

LITTLE FOLKS

The Fairies Visit Gracie.

(By Maud Walker in the 'Junior Eagle'.)

Gracie sat on the ground beneath a big tree, playing with her dolls and picture books. Pretty soon, to her great astonishment, one of the picture books opened—a book of fairy tales—and out stepped one of the daintiest fairies in all the book's pages. She was the Princess Lala, and Gracie had read of her dozens and dozens of times, never

self on the limb of a tree. There he sat, dangling his legs to and fro, humming a merry tune. And soon many of the other fairies—the youngish ones—followed Hop-Over-My-Thumb's example, and the fine old tree swarmed with fairy life.

'Well, why shouldn't we turn some of these little pebbles into chairs and divans?' asked the Princess Lala. 'What is the good of being a fairy if one doesn't use the fairy's power?' And as she spoke

'Bring your dollies to me,' said the old fairy queen. Gracie obeyed her, placing Sissy and Mabel on the queenly lap. The dear little old fairy touched the lips of the dolls with the wee point of her tiny finger, and immediately Sissy and Mabel began to sing the prettiest little song you ever heard. Gracie's pleasure was great. She danced and laughed in glee, telling the old fairy queen that she should never, never forget her. 'Oh, how can I ever thank you enough?' she said, kneeling at the feet of the old fairy queen.

'All we ask is that you do not forget us,' said the dear little old dame. 'It has become the fashion for children to not read fairy stories. They now read tales of fiction dealing with problems and questions much too old for them. In fact, the children of to-day are about as old as their parents, and if you tell them about us they'll shake their heads and say: 'There's no such people as fairies.' Now, you are not that sort of little girl. You delight in hearing and reading about us. And what is most gratifying to us is the fact that you honestly believe in us.'

'Indeed I do believe in you,' declared Gracie. 'Should I ever come to disbelieve in fairies I should be quite unhappy. Why, there'd be nothing then but real people that do things just as I do them. No, I love the fairies and I'll never cease to believe in them.'

'Now, shall we have a banquet?' called down Hop-Over-My-Thumb. 'I'm getting awful hungry—even though I'm not a flesh and bone person.'

'Yes, the fairies all have stomachs,' laughed a big fairy, a funny fellow, who was always going about in the book disguised as a clown. 'We've stomachs and—'

'Tongues to clatter too much with,' put in a pretty little fairy miss who was seated beside the clown. 'Now, will you remain quiet until called upon to speak, sir?' she added, laughingly.

'A feast, a feast, a feast!' cried a chorus of voices from the tree limbs. 'Queen Mab, give us a feast!'

The little old queen smiled indulgently on her band of fairies and waved her wand about in front of her. Immediately there appeared—as if rising from the very earth—a table spread with all the good things to eat that child or fairy could possibly wish for. And in another minute Gracie, having



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finding the story dull. As Gracie was on the point of speaking to Princess Lala another page of the book flew open and out walked Hop-Over-My-Thumb, just as funny and as real as Gracie had ever seen him in picture and story. Then, as fast as they could lift the book-leaves and step forth upon the soft grass, came all the fairies of the book, making a beautiful and entertaining company. Gracie, now almost too much surprised to believe her eyes, looked from one to the other of her strange callers, saying in a fluttering voice of excitement, 'Well, how did this ever happen? But, it is lovely, perfectly lovely, for you to come to life and make me a visit. Will you all be seated? I am sorry I can only offer you a seat on the grass.'

'Oh, my dear Gracie,' said the fairy queen, who was a white-haired, pretty little old fairy dame, 'it is we who should apologize to you for coming so unexpectedly. If one isn't invited one must be grateful for a seat on the grass—or on a tree's limb.'

'Sure, in a tree's limb,' exclaimed Hop-Over-My-Thumb. And instantly the impish fellow—for he looked really impish in real life—gave a bound in the air and seated him-

self on the limb of a tree. There he sat, dangling his legs to and fro, humming a merry tune. And soon many of the other fairies—the youngish ones—followed Hop-Over-My-Thumb's example, and the fine old tree swarmed with fairy life.

'We've come to tell you how much we appreciate your love for us,' said one of the fairies, smiling on Gracie. 'We don't know of another child in the whole surrounding country who enjoys us more than you do.'

'And I enjoy you in real life much more than I do in that big book,' declared Gracie. 'And every day I read about you to my dolls, Sissy and Mabel. You see, although my dolls do not talk they can understand me,' she added, seeing that several of the fairies looked at Sissy and Mabel, who were lying on the ground.

'Well, would you like to have your dollies talk?' asked the old fairy queen, addressing Gracie.

'Oh, that would be perfectly lovely,' Gracie cried, running to Sissy and Mabel and sitting them up against the tree. 'There; you must be more ladylike when company—and such distinguished company, too—is present,' she said in a motherly, chiding tone.