

THE MAGIC STORY BOOK

by

OLIVE PHILLIPS

and

KATHLEEN HUNT

December, 1949

© Kath Kay and Olive Phillips. Reproduced with permission.

THE MAGIC STORY BOOK

Characters

Betty	Brother and sister
Bobby	
Beryl	Friends
Jean	
David	
Noël	
Jack	
Molly	
Robert	Cousins
Mary	
Wee Willie Winkie	Nursery Rhyme Characters
Little Boy Blue	
Mary, Mary quite contrary	
Little Miss Muffet	
Jack	
Jill	
Bo-peep	
Old Mother Hubbard	
Red Riding Hood	
Aladdin	
King Cole	
Father Christmas	
Attendants and	
Herald	

THE MAGIC STORY BOOK

SCENE I

(BETTY and BOBBY BROWN both aged about 10 years, are busy trimming Xmas tree, putting up decorations, holly, etc.)	
BETTY	Oh, isn't this fun. I do wish Christmas came more than once a year.
BOBBY	So do I, then we should get two lots of presents and two Christmas dinners.
BETTY	Greedy thing! Just like a boy to think of his tummy. I wasn't thinking of presents and food, I was thinking of all the excitement and fun we have. I love hanging holly and mistletoe. Besides, it's lovely to give presents as well as to receive them.
BOBBY	That reminds me. Have you finished wrapping Molly's and Jack's presents?
BETTY	Yes, all the presents are ready now. I hope Mummy will like the tray-cloth that I have embroidered for her.
BOBBY	Daddy will be pleased with his pipe-rack, I know.
BETTY	Yes, he has been wanting one for ages.
BOBBY	(turning aside wistfully). Do you really think Father Christmas will bring me my engine, Betty?
BETTY	Yes, I should think so. I am feeling rather worried about my doll and pram. Do you think it was too much to ask for both?
BOBBY	I don't see why you shouldn't get them, as you want them so much. Besides, Cousin Mary asked for lots and lots of things last year, and got them all.
BETTY	Yes, so she did. Well, anyway, we usually get more things than we ask for, so I don't think he will mind my asking for two things.
BOBBY	Do you know, Betty, when I met Cousin Mary in the High Street last week, she told me that she doesn't believe in Father Christmas.
BETTY	Oh, Bobby, how dreadful! But there must be a Father Christmas. If not, where do you think all the lovely toys come from?
BOBBY	That is exactly what I told Mary, but she just laughed. You know, I think we ought to prove it, and then we can tell her how wrong she is.
BETTY	Yes, that would be a good idea.
BOBBY	If we creep downstairs, about midnight, we shall be able to get a glimpse of him as he comes down the chimney.
BETTY	Silly, he doesn't come down the chimney now. He got fast in the Jones's chimney last year, so now he comes through the door.
BOBBY	Well, anyway, he'll have to fill our stockings, so we shall see him whichever way he comes in.
BETTY	We shan't have to let him see us though, or he'll not leave us any toys at all.
BOBBY	If we hide in the big armchair and pull the travelling rug over us, he'll never notice us.

BETTY	Mind that you don't tread heavily on the third stair down because it creaks badly.
BOBBY	Sh! I think someone is coming.
(Footsteps heard outside. Enter two children JEAN and BERYL with presents.)	
JEAN	Hello, you two, we have just called to leave your presents. You must not open them till to-morrow though.
BERYL	If you open them to-night, you'll get bad luck for the rest of the year.
BETTY	Goodness, that would never do, would it?
JEAN	We received your invitation this morning. Thankyou so much for asking us to your party. We will be here at 3 O'clock prompt.
BOBBY	Right-ho, and don't eat too much before you come or you'll never be able to eat the lovely cakes and trifles that Mummy has made.
BETTY	Bobby! Thinking of food again. You're tubby enough already. Eating trifles and cakes won't make you any thinner, you know.
BOBBY	As long as you don't get fat I don't know why you should worry.
BERYL	Stop arguing, you two.
JEAN	Who else is coming to your party, Betty?
BETTY	Well, Cousin Robert and Cousin Mary will be coming as well as Jack, Molly, Noël and David.
BERYL	Ooh, it will be lovely.
JEAN	Well, we shall have to be going now, as we have to call at Auntie Margaret's with her present before we go home.
(Children go to door and goodbyes are said all round.)	
BOBBY	Cheerio! See you both to-morrow.
BOTH	Goodnight, a Happy Christmas.
VOICES	A Happy Christmas to you too.
(BETTY and BOBBY come back into room.)	
BETTY	Now we will finish our decorations.
(While they complete trimmings etc. carollers heard outside.)	
BOBBY	Listen! Carollers!
VOICE	I'll go to the door, Betty, and give them all a mincepie. Then you must both get ready for bed.
BETTY	Right-ho, Mummy.
BOBBY	Remember our plans, Betty, and remember to creep down as carefully as possible.
BETTY	Alright, I'll remember. Oh, I'm so excited. I shall never go to sleep, I know I shan't.
BOBBY	Come along now. We'd better go to bed.
BETTY	Switch the light out.
(BOBBY does so.)	
BETTY	Goodnight, Bobby.
BOBBY	(Yawning.) Goodnight Betty.

CURTAIN.

SCENE II

(Children come into room, BOBBY almost falling over BETTY's heels.)	
BETTY	You clumsy thing. You'll wake the whole house if you're not careful. You even stepped on the squeaky stair. Some good telling me to be quiet.
BOBBY	I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make such a clatter, but the kitten ran past my legs and made me jump.
BETTY	Well, it's just gone midnight and Santa isn't here yet. I hope he isn't going to be late, I'm nearly asleep, already.
BOBBY	Just like a girl, to want to go to sleep when the exciting part begins.
BETTY	I think we ought to do something to keep us awake.
BOBBY	Let's play at "I spy".
BETTY	No, we'd better not. Mummy and Daddy may hear us talking.
BOBBY	What about dominoes?
BETTY	No! I know, let's read some of the stories in that new Christmas book that Auntie Meg has given us.
BOBBY	Right-ho! Come along then, we'll sit in the armchair with the rug over us and then we shall be ready to hide when Father Christmas comes.
(BETTY fetches book from beside Tree. They settle down and begin to read. Slowly they begin to nod their heads, till finally they fall asleep. ENTER WEE WILLIE WINKIE.)	
WEE WILLIE WINKIE	Ho-ho, what have we here? Two children who aren't in bed, and on Christmas Eve too.
(ENTER BOY BLUE.)	
BOY BLUE	What's that you say, Wee Willie Winkie? Children not in bed. That will never do. Santa won't leave them any toys if he sees them here.
WEE WILLIE WINKIE	Just serve them right if he didn't. The naughty little things, they ought to be taught a lesson.
BOY BLUE	I'll blow my horn and summon the others. Then we shall probably think of something to do.
(He blows his horn and the following characters enter:- MISS MUFFET; MARY, MARY; BO-PEEP; JACK AND JILL; OLD MOTHER HUBBARD; ALADDIN; RED RIDING HOOD; and KING COLE)	
MISS MUFFET	Hullo, Boy Blue, and you too, Willie Winkie, did you want us for something?
BOY BLUE	Yes, indeed we did. Look, these two children have left their beds to wait for Santa. What can we do, to show them that they mustn't do such things?
MARY MARY	Well, I don't mean to be disagreeable, but I'm sure that I should have done exactly the same thing if I were in their place. Why should they be punished at all?
MISS MUFFET	Now then, Contrary Mary, don't you start making excuses for them. We are going to give them a lesson that they won't forget in a hurry.
MARY MARY	Very well. But don't frighten them with your spider, will you Miss Muffet?
MISS MUFFET	Of course not. We'll just get them back to their beds before Father Christmas comes and then our work will be done.

WEE WILLIE WINKIE	We must work fast though. Santa will be here shortly, and he must not see the children or he will not fill their stockings.
(KING COLE steps forward.)	
KING COLE	What do you propose to do my friends?
WEE WILLIE WINKIE	Oh, your Majesty, I didn't notice that you were here. Excuse me, please. I beg your pardon.
KING COLE	Oh, that's all right, my boy! Don't let a little thing like that worry you. Now, tell me, what are you going to do with these two little rascals?
WEE WILLIE WINKIE	Well, I wondered if we could test their wits, and see if they know us Nursery Rhyme folk as well as they should.
KING COLE	That is a good idea. But let me make a suggestion. If they can guess all our names they must be rewarded, not punished. After all they are only youngsters and we only want to give them a little scare. If they pass the test, allow them to talk to us for a little while, before sending them to bed.
WEE WILLIE WINKIE	Very well, your Majesty. That is exactly what we will do.
(ALADDIN steps forward.)	
ALADDIN	If you are all ready, I will rub my lamp, and wake the children up. Then we can proceed.
ALL	We are ready now.
(ALADDIN rubs his lamp and children wake up.)	
BETTY	Bobby, are you awake? Can you see what I can see? Whoever are all these queer people?
BOBBY	I don't know Betty but that fat old man over there looks like Old King Cole.
KING COLE	I am King Cole, you impertinent boy.
BOBBY	Good gracious, we must be dreaming. But who are all the others?
BETTY	They look like the people in our story book.
(OLD MOTHER HUBBARD steps forward.)	
OLD MOTHER HUBBARD	Yes, that is exactly who we are, you little rascals, but you must guess all our names. If you cannot guess them all you will be whisked off to the Land of Naughty Children where they never have any toys.
BETTY	Oh, Bobby, how dreadful, I wish we'd stayed in bed.
BOBBY	Don't be silly: this is going to be fun.
BETTY	It won't be fun if we can't guess who they all are.
ALADDIN	Come along, you two, stop chattering. It is time to start. Here is the first clue. I come from far across the sea, My magic lamp I've brought with me, I'll rub it once, and then again, Now, can you tell me who I am?
BETTY	I know, you are Aladdin.
ALADDIN	That was an easy one. Now who are those two?
JACK AND JILL	With bucket we went up the hill, But sad to say we had a spill.
BOBBY	(butting in quickly) I know your names, you're Jack and Jill.
JACK	My word, you're a poet and don't know it. (ALL laugh.)

JILL	No joking now, get on with the test. Here is number three.
MISS MUFFET	While sitting eating curds one day, A spider frightened me away.
BETTY	You are Miss Muffet. I'd know you anywhere. But where is your spider?
MISS MUFFET	Oh I left him in Nursery Rhyme Land. I didn't want to frighten you, so I left him with the Three Bears, and they are going to look after him for me. Here is my best friend. I wonder if you know who she is?
BO-PEEP	My name? Surely you can guess, I am a pretty shepherdess.
BETTY	Of course, you are Little Bo-Peep.
BO-PEEP	Yes, that's right. Miss Muffet and I live together in Nursery Rhyme Land and here is our next door neighbour.
BOY BLUE	My horn I blow to call my sheep. They've wandered whilst I've been asleep.
BOBBY	He is all in blue, Betty. He must be Little Boy Blue. Am I right, sir?
BOY BLUE	Yes, you are and I think you should guess the next one quite easily.
RED RIDING HOOD	My grandmama was ill in bed. I went, but found a wold instead.
BETTY	Ah, Red Riding Hood. I knew that before you spoke. Your red hood gives you away.
RED RIDING HOOD	Of course, everyone knows me. Here is the old lady who is so kind to all my friends and me.
OLD MOTHER HUBBARD	You are doing very well, children. Red Riding Hood was certainly easy for you to guess, and I am not very hard either. Here is my clue. My dog was whining when I got home, So I went to the cupboard to look for a bone.
BOBBY	I suppose you are Old Mother Hubbard.
OLD MOTHER HUBBARD	Clever boy. Now, another friend of mine, and what pretty flowers she is carrying.
MARY MARY	You have almost guessed us all. Only one more after mine and then you have finished. You will have passed the test. Hurry up and guess them, then you will be able to go back to bed. Santa will be here very soon. Now:- I listen to the silver bells, And also to the cockle-shells, And in my garden-plot so gay, I disagree with all they say.
BETTY	You are Mary Mary, quite contrary. I do like your flowers.
BOBBY	And my watering can is just like yours.
WEE WILLIE WINKIE	I am the last one and the hardest for you to guess. You will have to listen well and think hard if you are to guess who I am. Are you ready?
BOTH CHILDREN	Yes.
WEE WILLIE WINKIE	Right. Here goes:- Round the town at night I creep,

	To see that children are asleep. My candle sheds its light around, To help me over stony ground.
BOBBY	Oh dear, this is not so easy. Who can it be?
WEE WILLIE WINKIE	Think fast, your time is getting short. If you can't guess by the time I have counted ten, Aladdin will rub his lamp, then you will be whisked off to the Land of Naughty Children.
BETTY	(looking worried). I can't think who it is. Whatever shall we do?
WEE WILLIE WINKIE	(begins to count slowly whilst children carry on talking). One – Two – Three. (etc. up to 9).
BOBBY	For goodness sake, think of it quickly.
BETTY	(beginning to sob). I can't.
BOBBY	(pondering). I know, it's coming – it's coming.
BETTY	Yes, I know.
BOTH	Wee Willie Winkie, that's who you are.
WEE WILLIE WINKIE	(gives a loud sigh). Oh I thought you would never get it, children. Thank your lucky stars that you remembered in time. It wouldn't have been pleasant for either of you, spending Christmas in the Land where Naughty Children go.
BETTY	Yes, it would have been dreadful. I can't bear to think about it.
OLD MOTHER HUBBARD	Well, you are naughty children you know. Very naughty. You deserve to be well slapped for leaving your beds when you should have been fast asleep. Anyway, you passed your test and earned your reward, so you can stay and talk to us for just a few minutes longer. Then you must go to bed and don't dare to get up again until to-morrow morning.
BOBBY	I wish we could all sing a carol before we go back to bed.
BETTY	Mummy and Daddy would hear us.
ALADDIN	Not if I rub my lamp. They will sleep sounder than ever and never hear a thing.
BETTY	Do you people know any carols?
RED RIDING HOOD	Of course we do.
BETTY	Let us sing ----- I like that one.
KING COLE	Very well then. Let us begin.
(ALL sing carol.) (Bugle sounds outside. Enter HERALD).	
HERALD	Father Christmas is here. Make way for Father Christmas and his attendants.
KING COLE	My goodness, and the children are still here. It is too late, we can't possibly get them back to bed now.
(Enter FATHER CHRISTMAS and attendants) (Characters crowd round children to hide them).	
FATHER CHRISTMAS	Ho ho! So it was you people that I heard singing that carol. Very nice too. But what are you all doing, away from Nursery Rhyme Land? I thought you would be having a party tonight.

MARY MARY	No sir, the party is to-morrow night.
FATHER CHRISTMAS	Oh, I see. But what are you are all doing crowding round that chair? There is plenty of room. Besides I want to rest in that chair for a few minutes before I start on my rounds again.
MISS MUFFET	What shall we do? He'll see the children.
FATHER CHRISTMAS	Come along kiddies, move away and let an old man rest for a while – and stop mumbling all of you; you're like a lot of bees, buzzing.
(They all move away, slowly).	
FATHER CHRISTMAS	Ha, ha! So that's what you were hiding. Two children who should be in bed. I have no toys for such children as these.
KING COLE	Please, Father Christmas, don't be too hard on them. Please forgive them. We have taught them a lesson they won't forget in a hurry. They are quite ready to go to bed now.
FATHER CHRISTMAS	(to children). And what have you to say for yourselves?
BETTY	Dear Father Christmas, we really are sorry that we got out of bed to wait for you. We wanted to prove that there really is a Santa Claus. Cousin Mary doesn't believe it you see, and we thought that if we actually saw you, she would just have to believe.
FATHER CHRISTMAS	In that case, I will forgive you entirely. Cousin Mary will be jealous when she hears of the adventure you've had to-night.
BOBBY	She certainly will, and we'll both behave ourselves in future, won't we, Betty?
BETTY	Yes, we will.
FATHER CHRISTMAS	Run along now, children and pleasant dreams to both of you and remember, if ever you should want our aid, just open your book and wish for the person whom you wish to help you. Now rub your lamp Aladdin, then I will get on with my rounds or I shall never get finished before daybreak.
(ALADDIN rubs his lamp).	
FATHER CHRISTMAS	Good-night all of you.
ALL	Good-night, Father Christmas, Good-night.

CURTAIN

SCENE III

(BETTY and BOBBY in centre surrounded by other children. They are being told the story of BETTY's and BOBBY's adventure.)	
MARY	But that's incredible; it couldn't possibly have happened.
BETTY	But it did , I tell you. One minute we were alone and the next minute we were surrounded by all the folks from Nursery Rhyme Land.
MARY	There is no Father Christmas. You're making it all up.
BOBBY	We are not . I do wish we could make you believe us.
JEAN	Probably you saw Santa Claus, but just dreamed the rest.
BETTY	But we both saw them.
BERYL	Well, you must both have had the same dream then.
ROBERT	I think it is all a ridiculous fairy story.
DAVID	Did you really think we should believe that stuff?
BOBBY	We'll show you that it was true. Just you wait. Get the story book, Betty.
(BETTY fetches book).	
BETTY	Let's call Aladdin. He will help us with his lamp.
(They open book).	
BETTY AND BOBBY	Aladdin, now please help us, do And bring your magic lamp with you.
(ALADDIN appears at door).	
ALADDIN	What do you want, children?
BETTY	We want to prove to these silly people that we really did see King Cole and all the others last night. This is our Cousin Mary, who doesn't even believe in Father Christmas.
ALADDIN	Ah, I have a plan.
(He rubs his lamp, lights go out and on again. BETTY, BOBBY and MARY have disappeared).	
NOEL	Good gracious, what happened? Where have they gone?
MOLLY	Wasn't it strange? I wonder if it's all a huge joke.
JACK	Well, surely that fellow wasn't really Aladdin. They can't expect us to believe that .
BERYL	But who turned the lights out, surely we didn't imagine it?
ROBERT	It's all very mysterious. I think we should search the house for them. Probably they are hiding somewhere.
JEAN	We'd better start right away, before Mr & Mrs Brown return from Auntie Meg's.
DAVID	Noël and I will search the attics. (They go out).
JEAN	And Beryl and I will look in the bedrooms; they are probably under the beds, or in the wardrobe. (They go out).
JACK	Molly and I will look in the garden. They may be in a bush.
MOLLY	I hardly think so, Jack; that would be far too prickly. They might be hiding behind the hedges though. (They go out).
ROBERT	I'll stay and look round here. They can't be far away. We'll soon show them that they can't fool us.

ROBERT begins searching room. He picks up the story book and begins turning the pages).	
ROBERT	This looks a perfectly ordinary book to me. The pictures are nicely coloured and what a lot of them there are too. King Cole, Little Miss Muffet, Little Boy Blue, Bo-peep, Wee Willie Winkie, Mary, Mary, quite contrary, Aladdin ----- Aladdin. My goodness, that fellow must have been Aladdin! He's exactly like his picture. (Shouts). I say, Noël, David, Beryl, all of you, come quickly.
(Children come running back into room).	
BERYL	What is it Robert?
ROBERT	Look at this picture of Aladdin. It's him , you know, the one that came into this room. I'm beginning to wonder if Betty and Bobby weren't telling the truth after all.
JEAN	Well, they're certainly not in the bedrooms.
NOEL	And they aren't in either of the attics. There are only a few old sacks and lots of cobwebs up there.
MOLLY	We searched all over the garden, but they weren't anywhere to be found. They couldn't have been there, or we should have seen their footprints in the snow.
DAVID	Well, they don't seem to be putting in an appearance. Don't you think we could have a few games until they return?
NOEL	We might as well; it's no good sitting around talking about it. What game shall we have?
JACK	I know, let us make rhymes up and see which is best. Come along, Molly, you start first.
MOLLY	At Christmas we have lots of fun, And lovely gifts for everyone.
JEAN	How clever Molly. Your turn next, Jack.
JACK	Whyever did I suggest this? I can't think of a thing.
MOLLY	Of course you can. Come on, just say anything.
JACK	Oh well! Here goes. (slowly) The snowman that I made today, Will soon have melted right away.
MOLLY	Not bad Jack. Can you do any better Jean?
JEAN	I'll try. One day whilst walking down the street, My doggy stole the butcher's meat. (All laugh).
BERYL	But you haven't got a dog, Jean.
JEAN	Well, it's only for the rhyme. See if you can do any better.
BERYL	Yes, of course I can. It's easy. Something has happened, it's very weird; Betty and Bobby have disappeared, Taking Mary with them too; Oh, whatever shall we do?
NOEL	Not bad, Beryl. I don't think I can beat that, but I'll try.

	<p>Old Jack Frost comes round at night; Fingers and toes he tries to bite, I hide myself beneath the clothes, And then he cannot bite my nose.</p> <p>(Laughter).</p>
DAVID	Robert, your turn next and then I'll be last.
ROBERT	Oh, I'm no good at this game.
DAVID	Oh, have a go!
ROBERT	<p>At parties I eat lots of cakes; And then, oh dear, my tummy aches.</p> <p>(Laughter).</p>
JEAN	Still thinking of eating Robert, after the big tea we've had.
DAVID	<p>Now it's my turn.</p> <p>It's getting late, we ought to go, But where the rest are, I don't know. They vanished, when the clock struck six; I'll bet they're getting up to tricks.</p>
(BETTY and BOBBY and MARY appear in doorway.)	
BETTY AND BOBBY	Are you talking about us?
NOEL AND DAVID	Good gracious, wherever have you been?
MARY	We've been to Nursery Rhyme Land. It's been such fun and we saw Father Christmas' toy shop. He was asleep in his cottage, but we peeped through the window and saw him. I'll never disbelieve again. Mary Mary quite contrary gave me these flowers from her garden, and the Queen of Hearts made some tarts for us.
BERYL	You lucky thing; I wish we could have gone too.
JACK	We thought at first that you were playing a joke on us.
DAVID	Yes, and we searched the house and garden for you.
JEAN	We played a game making rhymes up, whilst you were away. That was what we were doing when you came in.
BETTY	Yes, we heard you. We stood outside the door the whole time. You see, we only went to Nursery Rhyme Land for a very short visit, just to give you all time to realize that we were telling the truth about our adventure.
ROBERT	Well, we all believe you now.
NOEL	As you heard all the rhymes, you will be the best judges of them. Whose, do you think, was best?
BOBBY	They were all very good. I don't think there was much to choose between them, but I liked Noël's.
JACK	Yes, it was funny, wasn't it?
BERYL AND JEAN	(whisper together and giggle, and then begin to sing). Nowell, Nowell. (All the children join in).
ROBERT	That was fine. Let's just sing one more carol and then we must all go home. (All sing).

CURTAIN.