

For the Classroom

Nimble Nim's Ring: A Play for Puppets

— Janene Ping

Author's Note: *I created this puppet play to be performed at our opening celebration at the beginning of the school year, as a picture of our ring time of seasonal song and verse. So many children (and parents) have not yet experienced joining hands in movement and song! To simplify the play, the list of friends can be omitted and just two fairy folk can dance together.*

Nimble-Nim, the nut-brown elf,
Lived in an oak tree by himself.
He helped the nuts grow ripe and round
And then he shook them to the ground.

MUSIC AS A SQUIRREL SCAMPERS ON THE GROUND
BELOW, REVELING IN THE NUT SHOWER

When the grand old oak began to sway,
Nimble-Nim's work was done for the day.
The forest provided for all of his needs,
He supped on dewdrops, berries and seeds,
And then was off to skip in the sun,
Find his friends, and share some fun!

His first stop was the garden bower,
Where he sang a song to the Lily flower:

Oh, Lily-Lee, let's dance

Oh, Lily-Lee, let's play!

Oh, Lily-Lee, let's live in light that shines today!

And the bright round face of his fairy friend
Peeped out, just then, around the bend.
She loved to play with Nimble-Nim,
And flew straight out to welcome him!

Joining hands they formed a ring,
With feet a-tapping, they began to sing.
And all the other fairy folk
Joined in a circle under the oak.
Schnickel-Schnack and Tinka-Ting,
Munca Mouse and Willow Wing,
Trillium and Billow-Blue,
They all came running two by two
And joined the circle to sing and play
Upon the grass that merry day.

MUSIC AS THE FRIENDS DANCE IN A RING

But then they stopped their dancing—Why?
A groaning croak came from a log nearby. . .
Someone was complaining mournfully,
Bitterly, and scornfully.
Old Grumble-Stump, the hoarfrost toad,
Invited NO ONE into his abode.
He sat, complaining with shaking head,
And rarely left his mossy bed.
“The day is gray and damp, and cold—
And it's only darkness I behold.”

Following a fine kind whim,
The fairy friends then called to him:
“But Grumble-Stump, the sky is blue!
The sun shines bright, the day is new!
If you will come out and join our play,
You can enjoy this beautiful day!”
Not to wrestle with the reason why,
They listened to hear the Toad's reply:
“This is what MY eyes do see.
Leave me alone and let me be!”

The friends looked at each other in sad dismay;
They had really wanted the Toad to play.
When suddenly on fluttering wing,
Owl arrived his wisdom to sing.
For Owl's advice brought loving light;
He knew how to turn the wrong to right.

“Whooo,” said the Owl, “Just let Toadie be,
Honor each friend and let him be free.
Enjoy your ring time as you know best,
And Toad may yet be the circle's fine guest.”

Now watch, dear children, to see the rest,
For in Owl's heart, he does know the best.

MUSIC AS THE FAIRY FRIENDS RESUME DANCING.
TOAD PEEPS OUT OF HIS LOG AND SLOWLY BECOMES
INTERESTED IN THE DANCE. FINALLY HE AWKWARDLY
JUMPS TO THE CENTER OF THE RING AND BEGINS TO
JOIN IN AS OWL WATCHES. PUPPETS EXIT DANCING TO
MUSIC ◆