way to do anything. And it was Father who mended the doll's cradle when no one else could; and with a little glue and some bits of wood and a penknife made all the Noah's Ark beasts as strong on their pins as ever they were, if not stronger.

Peter, with heroic unselfishness, did not say anything about his Engine till after Father had had his dinner and his after-dinner cigar. The unselfishness was Mother's idea—but it was Peter who carried it out. And needed a good deal of patience, too.

At last Mother said to Father, "Now, dear, if you're quite rested, and quite comfy, we want to tell you about the great railway accident, and ask your advice."
"All right," said Father, "fire away!"
So then Peter told the sad tale, and fetched what was left of the Engine.
"Hum," said Father, when he had looked the Engine over very carefully.
The children held their breaths.
"Is there no hope?" said Peter, in a low, unsteady voice.
"Hope? Rather! Tons of it," said Father, cheerfully; "but it'll want something besides hope—a bit of brazing, say, or some solder, and a new valve. I think we'd better keep it for a rainy day. In other words, I'll give up Saturday afternoon to it, and you shall all help me."
"Can girls help to mend engines?" Peter asked doubtfully.
"Of course they can. Girls are just as clever as boys, and don't you forget it! How would you like to be an engine-driver, Phil?"
"My face would be always dirty, wouldn't it?" said Phyllis, in unemotional tones, "and I expect I should break something."
"I should just love it," said Roberta—"do you think I could when I'm grown up, Daddy? Or even a stoker?"
"You mean a fireman," said Daddy, pulling and twisting at the engine. "Well, if you still wish it, when you're grown up, we'll see about making you a fire-woman. I remember when I was a boy——"
Just then there was a knock at the front door.
"Who on earth!" said Father. "An Englishman's house is his castle, of course, but I do wish they built semi-detached villas with moats and drawbridges."
Ruth—she was the parlour-maid and had red hair—came in and said that two gentlemen wanted to see the master.
"I've shown them into the Library, Sir," said she.
"I expect it's the subscription to the Vicar's testimonial," said Mother, "or else it's the choir holiday fund. Get rid of them quickly, dear. It does break up an evening so, and it's nearly the children's bed-time."
But Father did not seem to be able to get rid of the gentlemen at all quickly.
"I wish we had got a moat and drawbridge," said Roberta; "then, when we didn't want people, we could just pull up the drawbridge and no one else could get in. I expect Father will have forgotten about when he was a boy if they stay much longer."

Mother tried to make the time pass by telling them a new fairy story about a Princess with green eyes, but it was difficult because they could hear the voices of Father and the gentlemen in the Library, and Father's voice sounded louder and different from the voice he generally used to people who came about testimonials and holiday funds.

Then the Library bell rang, and everyone heaved a breath of relief.
"They're going now," said Phyllis; "he's rung to have them shown out."
But instead of showing anybody out, Ruth showed herself in, and she looked queer, the children thought.
"Please'm," she said, "the Master wants you to just step into the study. He looks like the dead, mum; I think he's had bad news. You'd best prepare yourself for the worst, 'm—p'raps it's a death in the family or a bank busted or——"
"That'll do, Ruth," said Mother gently; "you can go."
Then Mother went into the Library. There was more talking. Then the bell rang again, and Ruth fetched a cab. The children heard boots go out and down the steps. The cab drove away, and the front door shut. Then Mother came in. Her dear face was as white as her lace collar, and her eyes looked very big and shining. Her mouth looked like just a line of pale red—her lips were thin and not their proper shape at all.
"It's bed-time," she said. "Ruth will put you to bed."

"But you promised we should sit up late to-night because Father's come home," said Phyllis.
"Father's been called away—on business," said Mother. "Come, darlings, go at once."
They kissed her and went. Roberta lingered to give Mother an extra hug and to whisper:
"It wasn't bad news, Mammy, was it? Is anyone dead— or——"
"Nobody's dead—no," said Mother, and she almost seemed to push Roberta away. "I can't tell you anything to-night, my pet. Go, dear, go now."
So Roberta went.

Ruth brushed the girls' hair and helped them to undress. (Mother almost always did this herself). When she had turned down the gas and left them she found Peter, still dressed, waiting on the stairs.
"I say, Ruth, what's up?" he asked.
"Don't ask me no questions and I won't tell you no lies," the red-headed Ruth replied. "You'll know soon enough."
Late that night Mother came up and kissed all three children as they lay asleep. But Roberta was the only one whom the kiss woke, and she lay mousey-still, and said nothing.
"If Mother doesn't want us to know she's been crying," she said to herself as she heard through the dark the catching of her Mother's breath, "we won't know it. That's all."

When they came down to breakfast the next morning, Mother had already gone out.
"To London," Ruth said, and left them to their breakfast.
"There's something awful the matter," said Peter, breaking his egg. "Ruth told me last night we should know soon enough."
"Did you ask her?" said Roberta, with scorn.
"Yes, I did!" said Peter, angrily. "If you could go to bed without caring whether Mother was worried or not, I couldn't. So there."
"I don't think we ought to ask the servants things Mother doesn't tell us," said Roberta.
"That's right, Miss Goody-goody," said Peter, "preach away."
"I'm not goody," said Phyllis, "but I think Bobbie's right this time."
"Of course. She always is. In her own opinion," said Petei.
"Oh, don't!" cried Roberta, putting down her eggspoon;
"don't let's be horrid to each other. I'm sure some dire calamity is happening. Don't let's make it worse!"
"Who began, I should like to know?" said Peter.
Roberta ma'de an effort, and answered:
"I did, I suppose, but——"
"Well, then," said Peter, triumphantly. But before he went to school he thumped his sister between the shoulders and told her to cheer up.

The children came home to one o'clock dinner, but Mother was not there. And she was not there at tea-time.
It was nearly seven before she came in, looking so ill and tired that the children felt they could not ask her any questions. She sank into an arm-chair. Phyllis took the long pins out of her hat, while Roberta took off her gloves, and Peter unfastened her walking-shoes and fetched her soft velvety slippers for her.
When she had had a cup of tea, and Roberta had put eau-de-Cologne on her poor head that ached, Mother said:
"Now, my darlings, I want to tell you something. Those men last night did bring very bad news, and Father will be away for some time. I am very worried about it, and I want you all to help me, and not to make things harder for me."
"As if we would!" said Roberta, holding Mother's hand against her face.

"You can help me very much," said Mother, "by being good and happy and not quarrelling when I'm away"—Roberta and Peter exchanged guilty glances—"for I shall have to be away a good deal."
"We won't quarrel. Indeed we won't," said everybody. And meant it, too.
"Then," Mother went on, "I want you not to ask me any questions about this trouble; and not to ask anybody else any questions."
Peter cringed and shuffled his boots on the carpet.
"You'll promise this, too, won't you?" said Mother.

"I did ask Ruth," said Peter, suddenly. "I'm very sorry, but I did."
"And what did she say?"
"She said I should know soon enough."
"It isn't necessary for you to know anything about it," said Mother; "it's about business, and you never do understand business, do you?"
"No," said Roberta; "is it something to do with Govern- ; ment?" For Father was in a Government Office.
"Yes," said Mother. "Now it's bed-time, my darlings. And don't you worry. It'll all come right in the end."
"Then don't you worry either, Mother," said Phyllis, "and we'll all be as good as gold."
Mother sighed and kissed them.
"We'll begin being good the first thing to-morrow morning, said Peter, as they went upstairs.
"Why not now'?" said Roberta.
"There's nothing to be good about now, silly," said Peter.
"We might begin to try to feel good," said Phyllis, "and not call names."
"Who's calling names?" said Peter. "Bobbie knows right enough that when I say 'silly,' it's just the same as if I said Bobbie."
"Well," said Roberta.
"No, I don't mean what you mean. I mean it's just a—what is it Father calls it?—a germ of endearment! Good-night."
The girls folded up their clothes with more than usual neatness—which was the only way of being good that they could think of.
"I say," said Phyllis, smoothing out her pinafore, "you used to say it was so dull—nothing happening, like in books. Now something has happened."
"I never wanted things to happen to make Mother unhappy," said Roberta. "Everything's perfectly horrid."

Everything continued to be perfectly horrid for some weeks.
Mother was nearly always out. Meals were dull and dirty. The between-maid was sent away, and Aunt Emma came on a visit. Aunt Emma was much older than Mother. She was going abroad to be a governess. She was very busy getting her clothes ready, and they were very ugly, dingy clothes, and she had them always littering about, and the sewing-machine seemed to whir—on and on all day and most of the night. Aunt Emma believed in keeping children in their proper places. And they more than returned the compliment. Their idea of Aunt Emma's proper place was anywhere where they were not. So they saw very little of her. They preferred the company of the servants, who were more amusing. Cook, if in a good temper, could sing comic songs, and the housemaid, if she happened not to be offended with you, could imitate a hen that has laid an egg, a bottle of champagne being opened, and could mew like two cats fighting. The servants never told the children what the bad news was that the gentlemen had brought to Father. But they kept hinting that they could tell a great deal if they chose —and this was not comfortable.

One day when Peter had made a booby trap over the bathroom door, and it had acted beautifully as Ruth passed through, that red-haired parlour-maid caught him and boxed his ears.
"You'll come to a bad end," she said furiously, "you nasty little limb, you! If you don't mend your ways, you'll go where your precious Father's gone, so I tell you straight!"
Roberta repeated this to her Mother, and next day Ruth was sent away.
Then came the time when Mother came home and went to bed and stayed there two days and the Doctor came, and the children crept wretchedly about the house and wondered if the world was coming to an end.
Mother came down one morning to breakfast, very pale and with lines on her face that used not to be there. And she smiled, as well as she could, and said:
"Now, my pets, everything is settled. We're going to leave this house, and go and live in the country. Such a ducky dear little white house. I know you'll love it."
A whirling week of packing followed—not just packing clothes, like when you go to the seaside, but packing chairs and tables, covering their tops with sacking and their legs with straw.
All sorts of things were packed that you don't pack when you go to the seaside. Crockery, blankets, candlesticks, carpets, bedsteads, saucepans, and even fenders and fire-irons.
The house was like a furniture warehouse. I think the children enjoyed it very much. Mother was very busy, but not too busy now to talk to them, and read to them, and even to make a bit of poetry for Phyllis to cheer her up when she fell down with a screwdriver and ran it into her hand.
"Aren't you going to pack this, Mother?" Roberta asked, pointing to the beautiful cabinet inlaid with red turtleshell and brass.
"We can't take everything," said Mother.
"But we seem to be taking all the ugly things," said Roberta.
"We're taking the useful ones," said Mother; "we've got to play at being Poor for a bit, my chickabiddy."
When all the ugly useful things had been packed up and taken away in a van by men in green-baize aprons, the two girls and Mother and Aunt Emma slept in the two spare rooms where the furniture was all pretty. All their beds had gone. A bed was made up for Peter on the drawing-room sofa.
"I say, this is larks," he said, wriggling joyously, as Mother tucked him up. "I do like moving! I wish we moved once a month."
Mother laughed.
"I don't!" she said. "Good-night, Peterkin."

As she turned away Roberta saw her face. She never forgot it.
"Oh, Mother," she whispered all to herself as she got into bed, "how brave you are! How I love you! Fancy being brave enough to laugh when you're feeling like that!"
Next day boxes were filled, and boxes and more boxes; and then late in the afternoon a cab came to take them to the station.

Aunt Emma saw them off. They felt that they were seeing her off, and they were glad of it.
"But, oh, those poor little foreign children that she's going to governess!" whispered Phyllis. "I wouldn't be them for anything!"

At first they enjoyed looking out of the window, but when it grew dusk they grew sleepier and sleepier, and no one knew how long they had been in the train when they were roused by Mother's shaking them gently and saying:
"Wake up, dears. We're there."
They woke up, cold and melancholy, and stood shivering on the draughty platform while the baggage was taken out of the train. Then the engine, puffing and blowing, set to work again,

and dragged the train away. The children watched the tail-lights of the guard's van disappear into the darkness.

This was the first train the children saw on that railway which was in time to become so very dear to them. They did not guess then how they would grow to love the railway, and how soon it would become the centre of their new life, nor what wonders and changes it would bring to them. They only shivered and sneezed and hoped the walk to the new house would not be long. Peter's nose was colder than he ever remembered it to have been before. Roberta's hat was crooked, and the elastic seemed tighter than usual. Phyllis's shoe-laces had come undone.

"Come," said Mother, "we've got to walk. There aren't any cabs here."
The walk was dark and muddy. The children stumbled a little on the rough road, and once Phyllis absently fell into a puddle, and was picked up damp and unhappy. There were no gas-lamps on the road, and the road was uphill. The cart went at a slow pace, and they followed the gritty crunch of its wheels. As their eyes got-used to the darkness, they could see the mound of boxes swaying dimly in front of them.
A long gate had to be opened for the cart to pass through, and after that the road seemed to go across fields—and now it went downhill. Presently a great dark lumpish thing showed over to the right.
"There's the house," said Mother. "I wonder why she's shut the shutters."
"Who's she?" asked Roberta.
"The woman I engaged to clean the place, and put the furniture straight and get supper."
There was a low wall, and trees inside.
"That's the garden," said Mother.
"It looks more like a dripping-pan full of black cabbages," said Peter.
The cart went on along by the garden wall, and round to the back of the house, and here it clattered into a cobble-stoned yard and stopped at the back door.
There was no light in any of the windows.
Everyone hammered at the door, but no one came.
The man who drove the cart said he expected Mrs. Viney had gone home.
"You see your train was that late," said he.
"But she's got the key," said Mother. "What are we to do?"
"Oh, she'll have left that under the doorstep," said the cart-man; "folks do hereabouts." He took the lantern off his cart and stooped.
"Ay, here it is, right enough," he said.
He unlocked the door and went in and set his lantern on the table.
"Got e'er a candle?" said he.
"I don't know where anything is." Mother spoke rather less cheerfully than usual.
He struck a match. There was a candle on the table, and he lighted it. By its thin little glimmer the children saw a large bare kitchen with a stone floor. There were no curtains, no hearth-rug. The kitchen table from home stood in the middle of the room. The chairs were in one corner, and the pots, pans, brooms and crockery in another. There was no fire, and the black grate showed cold, dead ashes.

As the cart man turned to go out after he had brought in the boxes, there was a rustling, scampering sound that seemed to come from inside the walls of the house.
"Oh, what's that?" cried the girls.
"It's only the rats," said the cart man. And he went away and shut the door, and the sudden draught of it blew out the candle.
"Oh, dear," said Phyllis, "I wish we hadn't come!" and she knocked a chair over.
"Only the rats!" said Peter, in the dark.

## How my shore adventure began

**by Robert Louis Stevenson**
from Treasure Island
Chapter XIII

The appearance of the island when I came on deck next morning was altogether changed. Although the breeze had now utterly ceased, we had made a great deal of way during the night, and were now lying becalmed about half a mile to the south-east of the low eastern coast. Grey-coloured woods covered a large part of the surface. This even tint was indeed broken up by streaks of yellow sandbreak in the lower lands, and by many tall trees of the pine family, out-topping the others - some singly, some in clumps; but the general colouring was uniform and sad. The hills ran up clear above the vegetation in spires of naked rock. All were strangely shaped, and the Spyglass, which was by three or four hundred feet the tallest on the island, was likewise the strangest in configuration, running up sheer from almost every side, and then suddenly cut off at the top like a pedestal to put a statue on.

The Hispaniola was rolling scuppers under in the ocean swell. The booms were tearing at the blocks, the rudder was banging to and fro, and the whole ship creaking, groaning, and jumping like manufactory. I had to cling tight to the backstay, and the world turned giddily before my eyes; for though I was a good enough sailor when there was way on, this standing still and being rolled about like a bottle was a thing I never learned to stand without a qualm or so, above all in the morning, on an empty stomach.

Perhaps it was this -- perhaps it was the look of the island, with its grey, melancholy woods, and wild stone spires, and the surf that we could both see and hear, foaming and thundering on the steep beach — at least, although the sun shone bright and hot, and the shore birds were fishing and crying all around us, and you would have thought any one would have been glad to get to land after being so long at sea, my heart sank, as the saying is, into my boots; and from that first look onward, I hated the very thought of Treasure Island.

We had a dreary morning's work before us, for there was no sign of any wind, and the boats had to be got out and manned, and the ship warped three or four miles round the corner of the island, and up the narrow passage to the haven behind Skeleton Island. I volunteered for one of the boats, where I had, of course, no business. The heat was sweltering, and the men grumbled fiercely over their work. Anderson was in command of my boat, and instead of keeping the crew in order, he grumbled as loud as the worst.

«Well,» he said, with an oath, «it's not for ever.»

I thought this was a very bad sign; for, up to that day, the men had gone briskly and willingly about their business; but the very sight of the island had relaxed the cords of discipline.

All the way in, Long John stood by the steersman and conned the ship. He knew the passage like the palm of his hand; and though the man in the chains got everywhere more water than was down in the chart, John never hesitated once.
«There's a strong scour with the ebb,» he said, «and this here passage has been dug out, in a manner of speaking, with a spade.»

We brought up just where the anchor was in the chart, about a third of a mile from each shore, the mainland on one side, and Skeleton Island on the other. The bottom was clean sand. The plunge of our anchor sent up clouds of birds wheeling and crying over the woods; but in less than a minute they were down again, and all was once more silent.

The place was entirely land-locked, buried in woods, the trees coming right down to high-water mark, the shores mostly flat, and the hilltops standing round at a distance in a sort of amphitheatre, one here, one there.

Two little rivers, or, rather, two swamps, emptied out into this pond, as you might call it; and the foliage round that part of the shore had a kind of poisonous brightness. From the ship, we could see nothing of the house or stockade, for thefe were quite buried among trees; and if it had not been for the chart on the companion, we might have been the first that had ever anchored there since the island arose out of the seas.

There was not a breath of air moving, nor a sound but that of the surf booming half a mile away along the beaches and against the rocks outside. A peculiar stagnant smell hung over the anchorage - a smell of sodden leaves and rotting tree trunks. I observed the doctor sniffing and sniffing, like some one tasting a bad egg.
«I don't know about treasure,» he said, « but I'll stake my wig there's fever here.»
If the conduct of the men had been alarming in the boat, it became truly threatening when they had come aboard. They lay about the deck growling together in talk. The slightest order was received with a black look, and grudgingly and carelessly obeyed. Even the honest hands must have caught the infection, for there was not one man aboard to mend another. Mutiny, it was plain, hung over us like a thundercloud.
And it was not only we of the cabin party who perceived the danger. Long John was hard at work going from group to group, spending himself in good advice, and as for example no man could have shown a better. He fairly outstripped himself in willingness and civility; he was all smiles to every one. If an order were given, John would be on his crutch in an instant, with the cheeriest «Ay, ay, sir!» in the world; and when there was nothing else to do, he kept up one song after another, as if to conceal the discontent of the rest.

Of all the gloomy features of that gloomy afternoon, this obvious anxiety on the part of Long John appeared the worst.

We held a council in the cabin.

«Sir,» said the captain, «if I risk another order, the whole ship'll come about our ears by the run. You see, sir, here it is. I get a rough answer, do I not? Well, if I speak back, pikes will be going in two shakes; if I don't, Silver will see there's something under that, and the game's up. Now, we've only one man to rely on.»
«And who is that?» asked the squire.

«Silver, sir,» returned the captain; «he's as anxious as you and I to smother things up. This is a tiff; he'd soon talk'em out of it if he had the chance, and what I propose to do is give him the chance. Let's allow the men an afternoon ashore. If they all go, why, we'll fight the ship. If they none of them go, well, then, we hold the cabin, and God defend the right. If some go, you mark my words, sir, Silver'11 bring'em aboard again as mild as lambs.»

It was so decided; loaded pistols were served out to all the sure men; Hunter, Joyce, and Redruth were taken into our confidence, and received the news with less surprise and a better spirit than we had looked for, and then the captain went on deck and addressed the crew.

«My lads,» said he, «we've had a hot day, and are all tired and out of sorts. A turn ashore'11 hurt nobody - the boats are still in the water; you can take the gigs, and as many as please may go ashore for the afternoon. I'll fire a gun half an hour before sundown.»

I believe the silly fellows must have thought they would break their shins over treasure as soon as they were landed; for they all came out of their sulks in a moment, and gave a cheer that started the echo in a far-away hill, and sent the birds once more flying and squalling round the anchorage.

The captain was too bright to be in the way. He whipped out of sight in a moment, leaving Silver to arrange the party; and I fancy it was as well he did so. Had he been on deck, he could no longer so much as have pretended not to understand the situation. It was as plain as day. Silver was the captain, and a mighty rebellious crew he had of it.

The honest hands - and I was soon to see it proved that there were such on board - must have been very stupid fellows. Or, rather, I suppose the truth was this, that all hands were disaffected by the example of the ringleaders - only some more, some less; and a few, being good fellows in the main, could neither be led nor driven any further.
It is one thing to be idle and skulk, and quite another to take a ship and murder a number of innocent men.

At last, however, the party was made up. Six fellows were to stay on board, and the remaining thirteen, including Silver, began to embark.

Then it was that there came into my head the first of the mad notions that contributed so much to save our lives. If six men were left by Silver, it was plain our party could not take and fight the ship; and since only six were left, it was equally plain that the cabin party had no present need of my assistance. It occurred to me at once to go ashore. In a jiffy I had slipped over the side, and curled up in the fore-sheets of the nearest boat, and almost at the same moment she shoved off
No one took notice of me, only the bow oar saying, «Is that you, Jim? Keep your head down.» But Silver, from the other boat, looked sharply over and called out to know if that were me; and from that moment I began to regret what I had done.
The crews raced for the beach; but the boat I was in, having some start, and being at once the lighter and the better manned, shot far ahead of her consort, and the bow had struck among the shore-side trees, and I had caught a branch and swung myself out, and plunged into the nearest thicket, while Silver and the rest were still a hundred yards behind.

«Jim, Jim!» I heard him shouting.

But you may suppose I paid no heed; jumping, ducking, and breaking through, I ran straight before my nose, till I could run no longer.

## Fire and Water

**by John Ronald Reuel Tolkien**
from *The Hobbit* chapter XIV

Now if you wish, like the dwarves, to hear news of Smaug, you must go back again to the evening when he smashed the door and flew off in rage, two days before.
The men of the lake-town Esgaroth were mostly indoors, for the breeze was from the black East and chill, but a few were walking on the quays, and watching, as they were fond of doing, the stars shine out from the smooth patches of the lake as they opened in the sky. From their town the Lonely Mountain was mostly screened by the low hills at the far end of the lake, through a gap in which the Running River came down from the North. Only its high peak could they see in clear weather, and they looked seldom at it, for it was ominous and drear even in the light of morning. Now it was lost and gone, blotted in the dark.

Suddenly it flickered back to view; a brief glow touched it and faded.
'Look!' said one. 'The lights again! Last night the watchmen saw them start and fade from midnight until dawn. Something is happening up there.'
'Perhaps the King under the Mountains is forging gold,' said another. 'It is long since he went north. It is time the songs began to prove themselves again.'
'Which king?' said another with a grim voice. 'As like as not it is the marauding fire of the Dragon, the only king under the Mountain we have ever known.'
'You are always foreboding gloomy things!' said the others. 'Anything from floods to poisoned fish. Think of something cheerful!'

Then suddenly a great light appeared in the low place in the hills and the northern end of the lake turned golden. 'The King beneath the Mountain!' they shouted. 'His wealth is like the Sun, his silver like a fountain, his rivers golden run! The river is running gold from the Mountain!' they cried, and everywhere windows were opening and feet were hurrying.
There was once more a tremendous excitement and enthusiasm. But the grim-voiced fellow ran hotfoot to the Master. The dragon is coming or I am a fool!' he cried. 'Cut the bridges! To arms! To arms!'

Then warning trumpets were suddenly sounded, and echoed along the rocky shores. The cheering stopped and the joy was turned to dread. So it was that the dragon did not find them quite unprepared.

Before long, so great was his speed, they could see him as a spark of fire rushing towards them and growing ever huger and more bright, and not the most foolish doubted that the prophecies had gone rather wrong. Still they had a little time. Every vessel in the town was filled with water, every warrior was armed, every arrow and dart was ready, and the bridge to the land was thrown down and destroyed, before the roar of Smaug's terrible approach grew loud, and the lake rippled red as fire beneath the awful beating of his wings.

Amid shrieks and wailing and the shouts of men he came over them, swept towards the bridges and was foiled! The bridge was gone, and his enemies were on an island in deep water—too deep and dark and cool for his liking. If he plunged into it, a vapour and a steam would arise enough to cover all the land with a mist for days; but the lake was mightier than he, it would quench him before he could pass through.
Roaring he swept back over the town. A hail of dark arrows leaped up and snapped and rattled on his scales and jewels, and their shafts fell back kindled by his breath burning and hissing into the lake. No fireworks you ever imagined equalled the sights that night. At the twanging of the bows and the shrilling of the trumpets the dragon's wrath blazed to its height, till he was

blind and mad with it. No one had dared to give battle to him for many an age; nor would they have dared now, if it had not been for the grim-voiced man (Bard was his name), who ran to and fro cheering on the archers and urging the Master to order them to fight to the last arrow.

Fire leaped from the dragon's jaws. He circled for a while high in the air above them lighting all the lake; the trees by the shores shone like copper and like blood with leaping shadows of dense black at their feet. Then down he swooped straight through the arrow-storm, reckless in his rage, taking no heed to turn his scaly sides towards his foes, seeking only to set their town ablaze.

Fire leaped from thatched roofs and wooden beam-ends as he hurtled down and past and round again, though all had been drenched with water before he came. Once more water was flung by a hundred hands wherever a spark appeared. Back swirled the dragon. A sweep of his tail and the roof of the Great House crumbled and smashed down. Flames unquenchable sprang high into the night. Another swoop and another, and another house and then another sprang afire and fell; and still no arrow hindered Smaug or hurt him more than a fly from the marshes.

Already men were jumping into the water on every side. Women and children were being huddled into laden boats in the market-pool. Weapons were flung down. There was mourning and weeping, where but a little time ago the old songs of mirth to come had been sung about the dwarves. Now men cursed their names. The Master himself was turning to his great gilded boat, hoping to row away in the confusion and save himself. Soon all the town would be deserted and burned down to the surface of the lake.

That was the dragon's hope. They could all get into boats for all he cared. There he could have fine sport hunting them, or they could stop till they starved. Let them try to get to land and he would be ready. Soon he would set all the shoreland woods ablaze and wither every field and pasture. Just now he was enjoying the sport of town-baiting more than he had enjoyed anything for years.

But there was still a company of archers that held their ground among the burning houses. Their captain was Bard, grim-voiced and grim-faced, whose friends had accused him of prophesying floods and poisoned fish, though they knew his worth and courage. He was a descendant in long line of Girion, Lord of Dale, whose wife and child had escaped down the Running River from the ruin long ago. Now he shot with a great yew bow, till all his arrows but one were spent. The flames were near him. His companions were leaving him. He bent his bow for the last time.
Suddenly out of the dark something fluttered to his shoulder. He started—but it was only an old thrush. Unafraid it perched by his ear and it brought him news. Marvelling he found he could understand its tongue, for he was of the race of Dale.

'Wait! Wait!' it said to him. The moon is rising. Look for the hollow of the left breast as he flies and turns above you!' And while Bard paused in wonder it told him of tidings up in the Mountain and of all that it had heard.
Then Bard drew his bow-string to his ear. The dragon was circling back, flying low, and as he came the moon rose above the eastern shore and silvered his great wings.

'Arrow!' said the bowman. 'Black arrow! I have saved you to the last. You have never failed me and always I have recovered you. I had you from my father and he from of old. If ever you came from the forges of the true king under the Mountain, go now and speed well!'
The dragon swooped once more lower than ever, and as he turned and dived down his belly glittered white with sparkling fires of gems in the moon—but not in one place. The great bow

twanged. The black arrow sped straight from the string, straight for the hollow by the left breast where the foreleg was flung wide. In it smote and vanished, barb, shaft and feather, so fierce was its flight. With a shriek that deafened men, felled trees and split stone, Smaug shot spouting into the air, turned over and crashed down from on high in ruin.

Full on the town he fell. His last throes splintered it to sparks and gledes. The lake roared in. A vast steam leaped up, white in the sudden dark under the moon. There was a hiss, a gushing whirl, and then silence. And that was the end of Smaug and Esgaroth, but not of Bard.
The waxing moon rose higher and higher and the wind grew loud and cold. It twisted the white fog into bending pillars and hurrying clouds and drove it off to the West to scatter in tattered shreds over the marshes before Mirkwood. Then the many boats could be seen dotted dark on the surface of the lake, and down the wind came the voices of the people of Esgaroth lamenting their lost town and goods and ruined houses. But they had really much to be thankful for, had they thought of it, though it could hardly be expected that they should just then: three quarters of the people of the town had at least escaped alive; their woods and fields and pastures and cattle and most of their boats remained undamaged; and the dragon was dead. What that meant they had not yet realised.

They gathered in mournful crowds upon the western shores, shivering in the cold wind, and their first complaints and anger were against the Master, who had left the town so soon, while some were still willing to defend it.

'He may have a good head for business—especially his own business,' some murmured, 'but he is no good when anything serious happens!' And they praised the courage of Bard and his last mighty shot. 'If only he had not been killed,' they all said, 'we would make him a king. Bard the Dragon-shooter of the line of Girion! Alas that he is lost!'

And in the very midst of their talk a tall figure stepped from the shadows. He was drenched with water, his black hair hung wet over his face and shoulders, and a fierce light was in his eyes.
'Bard is not lost!' he cried. 'He dived from Esgaroth, when the enemy was slain. I am Bard, of the line of Girion; I am the slayer of the dragon!'

'King Bard! King Bard!' they shouted; but the Master ground his chattering teeth.
'Girion was lord of Dale, not king of Esgaroth,' he said. 'In 'the Lake-town we have always elected masters from among the old and wise, and have not endured the rule of mere fighting men. Let "King Bard" go back to his own kingdom—Dale is now freed by his valour, and nothing hinders his return. And any that wish can go with him, if they prefer the cold stones under the shadow of the Mountain to the green shores of the lake. The wise will stay here and hope to rebuild our town, and enjoy again in time its peace and riches.'
'We will have King Bard!' the people near at hand shouted in reply. 'We have had enough of the old men and the money-counters!' And people further off took up the cry: 'Up the Bowman, and down with Moneybags,' till the clamour echoed along shore.

'I am the last man to undervalue Bard the Bowman,' said the Master warily (for Bard now stood close beside him). 'He has tonight earned an eminent place in the roll of the benefactors of our town; and he is worthy of many imperishable songs. But, why O People?'—and here the Master rose to his feet and spoke very loud and clear—'why do I get all your blame? For what fault am I to be deposed? Who aroused the dragon from his slumber, I might ask? Who obtained of us rich gifts and ample help, and led us to believe that old songs could come true? Who played on our soft hearts and our pleasant fancies? What sort of gold have they sent down the river to reward us? Dragon-fire and ruin! From whom should we claim the recompense of our damage, and aid for our widows and orphans?'

As you see, the Master had not got his position for nothing. The result of his words was that for the moment the people quite forgot their idea of a new king, and turned their angry thoughts towards Thorin and his company. Wild and bitter words were shouted from many sides; and some of those who had before sung the old songs loudest, were now heard as loudly crying that the dwarves had stirred the dragon up against them deliberately!

'Fools!' said Bard. 'Why waste words and wrath on those unhappy creatures? Doubtless they perished first in fire, before Smaug came to us.' Then even as he was speaking, the thought came into his heart of the fabled treasure of the Mountain lying without guard or owner, and he fell suddenly silent. He thought of the Master's words, and of Dale rebuilt, and filled with golden bells, if he could but find the men.

At length he spoke again: 'This is no time for angry words, Master, or for considering weighty plans of change. There is work to do. I serve you still—though after a while I may think again of your words and go North with any that will follow me.'

Then he strode off to help in the ordering of the camps and in the care of the sick and the wounded. But the Master scowled at his back as he went, and remained sitting on the ground. He thought much but said little, unless it was to call loudly for men to bring him fire and food.
Now everywhere Bard went he found talk running like fire among the people concerning the vast treasure that was now unguarded. Men spoke of the recompense for all their harm that they would soon get from it, and wealth over and to spare with which to buy things from the South; and it cheered them greatly in their plight. That was as well, for the night was bitter and miserable. Shelters could be contrived for few (the Master had one) and there was little food (even the Master went short). Many took ill of wet and cold and sorrow that night, and afterwards died, who had escaped uninjured from the ruin of the town; and in the days, that followed there was much sickness and great hunger.

Meanwhile Bard took the lead, and ordered things as he wished, though always in the Master's name, and he had a hard task to govern the people and direct the preparations for their protection and housing. Probably most of them would have perished in the winter that now hurried after autumn, if help had not been to hand. But help came swiftly; for Bard at once had speedy messengers sent up the river to the Forest to ask the aid of the King of the Elves of the Wood, and these messengers had found a host already on the move, although it was then only the third day after the fall of Smaug.

The Elvenking had received news from his own messengers and from the birds that loved his folk, and already knew much of what had happened. Very great indeed was the commotion among all things with wings that dwelt on the borders of the Desolation of the Dragon. The air was filled with circling flocks, and their swift-flying messengers flew here and there across the sky. Above the borders of the Forest there was whistling, crying and piping. Far over Mirkwood tidings spread: 'Smaug is dead!' Leaves rustled and startled ears were lifted. Even before the Elvenking rode forth the news had passed west right to the pinewoods of the Misty Mountains; Beorn had heard it in his wooden house, and the goblins were at council in their caves.

'That will be the last we shall hear of Thorin Oakenshield, I fear,' said the king. 'He would have done better to have remained my guest. It is an ill wind, all the same,' he added, 'that blows no one any good.' For he too had not forgotten the legend of the wealth of Thror. So it was that Bard's messenger found him now marching with many spearmen and bowmen; and

crows were gathered thick above him, for they thought that war was awakening again, such as had not been in those parts for a long age.

But the king, when he received the prayers of Bard, had pity, for he was the lord of a good and kindly people; so turning his march, which had at first been direct towards the Mountain, he hastened now down the river to the Long Lake. He had not boats'or rafts enough for his host, and they were forced to go the slower way by foot; but great store of goods he sent ahead by water. Still elves are lightfooted, and though they were not these days much used to the marshes and the treacherous lands between the Forest and the Lake,

their going was swift. Only five days after the death of the dragon they came upon the shores and looked on the ruins of the town. Their welcome was good, as may be expected, and the men and their Master were ready to make any bargain for the future in return for the Elvenking's aid.
Their plans were soon made. With the women and the children, the old and the unfit, the Master remained behind; and with him were some men of crafts and many skilled elves; and they busied themselves felling trees, and collecting the timber sent down from the Forest. Then they set about raising many huts by the shore against the oncoming winter; and also under the Master's direction they began the planning of a new town, designed more fair and large even than before, but not in the same place. They removed northward higher up the shore; for ever after they had a dread of the water where the dragon lay. He would never again return to his golden bed, but was stretched cold as stone, twisted upon the floor of the shallows. There for ages his huge bones could be seen in calm weather amid the ruined piles of the old town. But few dared to cross the cursed spot, and none dared to dive into the shivering water or recover the precious stones that fell from his rotting carcase.

But all the men of arms who were still able, and the most of the Elvenking's array, got ready to march north to the Mountain. It was thus that in eleven days from the ruin of the town the head of their host passed the rock-gates at the end of the lake and came into the desolate lands.

## Milly-Molly-Mandy Goes to the Pictures
**by Joyce Lankester Brisley**

Once upon the time Milly-Molly-Mandy found out there was a moving-picture show every Saturday evening in the next village. (It was the young lady who helped Mrs Hubble in the Baker's shop who told her.)
Milly-Molly-Mandy told Father and Mother and Grandpa and Grandma and Uncle and Aunty directly she got home to the nice white cottage with the thatched roof. Father and Mother and Grandpa and Grandma and Uncle and Aunty thought they might go one Saturday evening for a special treat (with Milly-Molly-Mandy of course), in the red bus that ran between their village and the next.
So one Saturday evening, early, they all put on their hats and coats and walked down though the village to the crossroads (where the red bus always stopped).
As they passed the Moggs's cottage little-friend-Susan was swinging on her swing, and Milly-Molly-Mandy waved to her and said, «Hullo, Susan! We're going in the bus to the pictures!» And little-friend-Susan waved back and said, «We're going next Saturday!» So Milly-Molly-Mandy felt very glad for little-friend-Susan.
As they passed Mr. Blunt's corn-shop Billy Blunt was making himself a scooter in the little garden at the side, and Milly-Molly-Mandy waved to him and said, «Hullo, Billy! We're going in the bus to the pictures!»
And Billy Blunt looked round with a grin and said. «I went last Saturday!» So Milly-Molly-Mandy felt very glad for Billy Blunt.

When they came to the crossroads the red bus was just in sight, and Milly-Molly-Mandy gave a little skip, because it was very exciting.
Then the red bus came close and pulled up, and they all crowded to the steps, Father and Mother and Grandpa and Grandma and Uncle and Aunty and Milly-Molly-Mandy.
But the Conductor put out his hand and said loudly. «Only room for two!»
So they had to decide quickly who should go. Uncle and Aunty wanted Grandpa and Grandma to go, and Grandpa and Grandma wanted Father and Mother to go, and Father and Mother wanted not to go at all ijt they couldn't all go together.
Then Grandpa and Grandma and Uncle and Aunty said, «Milly-Molly-Mandy will be so disappointed if she doesn't see the pictures. You take her, Father and Mother - there'll be room for her on your lap.»
Then the Conductor said, «Hurry up please!» (but quite kindly), so Father and Mother with Milly-Molly-Mandy hurried up into the red bus and squeezed past the other people into the two seats.
And Milly-Molly-Mandy, standing between Father's knees while he got the money out of his pocket, watched Grandpa and Grandma and Uncle and Aunty getting smaller and smaller in the distance, until she couldn't see them any more.
And Milly-Molly-Mandy felt very sorry indeed they weren't coming to the pictures too.
Then Mother said, «Well, Milly-Molly-Mandy, we must enjoy ourselves all we can, or Grandpa and Grandma and Uncle and Aunty will be so disappointed, because they wanted us to enjoy ourselves.»

So Milly-Molly-Mandy cheered up and began to look out of the windows, and at the other people in the bus. Mr Rudge, the Blacksmith, was sitting in the farther corner, and he smiled a nice twinkly smile at Milly-Molly-Mandy, and Milly-Molly-Mandy smiled back. (They couldn't talk because the bus made such a rattly noise.)
Then they came to the next village and got down. The coloured posters outside the place where the picture show was to be looked very exciting, and Milly-Molly-Mandy did wish Grandpa and Grandma and Uncle and Aunty could see them. But she thought she would look

at everything and remember very carefully, so that she could tell them all about it when they got home.
The pictures were lovely! There was a very nice man who rescued a lady just in time (Milly-Molly-Mandy knew he would); and there was a funny man who ran about a lot and fell into a dust-bin, and there was a quite close-up picture of the Prince of Wales, and someone with feathers on his hat, whom Father said was the King (the people clapped a lot, and so did Milly-Molly-Mandy).
The light went out once, and they had to turn up the gas for a little while, till they got it right; and Milly-Molly-Mandy could see where the Blacksmith was sitting. And there was a lady who looked awfully like Aunty over on the other side (only she had a little boy with her), and someone who might easily have been Grandpa. And then the light came again and they turned off the gas, and the picture went on till the end.
Milly-Molly-Mandy was sorry when it was all over. If only Grandpa and Grandma and Uncle and Aunty could have been there it would have been just perfect.
They went out quite close to the lady who looked like Aunty, and she really did look like Aunty, back view.

And then Milly-Molly-Mandy heard Father and Mother talking to someone and exclaiming; and she looked up, and there was Uncle! and Grandpa and Grandma were just behind! And the lady who looked like Aunty turned round, and it was Aunty! And she wasn't with the little boy at all, he belonged to somebody else.
And then Grandpa and Grandma and Uncle and Aunty explained how the lady who lived at the Big House with the iron railings near the crossroads was taking her little girl in their car to the pictures (the same little girl who helped Milly-Molly-Mandy that time when she got stuck up in a tree); and she passed while they were watching the red bus go out of sight, and offered them a lift. So they had a lovely ride, and arrived in time not to miss any of the pictures!
And when Father and Mother and Grandpa and Grandma and Uncle and Aunty and Milly-Molly-Mandy came out into the street, there was the car outside, and the lady who lived at the Big House with iron railings smiled to them all and said, «There's room for four going back, if you don't mind sitting close!»
And the little girl with her said, «There's room for Milly-Molly-Mandy too, isn't there?»
So Father and Mother and Grandpa and Grandma got in, and the little girl and Milly-Molly-Mandy sat on their laps. (Uncle and Aunty went back by the red bus.)
And they had the loveliest possible ride home - just like the wind, and without any rattly noise. Milly-Molly-Mandy only Wished it could have been twice as long.
So altogether it was very nice indeed that there had been only room for two on the bus going in!»

## The Selfish Giant
**by Oscar Fingal O'Flathertie Wills Wilde**

Every afternoon, as they were coming from school, the children used to go and play in the Giant's garden.
It was a large lovely garden, with soft green grass. Here and there over the grass stood beautiful flowers like stars, and there were twelve peach-trees that in the spring-time broke out into delicate blossoms of pink and pearl, and hi the autumn bore rich fruit. The birds sat on the trees and sang so sweetly that the children used to stop their games in order to listen to them. «How happy we are here!» they cried to each other.
One day the Giant came back. He had been to visit his friend the Cornish ogre, and had stayed with him for seven years. After the seven years were over he had said all that he had to say, for his conversation was limited, and he determined to return to his own castle. When he arrived he saw the children playing in the garden.
«What are you doing here?» he cried in a very gruff voice, and the children ran away.
«My own garden is my own garden,» said the Giant; «any one can understand that, and I will allow nobody to play in it but myself.» So he built a high wall all round it, and put up a noticeboard.
TRESPASSERS
WILL BE PROSECUTED
He was a very selfish Giant.

The poor children had now nowhere to play. They tried to play on the road, but the road was very dusty and full of hard stones, and they did not like it. They used to wander round the high wall-when their lessons were over, and talk about the beautiful garden inside.
«How happy we were there,» they said to each other.
Then the Spring came, and all over the country there were little blossoms and little birds. Only in the garden of the Selfish Giants-it was still Winter. The birds did not care to sing in it as there were no children, and the trees forgot to blossom. Once a beautiful flower put its head out from the grass, but when it saw the notice-board it was so sorry for the children that it slipped back into the ground again, and went off to sleep. The only people who were pleased were the Snow and the Frost. «Spring has forgotten this garden» they cried, «so we will live here all the year round.» The Snow covered up the grass with her great white cloak, and the Frost painted all the trees silver. Then they invited the North Wind to stay with them, and he came. He was wrapped in furs, and he roared all day about the garden, and blew the chimney-pots down. « This is a delightful spot,» he said, «we must ask the Hail on a visit.» So the Hail came. Every day for three hours he rattled on the roof of the castle till he broke most of the slates, and then he ran round and round the garden as fast as he could go. He was dressed in grey, and his breath was like ice.
«I cannot understand why the Spring is so late in coming,» said the Selfish Giant, as he sat at the window and looked out at his cold white garden; «I hope there will be a change in the weather.»
But the Spring never came, nor the Summer. The Autumn gave golden fruit to every garden, but to the Giant's garden she gave none. «He is too selfish,» she said. So it was always Winter there, and the North Wind, and the Hail, and the Frost, and the Snow danced about through the trees.

One morning the Giants was lying awake in bed when he heard some lovely music. It sounded so sweet to his ears that he thought it must be the King's musicians passing by. It was really only a little linnet singing outside his window, but it was so long since he had heard a bird sing in his garden that it seemed to him to be the most beautiful music in the world.

Then the Hail stopped dancing over his head, and the North Wind ceased roaring, and a delicious perfume came to him through the open casement. «I believe the Spring has come at last,» said the Giant; and he jumped out of bed and looked out.
What did he see?
He saw a most wonderful sight. Through a little hole in the wall the children had crept in, and they were sitting in the branches of the trees. In every tree that he could see there was a little child. And the trees were so glad to have the children back again that they had covered themselves with blossoms, and were waving their arms gently above the children's heads. The birds were flying about and twittering with delight, and the flowers were looking up through the green grass and laughing. It was a lovely scene, only in one corner it was still Winter. It was the farthest corner of the garden, and in it was standing a little boy. He was so small that he could not reach up to the branches of the tree, and he was wandering all round it, crying bitterly. The poor tree was still quite covered with frost and snow, and the North Wind was blowing and roaring above it. «Climb up! little boy» said the Tree, and it bent its branches down as low as it could; but the boy was too tiny.
And the Giant's heart melted as he looked out. «How selfish I have been!» he said; «now I know why the Spring would not come here. I will put that poor little boy on the top of the tree, and then I will knock down the wall, and my garden shall be the children's playground for ever and ever.» He was really very sorry for what he had done.
So he crept downstairs and opened the front door quite softly, and went out into the garden.

But when the children saw him they were so frightened that they all ran away, and the garden became Winter again. Only the little boy did not run, for his eyes were so full of tears that he did not see the Giant coming. And the Giant stole up behind him and took him gently in his hand, and put him up into the tree. And the tree broke at once into blossom, and the birds came and sang on it, and the little boy stretched out his two arms and flung them round the Giant's neck and kissed him. And the other children, when they saw that the Giants was not wicked any longer, came running back, and with them came the Spring. «It is your garden now, little children,» said the Giant, and he took a great axe and knocked down the wall. And when the people were going to market at twelve o'clock they found the Giant playing with the children in the most beautiful garden they had ever seen.
All day long they played, and in the evening they came to the Giant to bid him good-bye.
«But where is your little companion?» he said: «the boy I put into the tree.» The Giant loved him the best because he had kissed him.
«We don't know,» answered the children; «he has gone away.»
«You must tell him to be sure and come here to-morrow,» said the Giant. But the children said that they did not know where he lived, and had never seen him before; and the Giant^felt very sad.
Every afternoon, when school was over, the children came and played with the Giant. But the little boy whom the Giant loved was never seen again. The Giant was very kind to all the children, yet he longed for his first little friend, and often spoke of him. «How I would like to see him!» he used to say.
Years went over, and the Giant grew very old and feeble. He could not play about any more, so he sat in a huge armchair, and watched the children at their games, and admired his garden. «I have many beautiful flowers,» he said; «but the children are the most beautiful flowers of all.»

One winter morning he looked out of his window as he was dressing. He did not hate the Winter now, for he knew that it was merely the Spring asleep, and that the flowers were resting.
Suddenly he rubbed his eyes in wonder, and looked and looked. It certainly was a marvellous sight. In the farthest corner of the garden was a tree quite covered with lovely white blossoms.

Its branches were all golden, and silver fruit hung down from them, and underneath it stood the little boy he had loved.
Downstairs ran the Giant in great joy, and out into the garden. He hastened across the grass, and came near to the child. And when he came quite close his face grew red with anger, and he said, «Who hath dared to wound thee?» For on the palms of the child's hands were the prints of two nails, and the prints of two nails were on the little feet.
«Who hath dared to wound thee?» cried the Giant; «tell me, that I may take my big sword and slay him.»
«Nay!» answered the child; «but these are the wounds of Love.»
«Who art thou?» said the Giant, and a strange awe fell on him, and he knelt before the little child.
And the child smiled on the Giant, and said to him, «You let me play once in your garden, to-day you shall come with me to my garden, which is Paradise.»
And when the children ran in that afternoon, they found the Giant lying dead under the tree, all covered with white blossoms.

## Om forfatterne

**Richard Adams** *(1920- )* Boka *Watership Down* utkom i 1972 og ble straks enormt populær. Forfatteren beskriver et samfunn som består av kaniner. Boka var begynnelsen på en forfatterkarriere som kom til å avspeile forfatterens helt spesielle evner til å beskrive og fortolke dyrs væremåte. Adams viser innlevelsesevne, han personifiserer og karakteriserer - slik at både voksne og barn kan glede seg over fortellingene hans. Selv har han sagt at han er mer interessert i å fortelle en god historie enn å forfatte stor litteratur. Derfor har han også inntatt en beskjeden plass i det gode litterære selskap i Storbritannia.

**Sir James Matthew Barrie** *(1860-1937)* ble født i Skottland og utdannet seg blant annet ved universitetet i Edinburgh. Han begynte sin skrivekarriere i *Nottinghamshire Journal,* og skrev på slutten av 1880 og begynnelsen av 1890-tallet en rekke fortellinger fra sin hjemby Kirriemuir. I 1891 ble hans første skuespill, *Richard Savage,* oppført i London. I boka *Tommy and Grizel* fra 1900, anes konturene av Peter Pan-skikkelsen som noe senere dukket opp i et skuespill for barn. Peter *Pan* ble oppført første gang i 1904, og var basert på fortellinger som Barrie hadde fortalt for de fem sønnene til et vennepar. Barrie tok guttene til seg da foreldrene døde. Peter Pan skuespillet ble fulgt av fortellingen *Peter Pan in Kensington Gardens* i 1906, og av skuespillet i bokform i 1911. Barrie ble adlet og mottok flere ærespriser.

**Frances Hodgson Burnett** *(1849-1924)* var en produktiv forfatter som skrev en rekke romaner og andre bøker for voksne, men først og fremst huskes hun for sine fortellinger for barn. Særlig kjent er hun for boka om Lille Lord Fauntleroy fra 1886. Kritikere og andre harsellerte over boka, likevel ble den en kjempesuksess og en bestseller gjennom mange år. Den yndige Fauntleroy-dressen i fløyel ble dessuten svært populær i datidens motebilde. Hovedpersonen i boka var inspirert av en av forfatterens sønner. *The Secret Garden* fra 1911 handler om en ulykkelig, foreldreløs, jente - Mary - som finner en forlatt og forfallen hage. Hun setter i gang med å rydde i hagen, slik at den kan få tilbake sin skjønnhet. Da treffer hun sin sykelige fetter Colin. Gjennom arbeidet i hagen finner Mary tilbake livsgleden, og Colin blir frisk. *The Secret Garden* er blitt en av barnelitteraturens klassikere.

**Charles Lutwidge Dodgson** *(1832-1898)* Dodgson ble kjent som forfatter under pseudonymet Lewis Carroll. Han var barn nummer tre i en familie på 13, alle med sterke litterære og kunstne-riske interesser. Barna i familien laget familiemagasiner der Dodgson blant annet demonstrerte sin forkjærlighet for parodiering, for ordspill og oppgaver av forskjellig slag. Senere underviste han i matematikk i Oxford, samtidig som han stadig pønsket ut nye pedagogiske brettspill. Det var en båttur sammen med de unge døtrene til en venn som inspirerte ham til a skrive *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.* Han elsket å fortelle historier for barn, og etter å ha fortalt om Alices fantastiske eventyr, skrev han fortellingen ned, og utga den som bok i 1865. Det som stadig fascinerer, er at boka er så grenseløs i sin fantasi, og at den mangler den moralske pekefingeren, noe som var helt uvanlig på den tiden den ble skrevet. Etter den første Alice boka fulgte *Through the Looking-Glass* og *What Alice found There.*

**Kenneth Grahame** *(1859-1932)* var født i Edinburgh, og etter utdannelse  i Oxford, begynte han som sekretær i Bank of England. Som ung publiserte han blant annet flere essays og fortellinger om barn, familieforhold og oppvekst. Han ble berømt for sine autentiske beretninger fra barndo-men og sine skarpsindige observasjoner av barnesinnet. Bøkene hans fikk suksess både i England og i USA. The *Wind in the Willows* er stort sett basert på godnattfortellinger og brev til sønnen, og var aldri egentlig tenkt utgitt. Boka ble utgitt i 1908. Mottakelsen var avmålt, og det var først noen år senere at fortellingen om Rotta, Muldvarpen, Grevlingen og Padda - og livet ved elva - ble en virkelig klassiker i barneboklitteraturen. Boka ble dramatisert av A. A. Milne i 1929, og har siden blitt oppført mange ganger.

**Clive Staples Lewis** *(1898-1963)* Lewis var kritiker, forfatter og filolog og jobbet som professor i middelalder- og renessanseengelsk ved Universitetet i Cambridge. Han skrev kritiske verk om engelsk litteratur, men ble mer kjent for sine bøker om religiøse og moralske tema. Hans tre science fiction fortellinger er sterkt influert av vennskapet med J. R. R. Tolkien og C. Williams. *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* (1950) var opptakten til en serie på sju Narnia-fortellinger for barn.

**Edith Nesbit** *(1858-1924)* Ektemannens dårlige helse og feilslåtte forretninger gjorde at hun måtte oppgi drømmen om å skrive dikt, og satse på mer matnyttig skriving. For å forsørge familien, begynte hun å skrive populærlitteratur som solgte i store opplag. Hun huskes først og fremst for sine barnebøker, som henter sine motiv fra vanlige hverdagsmiljø, men med et anstrøk av magi. *The Railway Children* utkom i 1906.

**Robert Louis Stevenson** *(1850-1894)* var født i Edinburgh. Planen var at han skulle følge i sin fars fotspor som ingeniør i fyrvesenet, men på grunn av dårlig helse, skiftet han fra ingeniørstudier  til jus. Stevenson ble advokat i 1875, men var fast bestemt på å bli forfatter. På grunn av sin dårlige helse, oppsøkte han stadig nye steder på jakt etter helsebringende omgivelser. Reisene inspirerte skrivelysten, og han publiserte flere noveller og reisebeskrivelser i tidsskrifter. Hans første skjønnlitterære roman, *Treasure Island,* ble utgitt i 1883. Denne boka gjorde ham berømt, og han fulgte opp suksessen med nok en suksess, nemlig The Strange *Case of D. Jekyll and Mr Hyde.* Han bosatte seg til slutt på Samoa, der helsen bedret seg, og han gikk under navnet «tusitala» eller «historiefortelleren».

**John Ronald Reuel Tolkien** *(1892-1973)* var professor i engelsk språk og litteratur i Oxford 1945-59. Han publiserte en rekke filologiske og kritiske studier, og ble berømt for sine eiendommelige bøker, preget av eventyr og myter. Internasjonalt kjent ble han for to verk basert på egen mytologi: *The Hobbit* (1937) og fortsettelsen *The Lord of the Rings* (3 bind, 1954-5). *The Silmarillion (*1977), som  ble publisert etter hans død, ble opprinnelig påbegynt atskillig tidligere, og henter også sitt stoff fra en forunderlig verden bestående av eventyr og myter.

**Joyce Lankester Brisley** *(1896-1978)* var født i Sussex og gikk blant annet på Lambeth Art School i London. Brisley skrev en rekke barnebøker som hun selv illustrerte. De fleste barnebøkene hennes handler om hverdagen til den lille jenta, Milly-Molly-Mandy, som «had a Father, and a Mother, and a Grandpa, and a Grandma, and an Uncle, and an Aunty; og de levde alle lykkelig sammen i et idyllisk, lite, hvitt hus med halmtak. I skikkelsen Milly-Molly-Mandy skapte forfatteren en karakter så sympatisk, så sjenerøs og gladlynt at hun kanskje kan virke som en idealutgave av et normalt barn. Her er en idyllisert verden, uten sorger og bekymringer. Brisleys stil er enkel og uttrykksfull, godt egnet for høytlesing, vokabularet er enkelt. Det er få beskrivelser av de vokse, men forfatterens tegninger kompletterer karaktertegningen

**Oscar Fingal O'Flathertie Wills Wilde** *(1854-1900)* var født i Dublin som sønn av Sir William Wilde, irsk kirurg, og Jane Francesca Elgee, velkjent som skribent og litterær vertinne under navnet Speranza. Wilde var en bemerkelsesverdig student, han studerte både i Dublin og ved Magdalen College, Oxford, der han i 1878 vant en prestisjefylt pris for et av sine dikt. Han ga ut sin første diktsamling i 1881. I 1888 giftet han seg, og senere ga han ut eventyrsamlingen *The Happy Prince and other tales,* som han skrev for sønnene sine. Hans mesterstykke er *The Importance of Being Earnest* fra 1895. En rekke hendelser førte til at Wilde ble fengslet for homoseksuell adferd i 1895. I fengselet skrev han et brev fylt av bitter anklage til Lord Alfred, sin elsker. Deler av det ble publisert i 1905 under tittelen De *Profundis.*

## How Little John Came to the Greenwood

About noon Robin came along a forest path to a wide, swiftly flowing stream which was crossed by a narrow bridge made of a single tree-trunk flattened on the top. As he approached it, he saw a tall yeoman hastening towards him beyond the stream.

'We cannot both cross at once, the bridge is too narrow,' thought Robin, and he quickened his pace meaning to be first over.

But the tall yeoman quickened his pace also, with the result that they each set foot on the opposite ends of the bridge at the same moment.

'Out of my way, little man!' shouted the stranger, who was a good foot taller than Robin. ' That is, unless you want a ducking in the stream!'

'Not so fast, not so fast, tall fellow,' answered Robin. ' Go you back until I have passed - or may be I will do the ducking!'

'Why then,' cried the stranger, waving his staff, Til break your head first, and tip you into the water afterwards !'

'We'll see about that,' said Robin, and taking an arrow well feathered from the wing of a goose, he fitted it to the string.

'Draw that bow string ever so little!' shouted the stranger, 'and I'll first tan your hide with this good staff of mine, and then soak you well in the stream!'

'You talk like a plain ass!' exclaimed Robin scornfully, ' for were I to bend my bow I could send an arrow quite through your proud heart before you could touch me with your staff.'

'If I talk like an ass,' answered the stranger, 'you talk like a coward. You stand there well armed with a good long bow, while I have only a staff and am well out of your reach.'

'I scorn the name of coward,' cried Robin, slipping the arrow back into his quiver and unstringing his bow. 'Therefore will I lay aside my weapons and try your manhood with a quarter-staff such as your own - if you will but wait there until I cut one in the thicket.'

'Here I bide,' said the stranger cheerfully, 'one foot on the bridge - until you are ready for your cold bath in the stream!'

Robin Hood stepped aside to a thicket of trees and chose himself a stout six-foot staff of ground oak, straight and true and strong. Then he returned to the bridge, lopping and trimming his weapon as he came. He flung his bow and quiver on the bank, with his hood and his horn beside them, and set foot again on the bridge, crying merrily:

'Lo what a lusty staff I have, and a tough one at that - the very thing for knocking insolent rogues into the water! Let us fight here on the bridge, so that if one of us goes into the water, there will be no doubt who has won, and the victor may go on his way without a wetting.'

'With all my heart,' said the stranger. 'I scorn to give way.... Have at your head!' So saying, he grasped his staff one quarter of the way from the end, held his other hand ready to grasp it by the middle when using it as a shield, and advanced along the narrow bridge.

Robin came to meet him, nourishing his weapon round his head, and by a quick feint got the end in under his adversary's guard and made his ribs ring with the blow.

'This must be repaid!' cried the stranger. 'Be sure I'll give you as good as I get for so long as I am able to handle a staff - and I scorn to die in your debt when a good crack will pay what I owe!'

Then they went at it with mighty blows, rather as if threshing corn with flails. Presently the sharp rattle and clatter of wood upon wood was broken by a duller crack as the stranger struck Robin on the head, causing the blood to appear; and after that they lashed at each other all the more fiercely, Robin beating down the guard and getting in with blow after blow on shoulders and sides until the dust flew from the stranger's jerkin like smoke.

But on a sudden, with a great cry of rage the stranger whirled up his staff and smote so mightily and with such fury that even Robin could not withstand it, but tumbled head over heels into the stream and disappeared from sight.

'Good fellow, good fellow, where are you now?' shouted the stranger kneeling on the bridge and gazing anxiously down into the water.

' Here I am!' shouted Robin gaily as he pulled himself out by an overhanging hawthorn, 'just floating down the stream - and washing my bruised head as I go! I must acknowledge myself beaten: you're a fine fellow, and a good hitter - and as the day is yours, let there be no more battle between us.'

With that Robin picked up his horn and sounded a shrill blast on it. Then turning to the stranger he said:

'Whither were you hastening in the greenwood? I trust that you can spare time from your business to dine with me? Indeed I insist upon it - and must use force, if persuasion will not bring you!'

'To tell you truth,' answered the stranger, 'I was in search of a man they call Robin Hood - '

## Robinson Crusoe

**by Daniel Defoe**

After I had solaced my mind with the comfortable part of my condition, I began to look round me, to see what kind of place I was in, and what was next to be done; and I soon found my comforts abate, and that, in a word, I had a dreadful deliverance; for I was wet, had no clothes to shift me, nor anything either to eat or drink to comfort me; neither did I see any prospect before me but that of perishing with hunger or being devoured by wild beasts; and that which was particularly afflicting to me was, that I had no weapon, either to hunt and kill any creature for my sustenance, or to defend myself against any other creature that might desire to kill me for theirs. In a word, I had nothing about me but a knife, a tobacco-pipe, and a little tobacco in a box. This was all my provisions; and this threw me into such terrible agonies of mind, that for a while I ran about like a madman. Night coming upon me, I began with a heavy heart to consider what would be my lot if there were any ravenous beasts in that country, as at night they always come abroad for their prey.

All the remedy that offered to my thoughts at that time was to get up into a thick bushy tree like a fir, but thorny, which grew near me, and where I resolved to sit all night, and consider the next day what death I should die, for as yet I saw no prospect of life. I walked about a furlong from the shore, to see if I could find any fresh water to drink, which I did, to my great joy; and having drank, and put a little tobacco into my mouth to prevent hunger, I went to the tree, and getting up into it, endeavoured to place myself so that if I should sleep I might not fall. And having cut me a short stick, like a truncheon, for my defence, I took up my lodging; and having been excessively fatigued, I fell fast asleep, and slept as comfortably as, I believe, few could have done in my condition, and found myself more refreshed with it than, I think, I ever was on such an occasion.

After I had solaced my mind with the comfortable part of my condition, I began to look round me to see what kind of place I was in, and what was next to be done, and I soon found my comforts abate, and that, in a word, I had a dreadful deliverance; for I was wet, had no clothes to shift me, nor anything either to eat or drink to comfort me, neither did I see any prospect before me but that of perishing with hunger, of being devoured by wild beasts; and that which was particularly afflicting to me was that I had no weapon either to hunt and kill any creature for my sustenance, or to defend myself against any other creature that might desire to kill me for theirs. In a word, I had nothing about me but a knife, a tobacco-pipe, and a little tobacco in a box. This was all my provision; and this threw me into terrible agonies of mind, that for a while I ran about like a madman. Night coming upon me, I began, with a heavy heart, to consider what would be my lot if there were any ravenous beasts in that country, seeing at night they always come abroad for their prey.

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When I waked it was broad day, the weather clear, and the storm abated, so that the sea did not rage and swell as before. But that which surprised me most was, that the ship was lifted off in the night from the sand where she lay, by the swelling of the tide, and was driven up almost as far as the rock which I first mentioned, where I had been so bruised by the dashing me against it. This being within about a mile from the shore where I was, and the ship seeming to stand upright still, I wished myself on board, that, at least, I might have some necessary things for my use.

When I came down from my apartment in the tree I looked about me again, and the first thing I found was the boat, which lay as the wind and the sea had tossed her up upon the land, about two miles on my right hand. I walked as far as I could upon the shore to have got to her, but found a neck or inlet of water between me and the boat, which was about half a mile broad; so I came back for the present, being more intent upon getting at the ship, where I hoped to find something for my present subsistence.

# Gulliver's Travels
**by Jonathan Swift**

On the 16th Day of June 1703 a Boy on the Top-mast discovered Land. On the 17th we came in full View of a great Island or Continent (for we knew not whether) on the South-side whereof was a small Neck of Land jutting out into the Sea, and a Creek too shallow to hold a Ship of above one hundred Tuns. We cast Anchor within a League of this Creek, and our Captain sent a dozen of his Men well armed in the Long Boat, with Vessels for Water if any could be found. I desired his leave to go with them, that I might see the Country, and make what Discoveries I could. When we came to Land we saw no River or Spring, nor any sign of Inhabitants. Our Men therefore wander'd on the Shore to find out some fresh Water near the Sea, and I walked alone about a mile on the other Side, where I observed the Country all barren and rocky. I now began to be weary, and seeing nothing to entertain my Curiosity, I returned gently down towards the Creek; and the Sea being full in my View, I saw our Men already got into the Boat, and rowing for Life to the Ship. I was going to hollow after them, although it had been to little purpose, when I observed a huge Creature walking after them in the Sea, as fast as he could: He waded not much deeper than his Knees, and took prodigious strides: But our Men had the start of him half a League, and the Sea thereabouts being full of sharp-pointed rocks, the Monster was not able to overtake the Boat. This I was afterwards told, for I durst not stay to see the Issue of that Adventure; but ran as fast as I could the way I first went; and then climbed up a steep Hill, which gave me some Prospect of the Country. I found it fully cultivated; but that which first surprized me was the Length of the Grass, which in those Grounds that seemed to be kept for hay, was above twenty foot high.

I fell into a high Road, for so I took it to be, though it served to the Inhabitants only as a foot Path through a Field of Barley. Here I walked on for some time, but could see little on either Side, it being now near Harvest, and the Corn rising at least forty foot. I was an hour walking to the end of this Field, which was fenced in with a Hedge of at least one hundred and twenty foot high, and the Trees so lofty that I could make no Computation of their Altitude. There was a Stile to pass from this Field into the next. It had four Steps, and a Stone to cross over when you came to the uppermost. It was impossible for me to climb this Stile, because every Step was six Foot high, and the upper Stone above twenty. I was endeavouring to find some Gap in the Hedge, when I discovered one of the Inhabitants in the next Field, advancing towards the Stile, of the same Size with him whom I saw in the Sea, pursuing our Boat. He appeared as tall as an ordinary Spire-steeple, and took about ten Yards at every Stride, as near as I could guess. I was struck with the utmost Fear and Astonishment, and ran to hide myself in the Corn, from whence I saw him at the top of the Style, looking back into the next Field on the right hand, and heard him call in a Voice many degrees louder than a speaking Trumpet; but the Noise was so high in the Air, that at first I certainly thought it was thunder.

Whereupon, seven Monsters like himself came towards him with Reaping-hooks in their Hands, each Hook about the size of six Scythes. These People were not so well clad as the first, whose Servants or Labourers they seemed to be: For upon some Words he spoke, they went to reap the Corn in the Field where I lay. I kept from them at as great a distance as I could, but was forced to move with extreme Difficulty, for the Stalks of the Corn were sometimes not above a Foot distant, so that I could hardly squeeze my Body betwix them. However, I made a shift to go forward till I came to a part of the Field where the Corn had been laid by the Rain and Wind. Here it was impossible for me to advance a step; for the Stalks were so interwoven that I could not creep thorough, and the Beards of the fallen Ears so strong and pointed that they pierced through my Cloaths into my Flesh. At the same time I heard the Reapers not above an hundred Yards behind me. Being quite dispirited with Toil, and wholly overcome by Grief and Despair, I lay down between two Ridges, and heartily

wished I might there end my Days. I bemoaned my desolate Widow, and Fatherless Children. I lamented my own Folly and Wilfulness in attempting a second Voyage against the Advice of all my Friends and Relations. In this terrible Agitation of Mind I could not forbear thinking of Lilliput, whose Inhabitants looked upon me as the greatest Prodigy that ever appeared in the World; Where I was able to draw an Imperial Fleet in my Hand, and perform those other Actions which will be recorded forever in the Chronicles of that Empire, while Posterity shall hardly believe them, although attested by Millions. I reflected what a Mortification it must prove to me to appear as inconsiderable in this Nation as one single Lilliputian would be among us. But this I conceived was to be the least of my Misfortunes: For as human Creatures are observed to be more savage and cruel in Proportion to their Bulk, what could I expect but to be a Morsel in the Mouth of the first among these enormous Barbarians that should happen to seize me? Undoubtedly Philosophers are in the right when they tell us, that nothing is great or little otherwise than by Comparison. It might have pleased Fortune to let the Lilliputians find some Nation, where the People were as diminutive with respect to them, as they were to me. And who knows but that even this prodigious Race of Mortals might be equally overmatched in some distant part of the World, whereof we have yet no Discovery?

# Treasure Island
**by Robert Louis Stevenson**

Long John's eyes burned in his head as he took the chart, but by the fresh look of the paper I knew he was doomed to disappointment. This was not the map we found in Billy Bones's chest, but an accurate copy, complete in all things--names and heights and soundings--with the single exception of the red crosses and the written notes. Sharp as must have been his annoyance, Silver had the strength of mind to hide it.

"Yes, sir," said he, "this is the spot, to be sure, and very prettily drawed out. Who might have done that, I wonder? The pirates were too ignorant, I reckon. Aye, here it is: 'Capt. Kidd's Anchorage'--just the name my shipmate called it. There's a strong current runs along the south, and then away nor'ard up the west coast. Right you was, sir," says he, "to haul your wind and keep the weather of the island. Leastways, if such was your intention as to enter and careen, and there ain't no better place for that in these waters."

"Thank you, my man," says Captain Smollett. "I'll ask you later on to give us a help. You may go."

I was surprised at the coolness with which John avowed his knowledge of the island, and I own I was half- frightened when I saw him drawing nearer to myself. He did not know, to be sure, that I had overheard his council from the apple barrel, and yet I had by this time taken such a horror of his cruelty, duplicity, and power that I could scarce conceal a shudder when he laid his hand upon my arm.

"Ah," says he, "this here is a sweet spot, this island-- a sweet spot for a lad to get ashore on. You'll bathe, and you'll climb trees, and you'll hunt goats, you will; and you'll get aloft on them hills like a goat yourself. Why, it makes me young again. I was going to forget my timber leg, I was. It's a pleasant thing to be young and have ten toes, and you may lay to that. When you want to go a bit of exploring, you just ask old John, and he'll put up a snack for you to take along."

And clapping me in the friendliest way upon the shoulder, he hobbled off forward and went below.

## Five ways to Kill a Man
**by Edwin Brock**

There are many cumbersome ways to kill a man
You can make him carry a plank of wood
To the top of a hill and nail him to it. To do this
properly you require a crowd of people
wearing sandals, a cock that crows, a cloak
to dissect, a sponge, some vinegar and one
man to hammer the nails home.

Or you can take a length of steel,
Shaped and chased in a traditional way,
and attempt to pierce the metal cage he wears.
But for this you need white horses,
English trees, men with bows and arrows,
at least two flags, a prince and a
castle to hold your banquet in.

Dispensing with nobility, you may, if the wind
allows, blow gas at him. But then you need
a mile of mud sliced through with ditches,
not to mention black boots, bomb craters,
more mud, a plague of rats, a dozen songs
and some round hats made of steel.

In an age of aeroplanes, you may fly
miles above your victim and dispose of him by
pressing one small switch. All you then
require is an ocean to separate you, two
systems of government, a nation's scientists,
some factories, a psychopath and
land that no-one needs for several years.

These are, as I began, cumbersome ways
To kill a man. Simpler, direct, and much more neat
is to see that he is living somewhere in the middle
of the twentieth century, and leave him there.

## The Barrack Hospital, Scutari, Uth November 1854

Dear Dr.Bowman,

I Wish I had time, I could write you a letter dear to a surgeon's heart. I am as good as the Medical Times. You can have little idea, sitting at home with your successful practice, of the horror and misery of operating on these wounded and exhausted men in a military hospital. I assure you a London hospital is a garden of flowers to it. We have four miles of beds and not 18 inches between them. The wounded are lying up to my door and we are landing 544 tonight, We are lucky in our Medical Heads - two are brutes and four are angels, for this is work which makes devils or angels of men and women too. As for the assistants, they are all cubs who, while a man is being called from their dinners - but unlicked cubs grow into good old bears, though I don't know how. You will not believe this but I rank as a Brigader General in the Army because the 40 British females I have with me are more trouble than 4,000 men.

As I went on my night rounds amongst the newly wounded that first night, there was not one murmur, one groan, the strictest discipline. The most absolute silence and quiet prevailed, only the steps of the sentry. I heard one man say "I was dreaming of my friends at home" and another said "I was thinking of them". The poor fellows bear pain and mutilation with unshrinking heroism which is really super-human. In all our corridor I think we have not an average of three limbs per man. We have fever and gangrene - we are steeped up to our necks in blood. And yet in the midst of this appalling horror there is good and I can truly say, like St. Peter, "It is good for us to be here"./We are getting on nicely in many ways, they were so glad to see us. The Senior Chaplain is a sensible man which is a remarkable Providence. If you ever see Mr.Whitmore the Apothecary at St.Thomas's will you tell him of the nurses he sent me. Mrs .Roberts is a treasure;
Mrs.Drake is worth her weight in gold; the other four are not fit to look after themselves but may do better by' and by if I can convince them of the absolute necessity of discipline. We hear there was another engagement on the 8th. More wounded are coming down on us. This is only the beginning.

Florence Nightingale

## The Wound
**by Ted Hughes**

Look at the facts. There we were. Three of us. Three. Not four, not sixty. But three. It was an old farmhouse. Instead of the kitchen we now had a burned-out tank with men hanging down like smoking Christmas trimmings-stopped by this hand. Instead of roof we had sky, full of ghosts just beginning to smell. Instead of floor we had mud and the remnants of friends. Instead of a view we had quag, leafless quagy Between three of us + two Lewis guns./No food. Plenty of ammo. No food. Rain battering down. Three full-utility fighting men, unscratched. I alone, I alone must have accounted for well over well, say at a guess, four hundred of the enemy. Don't stare. Count it up. One, two three, you, you and you - bang, bang, bang - four hundred. It takes time. It takes a kind of care. All this time no food. How did we fuel all this personal zest? Were we- to be wasted, starved-put under not a new wave of the enemy, reseating formidably, but a miserable hermetic pang in the gut. Principles. Principles came to our aid. Imagine. These strong lads underfoot - sacks of home-fed weren't they? Oh now, now, now. When you've shot one man into individual bite-size pieces, no ancient predjuce remains whole - everything's holes, anything's holy, if it serves. They served. We served them. Why what would their mother’s think, us leaving their boys trodden under that five square yards of undistinguished terrain in neglected postures? Better that we say: "Lady, I took your son into my own blood and brought him back alive though, alas, killed, but alive...." At the last ditch- and it was a ditch and it was the last - with our guns burning a hopeful circle of survival - for us- like a gas-ring, round us, and the enemy, unnumbered, cluthed at the slippery clouds and belly-flopped into the quag, well, look, I'll give you the facts. We cut up those dead lads of course and ate them raw, and as if all that to lie right in the next wave of not men. They'd got fed up sending men into that porridge. No, tanks , we got next, tanks in waves. Crawling at us, sawing away at us and fuming and cursing, and at other blokes too you know, we weren't alone quite in this war. Have you ladies ever seen a tank head on, waddling at you, spraying you with red-hot zinc dust and flying earth? No I know haven't. Three of us. Flesh and blood. What could we do? Surrender? How? Wave our vests? They were black. So how did we end it? How did we go under? In what way did we die? Joe Moss went first. He jumped erect in our pit and started blazing away blindly like a roman candle and that was an expression of his youth rather than of his good sense. But of course he hadn't stood like that for ten seconds, when he went suddenly all calm and still and philosophical- you could see in a flash his face had changed completely. He held his arm up to show that the hand had vanished. What do you expect? I went next. I wasn't so premature as Moss, but I didn't mourn him long. While he was still moving, a shell hit me here, on the point of the chin. You couldn't see me for mud.

## England’s Heroes
**by John Pudney**

They sleep beyond England's foam.
But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the night.
As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain,
As the stars that are starry in the time of our
darkness. ....

## An Irish Airman Foresees His Death
**by W.B. Yeats**

I know that I shall meet my fate
Somewhere among the clouds above;
Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;
My country is Kiltartan Cross,
My countrymen are Kiltartan poor,
No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave them happier than before.
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public men, norcheering crowds,
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove me to this tumult in the clouds;
I balanced all, brought all to mind,
The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.

## Tomorrow belongs to me

**by J. Kander, Fred Ebb**

The sun on the meadow is summery warm,
The stag in the forest runs free
But gathered together to greet the storm
Tomorrow belongs to me.

The branch of the linden is leafy and green
The Rhine gives its gold to the sea.
But somewhere a glory awaits unseen
Tomorrow belongs to me.

Oh Fatherland, fatherland show us the sign
your children have wanted to see,
The morning will come When the world is mine,
Tomorrow belongs to me.

## Naming of Parts
**by Henry Reed**

Today we have naming of parts. Yesterday,
We had daily cleaning. And tomorrow morning,
We shall have what to do after firing. But today,
Today we have naming of parts. Japonica
Glistens like coral in all of the neighbouring gardens,
And today we have naming of parts.

This is the lower sling swivel. And this
Is the upper sling swivwl, whose use you will see,
When you are given your slings. And this is the
piling swivel,
Which in your case you have not got. The branches
Hold in the gardens their silent, eloquent gestures,
Which in our case we have not got.

This is the safety-catch, wich is always released
With an easy flick of the tumb. And please do not let me
See anyone using his finger. You can do it quite easy
If you have any strength in your thumb. The blossoms
Are fragile and motionless, never letting anyone see
Any of them using their finger.

And this you can see is the bolt. The purpose of this
Is to open the breech, as you see. We can slide it
Rapidly backwards and forwards; we call this
Easing the spring. And rapidly backwards and forwards
The early bees are assaulting and fumbling the flowers:
They call it easing the Spring.

They call it easing the Spring: it is perfectly easy
If you have any strength in your thumb: like the bolt,
And the beech, and the cocking-piece, and the point of
Balance, Which in our case we have not got; and the
almond blossom Silent in all of the gardens and the
bees going backwards and forwards,
For today we have naming of parts.

## View From A Wheelchair
**by Vernon Scannel**

Every day is visiting day;
There are no temporal restrictions.
You cannot tell them to go away;
They fuss, or are negligent or bored.
The world is an open ward
Populated by nurses, orderlies
and simpering visitors with flowers.
I resent with equal rancour
Both indifference and pity.
Children insult me with their agility.
I am *an* old baby with a blue chin,
At night my teeth snarl in a tumbler.
As evening darkens in my ward
There are voices from beyond,
Clear cries of the unmitigated
Murmur of sensual conspiracy,
Salutations, prdigal laughter:
The blind effrontery of health.
I will strangle my ears: I will call
And demand to be put to bed.
But I do pray for a miracle-
You must not deceive yourself there-
And you must not assume my condition
Is not of my own choosing. I am not sure.
I am less fortunate, maybe
Than your insolent pity beljeyes.
The muscles in my wheels do not get tired;
Like a horse I can sleep standing.
And there is something sacred about me.
Something that can haunt and make you tremble.
I am sick of the fear, the pity, the revulsion.
I want them to put me to bed.
Their gratitude for my not being them
Is a nauseous, poisonous toffee.
It is dark and cold. They must put me to bed.
They do not know that I walk in my sleep.

## Bombardment
**by D.H. Lawrence**

The town has opened to the sun.
Like *a* flat red lily with a million petals
She unfolds, she comes undone.
A sharp sky brushes upon
The Myriad glittering chimney-tops
As she gently exhales to the sun.
Hurrying creatures run
Down the labyrinth of the sinister flower.
What is they shun?
A dark bird falls from the sun.
It curves in a rush to the heart of the vast
Flower: the day has begun.

## Big Brother Is Watching You

**by George Orwell**
from 1984

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a metre wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours. It was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine and had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift-shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. **BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU**, the caption beneath it ran.

Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of pig-iron. The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely. He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the meagreness of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine, his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended.

Outside, even through the shut window-pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything, except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The blackmoustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house-front immediately opposite. **BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU**, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own. Down at streetlevel another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word **INGSOC**. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a bluebottle, and darted away again with a curving flight. It was the police patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.

Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig-iron and the overfulfilment of the Ninth Three-Year Plan. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it, moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live -- did live, from habit that became instinct --

in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinized.

Winston kept his back turned to the telescreen. It was safer, though, as he well knew, even a back can be revealing. A kilometre away the Ministry of Truth, his place of work, towered vast and white above the grimy landscape. This, he thought with a sort of vague distaste -- this was London, chief city of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the provinces of Oceania. He tried to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been quite like this. Were there always these vistas of rotting nineteenth-century houses, their sides shored up with baulks of timber, their windows patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron, their crazy garden walls sagging in all directions? And the bombed sites where the plaster dust swirled in the air and the willow-herb straggled over the heaps of rubble; and the places where the bombs had cleared a larger patch and there had sprung up sordid colonies of wooden dwellings like chicken-houses? But it was no use, he could not remember: nothing remained of his childhood except a series of bright-lit tableaux occurring against no background and mostly unintelligible.

The Ministry of Truth -- Minitrue, in Newspeak -- was startlingly different from any other object in sight. It was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, 300 metres into the air. From where Winston stood it was just possible to read, picked out on its white face in elegant lettering, the three slogans of the Party:

**WAR IS PEACE**

**FREEDOM IS SLAVERY**

**IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH**

The Ministry of Truth contained, it was said, three thousand rooms above ground level, and corresponding ramifications below. Scattered about London there were just three other buildings of similar appearance and size. So completely did they dwarf the surrounding architecture that from the roof of Victory Mansions you could see all four of them simultaneously. They were the homes of the four Ministries between which the entire apparatus of government was divided. The Ministry of Truth, which concerned itself with news, entertainment, education, and the fine arts. The Ministry of Peace, which concerned itself with war. The Ministry of Love, which maintained law and order. And the Ministry of Plenty, which was responsible for economic affairs. Their names, in Newspeak: Minitrue, Minipax, Miniluv, and Miniplenty.

The Ministry of Love was the really frightening one. There were no windows in it at all. Winston had never been inside the Ministry of Love, nor within half a kilometre of it. It was a place impossible to enter except on official business, and then only by penetrating through a maze of barbed-wire entanglements, steel doors, and hidden machine-gun nests. Even the streets leading up to its outer barriers were roamed by gorilla-faced guards in black uniforms, armed with jointed truncheons.

## The Wish

**by Roald Dahl**

from *Someone like you*

Under the palm of one hand the child became aware of the scab of an old .cut on his kneecap. He bent forward to examine it closely. A scab was always a fascinating thing; it presented a special challenge he was never able to resist.
Yes, he thought, I will pick it off, even if it isn't ready, even if the middle of it sticks, even if it hurts like anything.
With a fingernail he began to explore cautiously around the edges of
the scab. He got a nail underneath it, and when he raised it, but ever so slightly, it suddenly came off, the whole hard brown scab came off beautifully, leaving an interesting little circle of smooth red skin.
Nice. Very nice indeed. He rubbed the circle and it didn't hurt. He picked up the scab, put it on his thigh and flipped it with a finger so that it flew away and landed on the edge of the carpet, the enormous red and black and yellow carpet that stretched the whole length of the hall from the stairs on which he sat to the front door in the distance. A tremendous carpet. Bigger than the tennis lawn. Much bigger than that. He regarded gravely, setting his eyes upon it with mild pleasure. He had never really noticed it before, but now, all of a sudden, the colours seemed to brighten mysteriously and spring out at him in a most dazzling way.
You see, he told himself, I know how it is. The red parts of the carpet are red-hot lumps of coal. What I must do is this: I must walk all the way along it to the front door without touching them. If I touch the red I will be burnt. As a matter of fact, I will be burnt up completely. And the
black parts of the carpet. . . yes, the black parts are snakes, poisonous snakes, adders mostly, and cobras, thick like tree trunks round the middle, and if I touch one of *them,* I'll be bitten and I'll die before teatime. And if I get across safely, without being burnt and without being bitten, I will be given a puppy for my birthday tomorrow. He got to his feet and climbed higher up the stairs to obtain a better view of this vast tapestry of colour and death. Was it possible? Was there
enough yellow? Yellow was the only colour he was allowed to walk on. Could it be done? This was not a journey to be undertaken lightly; the risks were far too great for that. The child's face — a fringe of white-gold
hair. two large blue eyes, a small pointed chin - peered down anxiously over the banisters. The yellow was a bit thin in places and there were one or two widish gaps, but it did seem to go all the way along to the other end. For someone who had only yesterday triumphantly travelled the whole length of the brick path from the stables to the summer-house without touching the cracks, this carpet thing should not be too difficult. Except for the snakes. The mere thought of snakes sent a fine electricity of fear running like pins down the backs of his legs and under the soles of his feet.
He came slowly down the stairs and advanced to the edge of the carpet. He extended one small sandalled foot and placed it cautiously upon a patch of yellow. Then he brought the other foot up, and there was just enough room for him to stand with the two feet together. There! He had started! His bright oval face was curiously intent, a shade whiter perhaps than before, and he was holding his arms out sideways to assist his balance. He took another step, lifting his foot high over a patch of black, aiming carefully with his toe for a narrow channel of yellow on the other side. When he had completed the second step he paused tc rest, standing very stiff and still. The narrow channel of yellow ran forward unbroken for at least five yards and he advanced gingerly along it bit by bit, as though walking a tightrope. Where it finally curled of sideways, he had to take another long stride, this time over a vicious-looking mixture of black and red. Halfway across he began to wobble He waved his arms around wildly, windmill fashion, to keep his balance and he got across safely and rested again

on the other side. He was quit breathless now, and so tense he stood high on his toes all the time, arms out sideways, fists clenched. He was on a big safe island of yellow. There was lots of room on it, he couldn't possibly fall off, and he stood there resting, hesitating, waiting, wishing he could stay for ever on this big safe yellow island. But the fear of not getting the puppy compelled hit to go on.
Step by step, he edged further ahead, and between each one he paused to decide exactly where he should put his foot. Once, he had choice of ways, either to left or right, and he chose the left because although it seemed the more difficult, there was not so much black that direction. The black was what had made him nervous. He glanced quickly over his shoulder to see how far he had come. Nearly halfway There could be no turning back now. He was in the middle and couldn't turn back and he couldn't jump off sideways either because was too far, and when he looked at all the red and all the black that was ahead of him, he felt that old sudden sickening surge of panic in his chest - like last Easter time, that afternoon when he got lost all alone in the darkest part of Piper's Wood.
He took another step, placing his foot carefully upon the only little piece of yellow within reach, and this time the point of the foot came within a centimetre of some black. It wasn't touching the black, he could see it wasn't touching, he could see the small line of yellow separating the toe of his sandal from the black; but the snake stirred as though sensing his nearness, and raised its head and gazed at the foot with bright beady eyes, watching to see if it was going to touch.^*I'm not touching you! You mustn't bite me! You know I'm not touching you*
Another snake slid up noiselessly beside the first, raised its head, two heads now, two pairs of eyes staring at the foot, gazing at a little naked place just below the sandal strap where the skin showed through. The child went high up on his toes and stayed there, frozen stiff with terror. It was minutes before he dared to move again.
The next step would have to be a really long one. There was this deep curling river of black that ran clear across the width of the carpet, and he was forced by his position to cross it at its widest part. He thought first of trying to jump it, but decided he couldn't be sure of landing accurately on the narrow band of yellow on the other side. He took a deep breath, lifted one foot, and inch by inch he pushed it out in front of him, far far out, then down and down until at last the tip of his sandal was across and resting safely on the edge of the yellow. He leaned forward, transferring his weight to his front foot. Then he tried to bring the back foot up as veil. He strained and pulled and jerked his body, but the legs were too wide apart and he couldn't make it. He tried to get back again. He couldn't do that either. He was doing the splits and he was properly stuck. He glanced down and saw this deep curling river of black underneath him. Parts of it were stirring now, and uncoiling and beginning to shine with a dreadfully oily glister. He wobbled, waved his arms frantically to keep his balance, but that seemed to make it worse. He was starting to go over. He was going over to the right, quite slowly he was going over, then faster and faster, and at the last moment, instinctively he put out a hand to break the fall and the next thing he saw was this bare hand of his going right into the middle of a great glistening mass of black and he gave one piercing cry as it touched.
Outside in the sunshine, far away behind the house, the mother was looking for her son.

## Grannies in the Wainscot

**by Laurie Lee**

from *Cider with Rosie*

Our house was seventeenth-century Cotswold, and was handsome as they go. It was built of stone, had hand-carved windows, golden surfaces, moss-flaked tiles, and walls so thick they kept a damp chill inside them whatever the season or weather. Its attics and passages were full of walled-up doors which our fingers longed to open - doors that led to certain echoing chambers now sealed off from us for ever. The place had once been a small country manor, and later a public beerhouse; -but it had decayed even further by the time we got to it, and was now three poor cottages in one. The house was shaped like a T, and we lived in the down-stroke. The top-stroke - which bore into the side of the bank like a rusty expended shell - was divided separately among two old ladies, one's portion lying above the other's.

Granny Trill and Granny Wallon were rival ancients and lived on each other's nerves, and their perpetual enmity was like mice irk the walls and absorbed much of my early days. With their sickle-bent bodies, pale pink eyes, and wild wisps of hedgerow hair, they looked to me the very images of witches and they were also much alike. In all their time as such close neighbours they never exchanged a word. They communicated instead by means of boots and brooms -jumping on floors and knocking on ceilings. They referred to each other as' 'Er-Down-Under' and' 'Er-Up-Atop, the Varmint'; for each to the other was an airy nothing, a local habitation not fit to be named.

'Er-Down-Under, who lived on our level, was perhaps the smaller of the two, a tiny white shrew who came nibbling through her garden, who clawed squeaking with gossip at our kitchen window, or sat sucking bread in the sun; always mysterious and self-contained and feather-soft in her move-
ments. She had two names, which she changed at will according to the mood of her day. Granny Wallon was her best, and stemmed, we were told, from some distinguished alliance of the past. Behind this crisp and trotting body were certainly rumours of noble blood. But she never spoke of them herself. She was known to have raised a score of children. And she was known to be very poor. She lived on cabbage, bread, and potatoes - but she also made excellent wines.

Granny Wallon's wines were famous in the village, and she spent a large part of her year preparing them. The gathering of the ingredients was the first of the mysteries. At the beginning of April she would go off with her baskets and work round the fields and hedges, and every fine day till the end of summer would find her somewhere out in the valley. One saw her come hobbling home in the evening, bearing her cargoes of crusted flowers, till she had buckets of cowslips, dandelions, elder-blossom crammed into every corner of the house. The elder-flower, drying on her kitchen floor, seemed to cover it with a rancid carpet, a crumbling rime of grey-green blossom fading fast in a dust of summer. Later the tiny grape-cluster of the elderberry itself would be seething in purple vats, with daisies and orchids thrown in to join it, even strands of the dog-rose bush.

What seasons fermented in Granny Wallon's kitchen, what summers were brought to the boil, with limp flower-heads piled around the floor holding fast to their clotted juices - the sharp spiced honey of those cowslips first, then the coppery reeking dandelion, the bitter poppy's whiff of powder, the cat's-breath, death-green elder. Gleanings of days and a dozen pastures, strippings of lanes and hedges -she bore them home to her flag-died kitchen, sorted them each from etch, built up her fires and loaded her pots, and added her sugar and **yeast.** The vats boiled daily in suds of sugar, revolving petals in throbbing water, while the air, aromatic, steamy, embalmed, distilled the hot dews flowery coups and ran die wine down die dripping And not only flower-heads went into these brews; the lady used parsnips, too, potatoes, sloes, crab-apples, qui in fact anything she could lay her hands on. Granny Wallon made wine as

though demented, out of anything at all; no doubt, if given enough sugar and yeast, could have a drink out of a box of old matches.
She never hurried or hoarded her wines, but led them gently through their natural stages. After the boiling they were allowed to settle and to work in the cool of the vats. For several months, using pieces of toast, she scooped their yeasty sediments. Then she bottled and labeled each liquor in turn and put them away for a year.
At last one was ready, then came the day of distribution. A squeak and a rattle would shake our window, and see the old lady, wispily grinning, waving a large white j in her hand.
'Hey there, missus! Try this'n, then. It's the first of my last year's cowslip.
Through die kitchen window she'd fill up our cups and watch us, head cocked, while we drank. The wine in the cups was still and golden, transparent as a pale spring morning. It smelt of ripe grass in some far-away field and its taste was as delicate as air. It seemed so innocent, we would swig away  happily and even the youngest guzzled it down. Then a curious rocking would seize the head; tides rose from our feet like a fever, the kitchen walls began to shudder and shift - and we all fell in love with each other.
Very soon we'd be wedged, tight-crammed, in the window, waving our cups for more, while our Mother, bright-eyed, would be mumbling gaily:
'Lord bless you, Granny. Fancy cowsnips and parsney. You must give me the receipt, my dear.'
Granny Wallon would empty the jug in our cups, shake out the last drops on the flowers, then trot off tittering down the garden pathleaving us hugging ourselves in the window.