

her father's pained one, and she had guessed there was trouble for somebody, and while Lionel looked so black she thought she had better keep by him in case he wanted help and sympathy.

"I am always good," grumbled Lionel, as he scurried along. "So I won't decide just to please Father. Who is Father, indeed? I know what I will do though. I'll be just as bad as I can be all day long, and I will be awake at night making plans to be badder and badder. So there! I've decided."

Then he heard a panting noise behind him, and he knew it meant his faithful sister was near, but he was too cross to be kind to her, though she had done nothing.

"Go back, Iris," he said. "Don't come bothering me."

"Oh, Lionel," she cried, "you are grumpy. And I am so tired. Do let me stay. I want to ask—"

"All right, then, stay," he interrupted. "But do not ask questions, for I won't answer them."

"No, I won't, Lionel dear," the little girl promised, "if you just tell me this one tiny little thing. What have you decided to do? And did the fairies help you?"

"What do you mean?" asked her brother as he sat down on the soft moss. "Well, you said, for I heard you, just now, 'I've decided,' and I thought it must be about when you are a man, and as we are in the Fairies' Glen, I guessed they would know all about it, too."

"Oh," said Lionel, turning very red as he found his words had been overheard. "I did not mean what you mean. It was something else I had made up my mind about, or I thought I had, now I am not quite sure. I'm only half decided."

"Then let me help you; may I?" asked a funny little voice quite close to them, and when the children looked up they were not a bit surprised to see a fairy, for they knew they were there, and every day they hoped to see one.

"Come, follow me," the fairy said, "and you shall easily make up your mind." And she skipped from one mushroom to the other so lightly that she did not even dent them, and if you want to know how lightly that is, well, you try to sit down on a mushroom the next time you see one growing, and you will find out quickly how strong its stem is. The fairy led them to a little nook in the woods that they both knew quite well, but it looked quite different from every day, for there were many little fairies sitting about in the grass, while on the ground was a golden dish full of apples, and just as though there was not enough fruit there, other fairies came down a path from the back and added more to the pile.

"Now every apple there means something different," explained the fairy from the top of the mushroom. "And with each apple there belongs a tiny fairy who will see that you get whatever the apple represents its power to be."

"How can the fairies know?" grumbled Lionel, who was still rather cross with everybody. "Not even a fairy can look inside an apple. That is rubbish!"

"Well, wait and see," said their new friend kindly. "You will not feel so angry very soon if you sit on the grass and get cool. Now, are you better? If so, choose an apple from the dish, and if you do not want it when you hear what it is, just give it back to the little fairy that belongs to it."

Lionel took off his cap, and, scrambling to his feet, he made all the party his best dancing class bow. Then he walked forward and lifted an apple from the dish.

Instantly one small fairy jumped up and made a bow.

"Who bites my apple shall become a mighty hunter, able to kill anything," said the little person. "Nothing shall escape his aim."

"Oh, Lionel!" cried his sister, for she was afraid. Lionel stood and thought seriously. He had many four-footed friends in the wood: the deer, the rabbits, the hares, and all the birds seemed to know and trust him. Fancy if he began to kill them! Yet how nice to be a hunter and to win praise for his prowess. And then he remembered a wounded deer he had found in terrible pain last winter, and how long it had taken to nurse the poor creature back to health and strength.

"No," he said, "I will not have that apple. I do not like it."

And Iris clapped her hands, she was so glad.

"Take another," said the fairy. "There are plenty on the dish."

"Who bites from my apple," cried a tiny mite with golden wings, "will have gold and silver and precious stones. Millions of them. Oh, how wealthy he will be!"

Lionel pushed the fruit away directly he heard this.

"No," he said. "Not for me. Mother says it is better to work hard and make your own money yourself, as a man should—not have it given to him. Why, that is like a girl, really."

Then he looked at the Head of the Fairies, who still waited on the mushroom to see what would happen. "Am I to go on?" he asked, and she nodded. "Go on till the dish is empty, and if you are not satisfied then I will send for some more."

So the boy picked up another apple, and, as a pretty little fairy with tiny white wings and curly hair came forward, he wondered what she had to say.

"Who bites from me shall marry a princess," she exclaimed, "and live in a palace with a sentry box outside."

"Oh, you are a dull one!" cried Lionel in great disgust. "I do not want to marry, and when I do it will not be a princess. Why, I might have to wear a crown, and then how my head would ache!"

"How clever he is!" Iris thought. "I should have bitten all those apples, I am sure I should. But I wonder if Lionel knows what he does want? Now he has picked up another."

"Who bites from me shall become beautiful," said the little mite who ran forward in answer to a sign from the Head of the Fairies. "You shall grow tall, and straight, and alim, your eyes shall be bright and your hair curly and thick. So beautiful shall you be that all shall marvel as you walk by."

"Pooh!" cried Lionel, throwing the fruit far from him. "Why, you are all getting worse and worse. It is quite horrid now. Only girls want curly hair and big blue eyes, and silly things like that."

"Oh, Lionel," said his sister in great distress. "Do not say such things. Girls are very nice people, and everybody likes curly hair. So there!"

"Well, let everybody have it then," growled Lionel. "Everybody but me: I mean. This is the last apple I shall take. I am getting tired of this game, for nothing comes along that seems worth anything to me. I shall pick a tiny wee one this time, and see if it is any better. The large ones have been quite stupid. Ah, here comes the fairy who owns this fruit. I wonder what she will have to tell us? Iris, listen to this. This is a fine one."

"Who bites from my apple shall be good to all. Kind to the sick and poor, gentle to the aged, tender to the young and helpless, obedient and considerate to everybody."

"Oh-h," said Lionel, and then he did not seem to say anything else. He just stood still, holding the apple in his hand and thinking steadily. He remembered everything that had happened at home. His rudeness to his mother, his crossness and ill-manners all round, and he felt hot and ashamed. If only he could be a better boy these holidays. He had meant to when he came home at first, and he had done splendidly in the beginning, but lately nothing had gone right. He wondered if the apple would help him. Slowly he turned it round and round in his hands, while the Head of the Fairies watched him curiously, for she wanted to see what he was going to do.

Suddenly he raised his eyes and looked at her.

"May I?" he asked, hitting the apple to his lips, and when she nodded her consent he dug his teeth far in.

But as he did so he felt the apple taken away, and somebody shook him by the shoulder.

"Wake up! Wake up!" cried Iris, tapping him on the cheek with the fruit she held in her hand. "First you are cross at home, and make everything horrid there, and then you come out into the woods and go to sleep. You are a nice brother, you are! Give me your knife and let's go shares in this apple. It is quite a good one, cook says. You can see it is, for it has streaks of red on it."

Lionel sat up feeling very lost and bewildered. He looked round to see where the fairies were, but there was no sign of them, nor of the big dish of golden

apples. Yet he could not forget his dream, if dream it was. He knew he had made up his mind to be a better boy, and his sister should know it too. She heard it all, or he thought she did.

"Iris," he said, "How long have you been here? Did you see the fairies?"

But she laughed and shook her head. "Fairies? No, you have been asleep. That is what is the matter with you. Why, I've not been here a minute."

"Come on," said Lionel. "Let's get back to the house. You see, I've not been very nice at home, and I want to put things straight with Father, and tell Mother how sorry I am. Come on. Let us run, for it is very, very important."

The Mortified Whale.

A whale met a Monax on her way to the church

(They had made the appointment by wire); She smiled as she said, "You're a musical chap

And we need you to help in the choir."

"No doubt I can render the aid you desire,"

Condescendingly answered the whale;

"I'll be glad of the change, for I'm tired of blowing

And lashing the waves with my tail."

He had played on the bones and sung billowy airs

In many a minstrel show,

So he counted on singing the prominent parts

As the mouse gayly took him in tow.

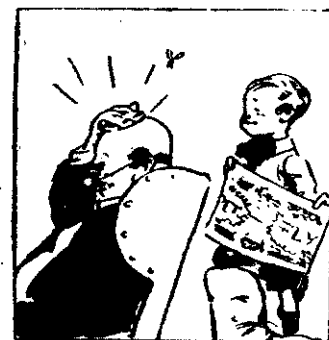
But when they arrived—oh, he blubbered and wailed

With a noise like an overworked war gun!

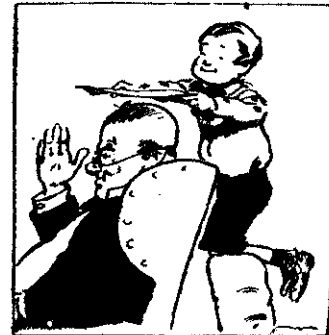
He was mortified clear to the tip of his tail,

For they set him to blow the big organ organ!

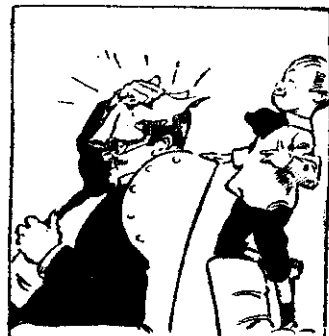
THE FLY, THE FLY PAPER AND THE FLY KID.



1.



2.



3.



4.



"Papa, what for it gets dark so soon?" "Because, my boy, winter is comin' and it gets late early now."

HOUP-LA.