

farmer's son the finest-looking young man in the place. The princess was so pleased that she ordered her servants to release Goody Greeneye, and perhaps she intended to thank her, but — dear me! — there was no time; the old hag had been too frightened to stay there a minute, and the instant the rope was off her neck — whiz! phiz! — there was a sound as if they had taken the cork out of a champagne bottle, and Goody Greeneye rose in the air, mounted on a broomstick, and flew off over the great cliff above the sea. The very last they saw of her was the flutter of her red rocket as she vanished through the hazy air, evidently on her way to France, where I expect she did no end of mischief.

Meanwhile, Osmund, quite restored to himself, was very thankful and very devoted to the princess, and his parents and all his eleven brothers and sisters came to rejoice and embrace him after having mourned for him as dead. And his dreadful experience had done him so much good, and taught him to be so kind, and merciful, and honest, that he grew to be a wonderfully wise and brave man, and I have heard reports, and I believe they are true, that he married the Princess Beautiful and lived ever after in the great Castle of Success that towered over the wide blue sea.

*LITTLE ELEANOR AND LITTLE
PEPPER*



LONG years ago there lived a dear little red-haired girl called Eleanor, and she had a faithful little brown dog, who loved her very, very dearly, and the little brown dog was called Pepper.

It chanced one day that Eleanor's mother took Pepper out with her, though he could not bear to leave his dear mistress, and when they returned, — the mother and the dog, — little Eleanor had vanished and there was only a gray goose quill in her cradle. Her mother ran up and down, weeping and wailing, and asking all the neighbors what had become of her child. But little Pepper asked no one, for he knew at once that the pixies had stolen her, and he set off all alone to look for her, trudging along over moors and over hills and through great, dark forests, weary, and footsore, and hungry still.

He met a shepherd dog first and inquired of him whether he had seen little Eleanor pass that way. The shepherd dog did not know anything about her; but, as he was a kind dog, he gave poor Pepper a bone from his own dinner and a drink of water out of his bowl. Next, Pepper asked the cow, but she said she did not know, but would chew her cud and consider; and then Pepper asked the horse, and the horse stopped to pick an oat out of his double teeth, and finally said that he had not seen her, but had heard a whizzing sound such as the pixies made when flying. So Pepper travelled on and inquired of the cat, but she was a witch-cat and put up her back and spit; and of course, he had to go on and on, dear, faithful, little dog; and he asked the hen, but she cackled and ruffled her feathers and made a great fuss, driving her chicks away. And just then he saw a magpie, and he knew that it was very bad luck to meet one magpie by itself, so he at once spit over his right shoulder and repeated the good old Devonshire charm against a single magpie:

“Clean birds by sevens,
Unclean by twos;
The dove, in heavens,
Is the one I choose.”

And feeling sure that this would keep away the magpie, Pepper trudged on and met a fine white pigeon, who looked so gentle and wise that Pepper stopped.

“Dear, dear pigeon,” he said, “where have the pixies taken my mistress?”

“Kourre, Kourre!” cried the pigeon, strutting off in the sun. “How should I know? I’m not her keeper!”

Then Pepper went farther and met a beautiful peacock.

“Tell me, dear sir, where is my mistress?” cried the little dog sadly.

“Ah, look at my tail,” replied the peacock; “is it not lovely?” and he spread it wide in the sun.

“What do I care for your tail, you vain thing?” said Pepper angrily, as he went up to a little busy brown sparrow and asked him the old question.

“Your mistress?” cried the sparrow. “Peep, peep! I’m too busy to know; I’ve a family of six in the nest this minute, and their mother’s gone to the club to play bridge-whist, and worms were never so scarce — peep, peep!”

And he hurried off, in a whirl of care, while Pepper walked wearily on, still asking his question;

but all those he met were either too busy or too careless to tell him anything; so, after all, he had to go to the great gray goose.

"Where is dear little Eleanor, my mistress?" he asked, his eyes full of tears; and he had beautiful brown eyes.

"Ah, yes, I know," said the goose, stretching his neck and yawning; "the pixies have carried her off, because her hair is red, and they think it would do for a torch for their new cave."

"Tell me only where to find her," cried Pepper, "and I will go even to the end of the earth."

The goose scratched her head and tried to look wise, but the truth was, she did not really know, and so she hunched up her shoulders.

"Go to the King of the Derricks," she said.

And poor Pepper went trudging for miles and miles, half starved, and dusty, and tired, and at last he found the King of the Derricks in the Pirate Cave, and told him his errand.

"Oh, yes," said his Majesty, "pixies have her locked up in an oak tree, and they will not let her out unless the most faithful heart in the world goes after her."

"And mine is the most faithful!" cried little Pepper truthfully. "Pray, pray, Mr. King, tell me the way!"

The king looked puzzled, but after a while he said,

"Well, you go straight ahead to the top of the hill, and then you turn to the left and go zigzag, and then to the right and go higglety-pigglety, and then straight ahead to the edge of the forest, and then to the left, and indirectly to the right, and there you are!"

The poor little dog was very much puzzled, but being the most faithful and loving heart in the whole world he set out, and by following the king's directions exactly, — I am sure I don't know how he did, — he found the great oak and heard little Eleanor crying inside of it. And what do you think he did? Why, for a whole year he gnawed away at the bark, and stopped only to eat a morsel a day to keep him alive, and meanwhile the squirrels fed little Eleanor on nuts, and brought her dew to drink out of acorn cups, and at the end of the year Pepper had gnawed a hole so big that she crept out and embraced him, crying for joy. As for the pixies, they were all so pleased at his devotion that they let her go home with him to her mother,

only keeping one lock of her red hair to light a single torch in the cavern of the fairies.

When she returned, her mother nearly died of joy, and her faithful little dog had more bark after that than anything else, because, you see, he had scarcely eaten anything but bark for a whole year.

And this is a true story.



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