



"JIMMINIES"

THE GATE HOUSE STORIES

By
Wm. DONAHEY



"Dar" he cried as he tucked the bag strings down the child's neck."

THE old gateman's little house at the railroad crossing was filled most of the time with the children of the neighborhood. In fact, sometimes they were packed in so tightly that Mr. Binjy had difficulty in lowering the gates for the passing trains.

The good gateman had made it a custom to serve afternoon tea at 4 o'clock, and you may believe that few of the children in the vicinity failed to take advantage of this social opportunity.

Little Dot Mead, however, could not be induced to enter the gate house again after her first visit. Dot's sister, Betty, had tried in vain to coax the child in, but Dot received all advances with flat refusal. Even Jeff Blinn's assurance that no harm would come to her in Mr. Binjy's house failed to move the child. So Betty gave up in despair, for Dot thought the Boy Scout an oracle and if his arguments failed to convince her nothing would. Betty was greatly incensed at Dot's behavior, for it fell to the lot of the older sister to look after the smaller one, and if Dot continued to feel as she now did it meant that Betty would miss many good times in the old gateman's house.

Mr. Binjy felt there must be some reason for her absence, so he made up his mind to ask Betty about it. "Where's Dot?" he asked as Betty and the Gate twins came putting into the house one afternoon.

"O, she's home," her sister said, dropping into the tiny window seat.

"But why doesn't she come to visit me any more?" asked the gateman.

"Why—why—she's afraid," confessed Betty.

"Afraid," exclaimed Mr. Binjy. "Why, what in the world is the child afraid of?"

"The little nippy is afraid of the genie you told her lived in there," laughed Betty, pointing to the closet in the corner.

"It's all my fault," cried Morgan Drew from his favorite seat behind the stove. "When she asked about a genie I should have told her it was a good fairy instead of a bad one that killed people."

"That's too bad," said Mr. Binjy, shaking his white head. "I think it's very wrong to frighten children. Once I knew a little fellow who was so badly scared he lost his mind,

and he's never gained his senses to this day." "O, she'll get over it in a couple of days," Betty assured the gateman.

"You tell her, Betty," said Mr. Binjy, "that a genie is only a make believe, and that I wouldn't let a bad make believe genie live in my closet."

While this conversation was taking place Dot sat silently on the Meads' big front steps holding her dimpled chin in her two fat little hands. So wrapped up in her thoughts was the little lady that she never noticed, or pretended not to see, the black figure of Azariah Jeremiah Bean as he stopped, grinning, on the sidewalk before her.

Mr. Bean, be it known, was a chocolate colored lad of some ten summers, with a big heart and an astonishing amount of information on witchcraft and charms. "Beany," as he was familiarly known by the children of the neighborhood, continued to grin for several minutes, till, receiving no recognition, he ventured a remark:

"Hello, dar, little period," he said.

"I ain't no period," denied Dot.

"Well, you all's a Dot, ain't you?" asked Beany.

"Yes, I'm a Dot," agreed the little lady. "Well, den, if you's a Dot, den you's a period," grinned Mr. Bean.

"I tell you, I ain't no period, I'm a Dot," Miss Mead replied with heat, and fell again into the thoughtful attitude in which the colored boy had found her.

"What's de matter?" Beany ventured as he saw the far away look in Dot's eyes.

"O, I's just finking."

"What's you thinkin' of?"

"I was just finking about jimminies."

"Land sakes," exclaimed Beany. "What's jimminies?"

"O, they're fairies that eats people. Mr. Binjy's got one in his closet and I won't go there any more cause I'm afraid of 'em."

"I knows what you mean," cried Beany. "You means a genie."

"Yes, that's it," nodded Dot.

"You all ought to have a charm."

"What's a charm?"

"Why, a charm is something which keeps off witches, and ghosts, and things," answered the lad.

"Are they big like a lion or elephant?" asked Dot.

"Why, course not," replied Beany. "You all got fo' to carry a charm 'round yo' neck, and how in the world does yo' spect to tote a elephant 'round wif you?"

"Where do you get charms?" asked Dot.

"Why, you done makes 'em."

"I'm going to ask Jeff Blinn to make me a charm."

"He don't know nothin' 'bout charms."

"Well, he's a Boy Scout and he can do most every thing," protested Dot.

"I knows dat Boy Scouts is pretty pert," drawled Beany, "but they don't know nothin' 'bout charms."

"Could you make one for me?" pleaded Dot.

"Sure," answered the good hearted lad thoughtfully. "I'se just tryin' to calculate whether a witch charm would do fo' a genie. Specs it would, fo' a genie mus' be somethin' like a witch."

"O, please, Beany, make me a charm, for I do so want to go and see Mr. Binjy," cried Dot, dancing up and down with excitement.

"You done stay here while I goes home and looks fo' a charm," cautioned Beany as he moved away.

Skipping across the street, the lad cut through a lawn, and, ducking nimbly under a fence, he disappeared.

"I wonder," thought Dot, as she sat waiting, "whether that charm'll keep toads away."

Beany's home was in a small house which sat at one end of a large coal yard where his father was employed as watchman. Dashing into the house, Beany hurried to a small bedroom, where, crawling under the bed, he soon

appeared with an old cigar box. Gathering several small objects from its dingy depths, he pushed it back under the bed and quickly returned to the waiting Dot.

"Now, here," he panted, as he pushed something into a small, much soiled tobacco bag, "you all must tie dish here bag 'round yo' neck, an' if you done wear it all de time den dat genie he gwine not to hurt you."

Dot eagerly exposed her small neck while Beany tied the string.

"Dar," he cried as he tucked the bag strings down the child's neck, "you all's got to keep dis here a secret, 'cause if any one 'cept you an' me knows anything 'bout dis here charm, it'll done do no good."

"O, I won't say nuffin'," said Dot, stuffing the bag under her dress. "And now I'm going right over to see Mr. Binjy."

"You all let me know if dat charm don't work," said Beany, as he moved off down the street.

Dot carefully covered all signs of the bag and hurried towards the gate house as fast as her fat legs would carry her. When she

boldly walked into the little house she was received with open arms. Nothing was said about the genie, for the good gateman had seen the little figure through the window as she made her way towards them, and he had asked the children not to say anything about the unpleasant subject. To the surprise of all, Dot seemed to have no fear of the genie; in fact, she sat quite near the little closet with calm indifference.

"I wonder," thought Betty, "what has made Dot so brave." But as Mr. Binjy handed her a cup of tea at that moment she thought of it no more, and the sisters were on their way home before it again entered her mind.

"I say, Dot," asked Betty, as they walked along, "what changed your mind about being afraid of Mr. Binjy's house?"

"O, nuffin," answered Dot. "I just changed, that's all."

Although Betty asked many questions she could get little satisfaction from her small sister.

"I'll bet something has happened to make Dot so brave," thought Betty, for she knew that when once Dot's little mind was set against something it was hard to change it.

However, Betty learned the reason for Dot's bravery sooner than she had expected. As company had dropped in at the Mead home that evening Dot had been kept up beyond her usual bedtime and had fallen sound asleep. Picking Dot up in her arms, Betty carried the sleeping child up to her bed, and when she unfastened the little dress the tobacco bag was exposed.

"Well, what's this," gasped Betty, as she fingered the bag, and quickly untying the string about Dot's neck she shook the contents onto the bed. Two pieces of stone, a small black feather, a tuft of hair, and a long sharp tooth, much resembling a cat's tooth, rolled out before the big sister's startled eyes.

"Well, I declare," exploded Betty.

At the sound of her sister's voice Dot opened one sleepy eye, and at the sight of the treasure bag both eyes popped open with alarming quickness.

"It's mine, it's mine," Dot cried, reaching out her hands. "Beany gave it to me."

"But what is it, Dot?" asked Betty.

"It's—it's my charm to keep off the jimminies."

(Another Gate House story will appear next week.)

The TEENIE WEEENIES

HAVE A RACE.

By
Wm. DONAHEY

ONE afternoon, while the Teenie Weenies were out walking, they stopped before a house where their friend, the mouse, lived.

"Let's go in and call on Mr. Mouse," said the General.

"Yes, let's do it," cried the rest, and at once they all hurried into the cellar.

The entrance to the home of Mr. Mouse was through a crack between two bricks. The General knocked loudly several times, and receiving no answer, he told the rest to wait for him, and stepped boldly in. He found no one at home, and so, leaving his card, returned to the waiting Teenie Weenies.

"I'm awfully sorry Mr. Mouse is out," said the Lady of Fashion, as the little people moved away, "I haven't seen him for a long time."

"Here he comes now," cried the Cook, pointing toward a pile of lumber at the other end of the cellar. "And there's another mouse with him."

The mouse saw the Teenie Weenies, and came bounding joyfully up to them.

"My, it does my eyes good to see you again," he cried. "It's a long time since I have seen you."

Motioning the other mouse to come up, he introduced him to all the Teenie Weenies. "I'm delighted to meet you," the new mouse said, making a deep bow.

The mice and the Teenie Weenies sat down, and Mr. Mouse told such funny stories that the sides of the little people grew sore from laughing so hard.

"Let's have a race," cried the Cow Boy, after they had all talked for some time.

The mice agreed, and a race course was soon chosen. The race was to be run between two long boards, and an old scrubbing brush was brought up for a hurdle at the end of the track. The Cow Boy was to ride one mouse and the Duncie, who claimed to be a good rider, the other.

"Now," said the General, "the man who rides down the length of these boards and jumps over the scrubbing brush first will win the race."

When all was ready, the signal was given and down the track came the mice, as fast as they could run, with the Cow Boy and the Duncie sticking tightly to their backs.

As the mice drew near the hurdle the Duncie was ahead, and it looked as though he would win the race. But just as the mouse sprang into the air to leap over the brush the Duncie lost his grip, and was tossed into the air.

The mouse jumped over the brush, and when the Duncie came down he hit the ground with a great thud.

The Cow Boy stuck tightly to his mouse, and, leaping gracefully over the brush, he was declared winner.

The Duncie was not hurt by his fall. He joined loudly in the laughter that greeted his tumble, and was the first to start a cheer for the Cow Boy.

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