

Leslie Madeline

Little Frankie and His Cousin



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CHAPTER I. FRANKIE'S COUSIN NELLY

In another little book I have given you an account of Frankie when he was a baby, and have spoken of some things which he said and did when he began to talk and to walk.

In this book I shall tell you more about him, and also about his cousin Nelly, who came to pass some months in his father's house, while her parents visited Europe.

Nelly was six years old, while Frankie was but just past his fourth birthday. Nelly was a pale, delicate child, with light flaxen hair, which curled in ringlets about her face. Her features were very small; but her eyes were bright and sparkling, and her motions quick and graceful.

Sally, the nurse, used often to say that Nelly looked like the great wax dolls which were put up in the shop windows; but her cousin Willie laughed, and said, "Nelly flies about so, I can't tell what she does look like."

When Nelly was a baby, she had learned to suck her finger; and since that time she had never been taught to give up the habit. Before her mother went to Europe, Mrs. Gray showed her that the poor little finger was wasting away, and would never grow like the others, unless Nelly would stop sucking it. But the lady only laughed, and said, "I have not the heart to forbid her, she takes such a world of comfort with it."

Mrs. Gray said no more, but she determined to break up the habit before Nelly left her.

The little girl was to have a small room, opening out of her aunt's chamber. There her trunks were carried for Sally to unpack, and put the clothes into the wardrobe and drawers.

"Come in here!" said Nelly to her little cousin, "and we will take out the playthings. This trunk is full of them."

Frankie's eyes grew very round and large as Sally selected the right key, and displayed a great variety of toys packed as closely as possible into the large trunk.

"Goodness me!" exclaimed nurse, holding up both hands. "Why, you'll be able to set up a toy shop, miss."

"I have more at home," said Nelly. "Maria couldn't get them all in."

Maria was the name of the colored woman who had taken care of Nelly ever since she was a tiny baby. She had wished to come with her to Mrs. Gray's, and cried bitterly when she knew that she could not. But her aunt was sure that if Maria was there, Nelly would be too much indulged, that is, she would have her own way, and would be spoiled. She loved her little niece, and was sorry that her brother's wife did not take more pains to teach her little girl to be good and kind. She hoped Nelly would learn, while her mother was away, to wait upon herself, and to be generous and truthful.

When Sally had unlocked the trunk of playthings for the little miss, she went on unpacking the other one. She took out the dresses, and laid them on the bed. There was a pink muslin, and a blue tarleton, and a white one with the skirt tucked up to the waist. Then there were two silks, and one or two delaines, and ever so many French calicoes.

Mrs. Gray came in at this moment, and Sally exclaimed, "Where I am to put all these dresses, ma'am, is more than I can tell. The wardrobe won't hold half of them."

The lady glanced toward the bed, and said, "You may hang the best ones in the parlor-chamber closet."

By this time Frankie had helped his cousin to take out the toys; and they were spread all over the floor, so that neither his mamma nor nurse could walk at all without stepping on them.

"Why, Nelly," said her aunt, "what a quantity of playthings you have there!"

"May we play with them here?" asked Frankie.

"I am afraid you will be in Sally's way," replied mamma.

"She can wait, then, till we are done," said Nelly, taking up a large dolly.

"No," said her aunt; "nurse has a great deal to do; and first of all she wants to clear up this room. See how untidy it looks, with the clothes all lying about."

"Can't we go up in Willie's play room, then?" asked the little boy.

"Yes, my dear; there is a large case up there, which will make a nice play house for Nelly. You can have one shelf for the parlor, and put these little sofas and chairs in it. Then have another for the closet, and set out the cups and saucers. You and your cousin may carry them up stairs; and when Margie comes home, she will love to help you arrange them."

"O mamma, see this pretty carriage!" cried Frankie.

"That's a pedler's wagon," said Nelly. "There is the front seat for him to sit on, and the top comes way over to keep off the rain. The horses can take out too. When I first had it, I used to play 'get to the tavern, and put them up in the barn.'"

"O Nelly!" exclaimed the little fellow, "let us play that as soon as we get up stairs."

"I'm tired," said Nelly, sitting down on the floor, and putting her finger in her mouth.

"I'll carry the things up then," said Frankie, running into the next room for a basket. "See, I'm real strong."

"If you are tired, you had better go and lie down on the lounge," said her aunt.

"No," said Nelly; "I want to stay here, and see Sally put away my clothes."

Nurse did not take a fancy to the little girl; that was very plain. She kept muttering to herself all the time she was arranging the drawers, and was quite vexed that her darling, as she called Frankie, should be doing the work while Nelly sat idly looking on.

At last, when her mistress had left the room, she asked, "Do you never work any, miss?"

Nelly shook her head.

"Well, I expect your aunt will teach you to wait upon yourself," said Sally; "you'd be a great deal happier if you had something to do."

"Maria does every thing for me," said Nelly, still holding her finger in her mouth. "If I don't like to stay without her, I shall send for her to come. Mamma said I might."

"Indeed!" said nurse, laughing. "We'll see what your aunt says to that. Here, darling," she called out to Frankie, "let Sally help you carry that heavy basket. I'm afraid you can't get it through the door alone."

"Yet I can," said Frankie, "cause I belong to the Try Company."

"I guess your cousin had better join it too," said nurse to herself.

CHAPTER II.

MOSES AND THE ORANGE

"Mamma," said Frankie one day, "you promised to tell me a toly."

"So I did," said mamma; "and what shall it be about?"

"Bout Moses."

"Moses in the bulrushes?" asked mamma.

"No; bout Moses and the orange."

The lady thought a minute before she could remember what he meant. Then she smiled, and said, "O, yes, I'll tell that. Do you like to hear stories, Nelly?" she asked.

"I don't know," answered Nelly. "Maria sometimes tells me pretty ones."

"Well, you may bring the cricket, and sit down by Frankie. I think you will like to hear about Moses," said aunty. "He was just as old as you are, Nelly; and like you, he was an only child. His father and mother were very fond of him, and loved to do every thing to make him happy. I don't mean that they always let him have his own way, or allowed him to do what was wrong, for that would have made him grow very selfish and wicked.

"The day before he was six years old, his mother thought she would let him have a party. So she asked his father to bring from the city some oranges, and figs, and nuts, that the little folks might have a feast.

"When papa had gone to town, which he did every day, because his store was there, she went to the kitchen, and helped the cook make some light sponge cake for Moses to have for his party.

"The little fellow knelt in a chair close by the table, and watched her sift the sugar and beat the eggs; then, when she put in the lemon, and took a clean spoon to taste a little to know whether it was seasoned right, Moses said, 'I should like to taste too.'

"By and by the cake was done, and smelled so good that Moses asked for a piece; but his mother told him to wait until his cousins were there to eat it with him.

"Then the carriage came up to the door, and James, the hostler, rung the bell to let his mistress know he was ready to drive her out. She dressed her little boy in his new suit, and told him he might go with her.

"They drove first to aunt Mary's, and mamma invited George and Walter, and little Katy. Then they went a mile farther, to uncle John's, where Susy, William, and Grace gladly promised to come. On their way home, they called upon three of their neighbors, where the number was increased to eleven.

"When his father came home from the city, he brought a basket in one hand, and two large bundles under his other arm.

"Moses ran to meet him, and said, 'Let me carry the basket, papa. It isn't too heavy for me.'

"Before he put it on the table, he peeped in, and said, 'O, what nice oranges, papa!' The little boy was very fond of oranges.

"That night Moses went to bed very happy. He longed for the time when his young companions would come, and lay awake nearly an hour, thinking what a very pleasant party his would be.

"The next morning he was up long before his mother, and ran down stairs to see if breakfast was ready. The table was not yet laid; and he went into the large store closet to see where his mother had put the oranges and cake. There was the basket upon the first shelf, and on lifting the lid he saw that the oranges were still in it. How fresh and good they smelt! He put in his hand and took one out. 'O, what a large one!'

"The basket was so full, he thought there must be more than twelve; so he stood up on a box, and began to count them. 'Yes, there are,' he said to himself; 'there are twelve, and one more.'

"Then he took the largest, and laid it on the next shelf, while he put the others back again into the basket, wishing all the time that he could have it for his own. He knew that he should have one at the party, but he couldn't wait. 'I want one now,' he said.

"He sat down on the box, and began to smell the large orange which he had left out. Then he made a small hole in the peel, and began to suck the juice through it. It tasted so sweet, he could not get his mouth away. So he squeezed and sucked, and sucked and squeezed, until the juice was all gone, and nothing remained but the skin and the pulp.

"'O, dear! I'm sorry I've eaten it,' he whispered; 'I didn't mean to. I only thought I would suck it a little. How quick it all came out!'

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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