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BELL**

NURSERY
COMEDIES

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Lady Florence Eveleen Eleanore Olliffe Bell
Nursery Comedies / Twelve
Tiny Plays for Children

WHAT HAPPENED TO HENNY PENNY

CHARACTERS

HENNY PENNY.
DUCKY DADDLES.
COCKIE LOCKIE.
GOOSEY POOSEY.
TURKY LURKY.
Mr. FOX.

WHAT HAPPENED TO HENNY PENNY

H. P. – Oh dear me! Oh dear me! What was it, I wonder? What could it have been? I must scream for help. Help! Help!

Enter Cockie Lockie

C. L. – What's the matter? Henny Penny, what is happening?

H. P. – Oh dear me! I don't know what it was, that is the worst of it.

C. L. – You don't know what it was?

H. P. – How should I, when I never saw it? It fell on to my head.

C. L. — *What* fell on to your head? What a stupid hen you are!

H. P. – I was under a beanstack pecking about, and suddenly something fell from the top of the stack on to my head. I thought at first it was a bean or a piece of stick, but now I think of it, I am sure it was something much heavier – a piece of the sky, or something of that sort.

C. L. – A piece of the sky falling out! But, Henny, this is serious.

H. P. – Of course! That's what I feel. That's why I screamed at once for help.

C. L. – You see, if the sky is coming to bits, I think the Queen of England ought to know it.

H. P. – I think she ought. Let's go and tell her!

C. L. – Agreed! We'll start at once. I'll just crow first very loud that everybody may know something is happening.

H. P. – Very well, and I'll cluck.

(They crow and cluck.)

C. L. – Now, then, we can start.

(A voice outside is heard.)

Voice. – Hullo there! Cockie Lockie! Henny Penny!

C. L. – There's that stupid Ducky Daddles.

Enter Ducky Daddles

C. L. – Well, Ducky Daddles, what do you want?

D. D. – I just wanted to come and have a chat. I saw you and Henny Penny starting off for a pleasant walk together, and I thought I'd come too.

C. L. – Ah! but this is no common walk.

H. P. – Indeed it is not.

D. D. – Why, where are you going to?

C. L. – We're going to London to see the Queen.

D. D. – The Queen! What for?

H. P. – To tell her a most important piece of news.

C. L. – A great piece of the sky fell out close to Henny Penny's head, and nearly killed her.

D. D. – Dear me! That is important. The Queen ought to know it at once. I'll come with you.

C. L. – You! Do you think you can walk so far?

D. D. – Oh, dear, yes! Besides, I daresay, we shall find some place on the road where we can get slugs or snails, or something of that sort, in case I feel faint.

C. L. – Very well, then, are you ready? Now we'll start.

D. D. – Come on, then. I'll just quack first to let people know where I am.

(Quacks. They prepare to start off arm in arm. A voice outside is heard.)

Voice. – Hullo! Cockie Lockie! Henny Penny! Ducky Daddles!

C. L. – Now, what is it? We shall never get off at this rate.

D. D. – It is that silly Goosey Poosey.

Enter Goosey Poosey

G. P. – There you are, Ducky Daddles! I've been looking for you everywhere!

C. L. – What do you want?

G. P. – I just wanted to see what you were doing, and have a chat. What a horrid day it is! the roads are so dry there is no walking in them.

D. D. – Well, I am sorry I've not time to stay with you. I'm just off to London to see the Queen.

G. P. – You, Ducky Daddles! Something very strange must have happened to make you go so far.

D. D. – Indeed it has, and what do you think?

C. L. – Guess what fell on to Henny Penny's head.

G. P. – An acorn, or perhaps even a chestnut.

D. D. – A chestnut! Oh, if that were all! No, my friend. It was a piece of the sky, a great, solid slab of blue sky, that fell *clump* on to the top of poor Henny Penny's head, and nearly killed her.

G. P. – Oh, how terrible! Have you sent for the police?

C. L. – No, we're going to London to tell the Queen. We think she ought to know.

G. P. – Indeed she ought, and at once. I'll come with you to see what she says.

C. L. – Very well! Only you must not keep waiting to splash about in all the puddles, then.

G. P. – Of course not, when I'm out walking on business.

C. L. – Very well, then, we'll start without losing any more time.

G. P. – I'll just hiss first in case there's an enemy in the road. (*Hisses.*) Now, then, I'm ready.

C. L. – Then let us start.

(Cockie Lockie *arm in arm* with Henny Penny. Goosey Poosey *arm in arm* with Ducky Daddles. A voice outside is heard.)

Voice. – Cockie Lockie! Henny Penny! Goosey Poosey! Ducky Daddles!

C. L. – Dear me! We shall never get to London.

G. P. – It's that gobbling Turkey Lurky!

Enter Turkey Lurky

T. L. – Ha! ha! my friends. This is very nice. Oho! Aha! Where are you all off to so merrily?

C. L. – Not merrily, indeed! Our business is most serious.

T. L. – You make my feathers stand on end. What *is* the matter?

G. P. – Haven't you heard? The most terrible thing has happened!

H. P. – One half of the sky fell on me as I was sitting under a haystack, and we don't know what is going to happen next.

T. L. – Oh dear! This *is* terrible! Suppose the other half were to come down?

C. L. – Exactly! That's what we're afraid of. We're going to the Queen of England to see what she can do.

T. L. – A very good thing to do! I'll come with you and explain it all to her. Oho!

C. L. – Are you sure you're not too fat to walk so far?

T. L. – Too fat! Aha! On the contrary, I shall make you look respectable. We shall be admitted to the Queen at once. I'll just gobble first to let her know we're coming.

(Gobbles. They prepare to start as before, Turkey in front. A voice outside is heard.)

Voice. – Stop! Stop! Good people, one moment, if you please.

D. D. – Why it's Mr. Fox!

H. P. – Is it safe to let him come?

T. L. – Oh dear, yes! There are quite enough of us to be a match for him. Oho! Aha!

Enter Mr. Fox

Mr. F. – Good afternoon, my friends. What a pleasant gathering you have here! You look as though you were going to enjoy yourselves.

C. L. – Alas! No! Nothing so festive. We are going to London on most serious business.

Mr. F. – To London?

G. P. – Yes, indeed! The whole sky has got loose and is slipping about in the most dangerous manner.

D. D. – It would have killed Henny Penny if she hadn't got under a beanstack.

Mr. F. – Oh how horrible! What shall we do?

C. L. – We're going to London to tell the Queen.

Mr. F. – To London! Why, that is capital! I'm going there myself.

D. D. – Are you, indeed!

Mr. F. – And what's more, I know a short cut to London, that will get you there in less than half the time.

C. L. – Oh, then, pray show it to us. Every minute is precious.

Mr. F. – You can't possibly mistake the road. Directly you get out of here, you will see a dark path to the right, that looks rather like the entrance to a cavern. However, you may be sure it leads to London, and you'll find the Queen sitting at the other end of it.

T. L. – Ah! that's capital! Oho! Aha! Hurrah!

Mr. F. – You all go on in front, and I'll bring up the rear, in case a lion comes up behind us.

C. L. – We'll go in single file this time.

(Exit, each making his own noise. Fox follows, slyly dancing.)

(After a minute all their voices heard together, then a pause. Fox re-enters covered with feathers. He crosses the stage silently, with a smile.)

Mr. F. – Henny Penny was the nicest! The others were rather tough!

Curtain

LITTLE PETSY

CHARACTERS

MRS. SIMONDS.
MRS. ROBERTS.
PETSY.

LITTLE PETSY

Mrs. Roberts discovered, in walking things

Mrs. R. – I wish Mrs. Simonds would appear! It is so rude to keep people waiting in this way when they come to see you. (*Looks at books, etc.*) Well, I wonder how much longer she's going to be. I would not have come if I had not wanted to explain to her about that bazaar we are getting up.

Enter Petsy with toys

Ah, how do you do, darling? How are you? Will you shake hands? (*Petsy turns away.*) You don't know my name, do you?

P. – I do, then.

Mrs. R. – You do? Who am I?

P. – You're Mrs. Roberts. I know it, because the maid came and told Mamma so, and then Mamma said, "Mrs. Roberts, bother!" and she told me to come and say she would be here in a minute.

Mrs. R. – (*Aside.*) Delightful child, this. (*Aloud.*) Then as you know my name, won't you shake hands?

P. – Shan't.

(*Makes a face at Mrs. R., and turns her back to her.*)

Enter Mrs. Simonds

Mrs. S. – Ah, my dear Mrs. Roberts, I am so glad to see you.

Mrs. R. – (*Aside.*) So I understand!

(*They shake hands.*)

Mrs. S. – I am so sorry to have kept you waiting. I was just taking off my things.

(*Draws forward chair for Mrs. R., they sit.*)

Mrs. R. – Oh, not at all. I've not been here very long.

Mrs. S. – I sent down my little Petsy to amuse you.

Mrs. R. – Oh, thank you, yes, she came.

Mrs. S. – It is impossible to feel dull where she is. Such an original child, so full of life!

Mrs. R. – Oh, indeed! I came to see you, Mrs. Simonds, about the charity bazaar at Wandsworth.

Mrs. S. – The bazaar, yes.

P. – (*Loud.*) Ma! Ma! How long is she going to stay?

Mrs. S. – (*Smiling.*) Oh, dear, dear, Petsy, Mrs. Roberts will be quite shocked at you! She will really, won't you, Mrs. Roberts?

Mrs. R. – (*Tries to smile.*) Oh, dear no! Sweet child!

(*Petsy goes on making a noise with drum, while Mrs. Roberts tries to speak.*)

Mrs. R. – (*Obliged to shout.*) It seems – there has been some difficulty – about the hall.

Mrs. S. – About the hall – yes. (*Looking round at Petsy.*) She is such a merry child, it makes one quite happy to see her!

Mrs. R. – (*Aside.*) I am glad it has that effect upon some one!

Mrs. S. – You were saying about the hall —

P. – Ma! Mamma!

Mrs. S. – Yes, darling, yes. About the hall —

P. – Ma! Ma! Ma!

Mrs. S. – I don't know why there should be any difficulty —

P. – Ma! Ma!

Mrs. S. – What is it, my dear one? What do you want?

P. – May I play with the silver inkstand?

Mrs. S. – If you'll take great care of it, yes. (*To Mrs. R.*) Did you ever hear such ideas as the child has? Such an active mind, never quiet!

Mrs. R. – (*Aside.*) Well, perhaps now she's got the inkstand she'll be quiet.

Mrs. S. – You have no idea what quaint things she says sometimes. You must get me to tell you some of them next time we meet.

Mrs. R. – Oh, thank you! Then you think we shall be able to get the hall?

P. – (*Goes up to Mrs. Roberts and pulls her cloak.*) Why do you wear this ugly cloak?

Mrs. S. – Oh, really, Petsy! I don't know what Mrs. Roberts will think! Such a pretty cloak, too.

P. – No, it isn't. It's hideous, and so is her bonnet. It's like Miss Jane's cloak in the poem.

Mrs. R. – In the poem?

Mrs. S. – Yes, that's a little poem she has learnt. You can't think what a memory she has for that kind of thing. I should like you to hear her recite it. You can't think how prettily she does it.

Mrs. R. – Does she, indeed.

Mrs. S. – Petsy, will you say your poetry to Mrs. Roberts?

P. – No, I shan't.

Mrs. S. – Oh, now do! Mrs. Roberts would like it so much, wouldn't you?

Mrs. R. – Oh, of all things.

Mrs. S. – She stands on a chair and says it. You can't think how pretty it looks. Come now, Petsy, won't you?

(*Mrs. S. puts her on a chair, Petsy jumps down and kicks away the chair.*)

Mrs. R. – Well, never mind – don't worry her about it now.

Mrs. S. – Oh, but I should so like you to hear her. Come, Petsy, you needn't stand on a chair – stand there with your hands behind you. Now begin: "Pretty Miss Jane – "

P. – I won't, then! (*Gives her mother a thump.*) There!

Mrs. S. – She's so unexpected, isn't she? (*To Petsy.*) If you won't say the poem to Mrs. Roberts, you will play the violin to her, won't you?

Mrs. R. – (*Horrified.*) The violin!

Mrs. S. – Yes, she does show such talent! You'll be quite surprised.

Mrs. R. – (*Aside.*) Yes, I shall be quite surprised if she does.

Mrs. S. – Of course, it's a little squeaky at times – but, after all, she's such a child, it's a wonder she plays at all.

Mrs. R. – It is indeed. (*Aside.*) Especially to visitors who don't want to hear her. (*Aloud.*) I am sorry I can't stay to-day, I just came to see about that hall.

Mrs. S. – Ah, to be sure, the hall, yes – we've settled nothing. Do stay and have tea with us.

Mrs. R. – Tea... I am afraid it is rather late.

Mrs. S. – Oh, do stay, we shall be so snug, just we three – for Petsy always comes in. There she sits in her high chair, and keeps me alive with her prattle.

Mrs. R. – (*Aside.*) Ah, that quite decides me. (*Aloud.*) I am afraid I can hardly do that to-day. I have an appointment at five. (*Looking at watch.*)

P. – Ma! (*Twitching Mrs. S.'s gown.*) May I have butter as well as jam on my toast?

Mrs. S. – Oh, oh! my dear child! Really! (*she knows her own mind, I assure you!*)

Mrs. R. – (*Aside.*) So it appears. (*Aloud.*) I am afraid I can't stay longer to-day. Good-bye.

Mrs. S. – Good-bye. I'm so sorry you can't stay to tea.

P. – I'm *so* glad!

Mrs. S. – Oh! Oh! really, dear Petsy. She likes being alone with her mother, that is the fact.

Mrs. R. – No doubt. Then you will let me know about the bazaar, won't you?

Mrs. S. – Oh, of course, I will, and then you must come here that we may have a good talk and settle everything – and we will persuade Petsy to sing her song, and dance her dance! she dances like a fairy, I assure you.

Mrs. R. – I have no doubt of it. Good-bye.

Mrs. S. – Good-bye.

P. – Good-bye, old Mother Roberts, good-bye!

Mrs. S. – (*Playfully.*) Oh, Petsy, little Petsy!

(*Exit Mrs. S. showing Mrs. R. out. Petsy pulling Mrs. S.'s skirts to hold her back.*)

Curtain

RATHER A PRIG

CHARACTERS

ELEANOR.

WALTER.

RATHER A PRIG

Eleanor. – (*Calling outside.*) Walter! Walter! (*Running in.*) Here you are, at last! Do come and play in the garden!

Walter. – (*Who is walking about with a book.*) Certainly not! Don't you see I am deep in study?

E. – But it's play-time.

W. – I dislike play-time.

E. – What a dull creature! Do you mean to say that you never play?

W. – As seldom as possible.

E. – What a pity! I have just got some new reins, and I wanted to play at horses. I do love being a horse.

W. – That is a natural preference. The horse has ever been a favoured companion of man. It is even on record that the Roman Emperor, Caligula —

E. – I will not talk about Roman Emperors during play-time. Come along, I will drag the cart and you shall drive standing up, if you like, as they do at the circus.

W. – That is a custom which dates from the most remote antiquity. Pictorial representations of standing charioteers are found on the Assyrian friezes and the Egyptian tombs —

E. – (*Stopping her ears.*) I will not talk about the Egyptians during play-time. Come, will you drive the cart?

W. – Certainly not.

E. – Then shall we skip? Look, I have a new skipping-rope, which my father gave me last week.

W. – The hemp from which that rope was made was doubtless derived from the flax grown in the province of Ulster, in Ireland, especially in the county of Antrim, of which the principal towns are Belfast, Lisbon, and Carrickfergus.

E. – Oh, bother the county of Antrim and the province of Ulster! I don't care to know where the skipping-rope grew. I want to skip with it.

W. – That is quite a savage instinct; the remarkable agility of the South Sea Islanders —

E. – I won't talk of the South Sea Islanders during play-time. You won't skip, then?

W. – Certainly not.

E. – Then let's be soldiers. I love playing at soldiers.

W. – That is somewhat of an unfeminine instinct, although it is justified by more than one example in history. Thus, Boadicea —

E. – Oh, shut up, or I will run you through with my sword! It's just like a real one. It's made of the most beautiful steel.

W. – Then the blade probably came from the district of Cleveland in Yorkshire, where the iron and steel industries may be seen in their greatest development. You have, doubtless, heard of the steel works of Eston, and the blast furnaces of Middlesborough?

E. – I don't know what a blast furnace is.

W. – Allow me to describe that ingenious construction to you.

E. – No, thank you, not in my play-time. I am going to get some daisies to make a daisy-chain.

W. – You doubtless have a herbarium?

E. – No. I don't believe they grow in this garden.

W. – Oh, too ignorant girl! A herbarium is not a flower, it is a collection of dried flowers and plants.

E. – Ah, well! I haven't one then.

W. – That is a mistake. You should carefully dry the plants and stick them in a book, with a minute description of each specimen written on the opposite page.

E. – I can't stick anything in a book, because Mamma doesn't like me to use her gum, and I have only fish-glue.

W. – Fish-glue is, for certain purposes, a most valuable substance. It has even been known to cure cecity or blindness. Thus, Tobit —

E. – Don't talk about Tobit. Are you coming to make a daisy-chain?

W. – Never.

E. – Shall we play at battledore? I have a heavy shuttlecock and a light one, whichever you like best.

W. – That is because the density of cork varies in a very marked manner. That brought from the West Indies —

E. – Don't talk about the West Indies during play-time. Are you coming to play at battledore?

W. – On no account.

E. – Very well, then, you may stay with your Egyptians, your South Sea Islanders, and your West Indies, while I go and play in the garden. I think you are rather a prig. (*Exit.*)

W. – (*Looking after her, surprised.*) A prig! How odd! I wonder what makes her say that?

THE MONSTER IN THE GARDEN

CHARACTERS

JACK.

JANET.

MABEL.

AUNT MARY.

THE MONSTER IN THE GARDEN

Janet. – Come, I want to go into the garden.

Mabel. – We must have Tiny with us.

Jan. – Of course, where is he, I wonder? Tiny! Tiny!

M. – Tiny! Tiny! Stupid little dog! He is always away when one wants him.

Jan. – Perhaps he is in the garden already.

M. – Perhaps he is. We'll go and see.

Jan. – Ah! here is Jack, perhaps he has seen Tiny.

Enter Jack

M. – Have you seen Tiny?

Jack. – Tiny? No, I haven't, indeed. Oh dear me! I am so frightened.

Jan. – What's the matter?

Jack. – I've seen the most terrible monster in the garden.

M. and Jan. – A monster!

Jack. – A monster, in the garden.

Jan. – Oh, Mabel, hold my hand! (*To Jack.*) Did you see him?

Jack. – Well, I did not see him exactly, because he was inside that clump of laurels, but I certainly heard him growl.

M. – (*Getting very close to Janet.*) Growl? Oh dear!

Jack. – Then I believe I saw two great eyes looking at me.

M. – Two great eyes?

Jack. – Then I am certain I saw the point of a hairy ear, the sort of point that a great monster's ear would be sure to have.

M. – Then, of course, now we won't go into the garden.

Jan. – I've just thought of the most terrible thing!

Jack. – What is it?

M. – What is it?

Jan. – (*Covering her face.*) That Tiny is in the garden!

M. – And he will be eaten alive!

(*Covering her face with her hands, and sobbing loudly.*)

Jan. – What shall we do? We can't leave him to die.

Jack. – (*Valiantly.*) No, we can't. I will go and save him.

M. – Oh, you brave boy! We'll come too.

Jack. – Come, then! I've got my knife.

(*Pulls his knife out of his pocket.*)

Jan. – And I'll take my new scissors.

M. – And what shall I have? Oh, I'll take two large hairpins to stab him with.

Jack. – That's right. We'll stab him through the heart.

Enter Aunt Mary

Aunt Mary. – Why, my dear children! How warlike you look!

Jack. – And well we may! We're going into the garden to kill the most terrible monster.

A. M. – Oh, I see, you are pretending to be warriors.

Jan. – No, indeed! We are not. It is a real monster in the garden. Jack has seen him – part of him, at least.

A. M. – And what was he like?

Jack. – He's an enormous animal, with great flaring eyes, and long hairy ears.

Jan. – And probably horns and tusks, but we're not quite sure, because he was behind the bushes.

M. – And we are so dreadfully afraid he will kill Tiny.

A. M. – Oh no! He won't find Tiny – Tiny is hidden behind the laurels near the conservatory, eating a mouse which he has just caught.

Jack. – Behind the laurels near the conservatory! Then he will certainly be killed! The monster is there too! That is where the growls came from!

A. M. – Ha! ha! Now I see it all! Why, the monster that Jack saw and heard, is simply Tiny, who was growling because he feared his mouse would be taken away from him.

Jack. – Are you sure?

Jan. – Was the monster Tiny?

A. M. – Evidently. I've just seen him there myself.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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