

train to the skirt. I was eating grapes, and she popped up over the top of the fence, and held out her hands for one so prettily that I passed it over."

"Over the fence," breathed Rodney again, awestruck.

"Yes, she was hungry, I suppose. She sat on the top rail and spread her train gracefully behind her, and ate her grape as any lady would."

"My goodness!" said Rodney.

"That was the first time I met her," continued Papa Bent. "Yesterday she was waiting for me, and scampered toward me along the fence, and took the grape I had ready for her. She seemed especially fond of them."

"One grape! My, she wasn't very hungry. Just one grape! Say, did you find out where she lived, pa?"

"No, son, I don't know just where she hangs out, but Mr. Freeman, just below here, says she's been getting nuts and leaves together for quite a while, and hiding them near his horse-chestnut tree. She's a prudent little lady, and—"

"A gray-satin lady hiding nuts," broke in Rod. "What a funny thing— Oh, oh, I know, Papa Bent! I know. It's a little gray squirrel, papa, isn't it?"

And she's going to meet you today? Can't I go with you?"

"Me go, too," and Baby Nan began to get down from her high chair.

"Breakfast first," warned papa, and peace being restored, the oatmeal melted away like a snow-man in the sun.

### KATRINA'S NEW UMBRELLA

Frances Margaret Fox.

Katrina longed for rain. For that matter, so did the farmers. Their reasons were different. Katrina longed for rain because Aunt Patricia had brought her from New York a pearl-handled, blue silk umbrella. There was nothing like it in the village. The farmers, so far from thinking of umbrellas, would have rejoiced in a shower hard enough to make their roofs leak, so great was the danger of losing their crops.

From the time Katrina was possessor of this new umbrella, she put on surprising airs. At first the little girls in her class at school were envious, as Katrina wished them to be. Then, as days passed and Katrina became a wee bit lofty in all her ways, the girls began to realize that their little friend had placed between herself and them that blue silk umbrella. Katrina couldn't explain an example in fractions at the blackboard without a certain uplift of the chin that seemed to say, "Behold, I do this beneath the shelter of the finest umbrella in town."

If Katrina could have had her way, she would have carried the umbrella to school and used it as a parasol. This vanity her mother would not allow, so there was nothing for the umbrella to do but wait for a shower.

In the meantime, the little girls who used to be Katrina's best friends began leaving her out of their games. Katrina said they were jealous, not realizing what a disagreeable child she had become in a few weeks. Aunt Patricia would have been surprised had she known that instead of telling the little village girls how much she loved her auntie, Katrina had been bragging about this auntie's home in New York, and how many servants she kept.

There was a time when Katrina was different. Her mother noticed a sad change in the little girl even before the umbrella came. She was worried as any mother would be who knows that a kind heart is much better than the possession of many pearl-handled silk umbrellas.

One Friday afternoon when the school children were to have music and recitations instead of their lessons, there were clouds in the sky. Katrina said she was sure it was going to rain; nevertheless mother shook her head when the child insisted that she must carry her new umbrella. Mother didn't believe it was going to rain that day. This shows that she wasn't a good weather prophet. It began to rain before the children had been in school half an hour. By the time Katrina had performed her part of the programme

by reciting "We are Seven," rain was pelting on the schoolhouse roof steadily and persistently, as if it meant to continue without stopping for a week.

Katrina thought of her umbrella; then she thought of mother's black silk umbrella; next she wished for mother's common umbrella; after that she remembered with longing the old umbrella in the attic.

When school was dismissed Katrina discovered that all the little girls were provided with umbrellas; moreover, they whispered while gazing at her Sunday white dress and dainty hat. She thought Elizabeth Morgan said, "Serves her right." It soon became evident that not one of them intended to share an umbrella with Katrina. At last little Angie Munson was so sure of the fact that she did a brave thing. She offered to take Katrina home beneath her old family umbrella. It was the worst-looking umbrella in the village; faded into a dingy brown with ribs bent and twisted.

"The boys played tent with it," Angie explained, blushing rosy red at the same time. She was so ashamed of that umbrella.

"It's big enough for two, though," Katrina interrupted, "and I don't want to get wet. Angie, you are the dearest girl ever."

Before Angie and Katrina had walked a block, Angie had forgotten to be ashamed of her umbrella. The cloak of vanity Katrina had been wearing seemed to slip off in that shower, and some way, beneath the Munson family umbrella, Miss Katrina returned to herself, becoming once more the little girl she used to be.

On reaching Katrina's home, Angie was persuaded against her will to come in and have a cup of hot chocolate.

"But I'm in a hurry to get home tonight," she said to Katrina's mother.

"We won't keep you more than ten minutes," urged Katrina, "so you must come in."

When Angie stepped out on the veranda to take her umbrella, it was gone.



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"Your brother borrowed it," explained the grocer's boy, who had been waiting at a neighbour's gate. "I heard him say he was going to borrow it for half an hour while you were visiting with Katrina."

"O, dear," exclaimed Angie, "then by the time I get home Aunt Florence will be gone. She said she couldn't —"

"Why, don't forget that I have an umbrella," interrupted Katrina, dashing into the hall and returning with the pearl-handled blue silk umbrella that had waited so long for a shower.

"What, that?" demanded Angie, scarcely believing her own eyes.

"Why, of course. And, dear me, I never was so glad to be the owner of it as I am this minute."

All the way down the long village street that afternoon Katrina's schoolmates gazed in wonder through their windows when they saw Angie Munson's smiling face beneath the blue silk umbrella.

This is the end of the umbrella story, because when Katrina discovered that her new umbrella was big enough for two, she discovered at the same time the way to happiness. She had so nearly missed the path.

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