

Helping Hands

— Connie Manson

Once there was a little girl who lived in a little yellow cottage at the edge of the wood with her mother. One day, not long ago, when she was playing outside she found a big brown mushroom near the vegetable garden. Underneath the mushroom cap, she saw a little hobgoblin in the grass lying on his back. He wore a red hat that was a little crumpled and needed a washing.

“I want a little friend that I can always carry with me,” she thought. “Will you come and live in my pocket and play with me?” she asked the hobgoblin. “Well, then, pick me up, and tuck me into your pocket, and be quick about it,” he muttered a bit crossly, and so she knelt down, picked up the hobgoblin and tucked him into her pocket.

When they were playing, the hobgoblin would whisper words to her that only she could hear. Whenever mother said, “And now we put away our toys,” the little girl would hear the hobgoblin whisper, “Not today, not today, I’m much too tired.” And then the little girl would answer her mother with the very same words! “Not today, not today, I’m much too tired!” And when her mother would say, “We set the table now for supper time,” the lazy little hobgoblin would whisper to the girl, “Sneak away, go out to play!” And so the little girl would listen to the lazy hobgoblin, and she would tiptoe away outside, and hide in the bushes until all the work was done. Then she would come inside just in time for supper and say, “Oh, were you looking for me? I was playing in the bushes, and I did not hear you call! I shall help another day.” But she never would.

One night, as the little girl lay sleeping in her bed, Mommy sat beside her and said a prayer to the child’s guardian angel. “Dear angel, please show my little girl how to use her helping hands.” In the heavens, a star began to shine and twinkle brightly. Tiny bits of stardust shook away from the star and fell down from the sky. They flew through the windowpane and landed on the fingertips of the little girl, gently dancing there. Mother’s eyes shone brightly as she quietly slipped away to her own bed for a peaceful night’s sleep.

The next morning, the girl awoke as the sun peeked up into the sky. Something was tickling her fingers! What was there? She looked and saw tiny fairies dancing on her fingertips!

They tickled her fingers again, which made the girl giggle, and then the golden fairy said,

*Up, up, dear child,
Raise your little head,
Smooth the covers, tuck the corners,
Time to make the bed!*

And before the little girl knew what was happening, she was up and the bed was nicely made!



Detail from “Lantern Walk” by Yasmeen Amina Olya

Red rosy strawberry fairy was the next to speak in a cheery fairy voice,

*Here my dear, your way is clear
Come and take the broom,
Little girls with helping hands
Always sweep the room!*

The fairy flew to the place where the broom sat, and soon the little girl had swept the floor as clean as clean could be!

Little pumpkin fairy, round and golden was the next to speak,

*Little girl, little girl,
Helping hands are able
To make ready all around
The settings on the table!*

Pumpkin fairy gently pulled the girl to the places where the napkins and the dishes and the silverware sat. Soon the table was ready for a yummy breakfast!

Mother woke up, and went into the kitchen to cook the morning meal. There was her little girl patiently waiting for her, "Good morning, Mother!" said the little girl and her eyes were shining.

After breakfast was cooked and eaten, pink primrose fairy said,

*Little girl, little girl,
Helping hands are able
To pick up dishes all around,
And wipe the breakfast table.*

As quick as a twinkle the dishes were whisked away, and the table was wiped until it shone bright and clean.

The little girl went outside to play. She went to the garden, and built fairy houses for her new friends from bits of bark and she laid soft moss underneath for a carpet. She carefully laid out shells for drinking cups, and built a little table to set them on.

When lunch time had almost come, her mother called from the doorway, "And now we come inside to set the table."

The little girl got up to go inside, when, "Ouch!" something bit her thumb! It was lazy hobgoblin lying in her pocket who had just woken up for the day! "Go into the bushes to hide," he whispered. "Do not help or go inside." She did not know what to do. Whose voice should she listen to?

Just then, the tiniest blue periwinkle fairy sang in a wee fairy voice,

*Little girl, little girl,
There is something your hands can do,
Lay the hobgoblin where he was found,
Then he will not trouble you.*

So the little girl found a place near the garden where all the weeds grew, and there was the mushroom where she had found the lazy hobgoblin, and she put him back there once more.

*You lazy fellow,
Here you will stay,
It's with the fairies
I'd rather play.*

Then the little girl went inside to use her hands for helping. ♦

Connie Manson has taught Waldorf kindergarten, nursery and parent-child programs for over 19 years. She has shared the magic of puppetry and music as a professional puppeteer and has taught in workshops and training programs nationwide. She currently teaches at Waldorf Sarasota in Florida.