



# *The memories of a buttonhook*

*child*

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Fable, Kids

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## The Accident

There was no telling how long sweet Bonny Tuliptoes had resided on the mantel. She herself could not remember. Long ago she was joined by the infant, Bluebell Shadow who sucked her thumb, the tiny crybaby Cowslip Pout and Buttercup Bib who always had a look of quizzical surprise on his cherubic face. The little doll faced fairies had been carefully chosen and given one at a time to the little girl every Christmas. They were placed in the drawing room above the fireplace amid the candles and cedar boughs.

It was nerve wracking sometimes! They were only six inches tall with soft bodies and sparkling gauze fairy wings. Their cunning little arms and legs were the palest, most delicate porcelain and their sweet faces were framed by petaled bonnets. The other children of the house liked to come in and rearrange them and that's how Cowslip Pout lost her foot. Cowslip was never happy and had a large tear drop that hung perpetually from her cheek. She just plain didn't like the whole arrangement in any form.

On this day, a careless hand knocked her over the edge. She fell a long way down and her tiny slippered foot hit the fire grate where it shattered into hundreds of tiny fragments. Cowslip shrieked in horror but it sounded like a cricket's stridulation and was drowned out by the snap and hiss of the fire log. Certainly none of the big people had heard it. The rest of the fairy babes were very quiet and in shock. Bluebell continued to suck her thumb for comfort.

A parlour maid with a face like an annoyed pansy had plucked poor Cowslip up from the hearth. After examining her, she pronounced sentence and tossed her unceremoniously into the ash can. When Little Missy saw Cowslip all covered in soot she howled so loudly her brother came running and rescued the tiny sprite from the cinder pit. He tried to make a new foot for her with paper mache, modeling clay, glue and a bit of paint. In spite of his effort it never did come out quite right. Instead of the clever rose slippered foot, a miniature pink cabbage adorned the broken limb. Though her companions refused to mention the appalling incident and pretended not to notice the defect, poor Cowslip looked more miserable than ever. Bonny Tuliptoes on the other hand remained the bonniest of the pixie bairns.

### A Birth

One day an elephant appeared on the mantel. He had ivory tusks and his trunk curled upward in blessing. A clock was sitting inside the howdah perched on top of his back. Little Missy's father was a world traveler and often brought back unusual treasures from far off places. Bonnie Tuliptoes was lulled happily by the tick tock of the time piece and Buttercup Bib moved closer to get a better look. Bluebell stared at it and contentedly sucked her thumb but Cowslip was totally unsure of the whole business and her lip quivered fearfully. Another time they awoke to a cunning, gold filigreed, Faberge egg which was poised on a tiny gold stand. The porcelain faced pixies watched and waited in quiet expectancy. One morning a gilt cage stood by the window and inside it a yellow canary began to sing joyously. The egg had hatched at last. Unfortunately the bird song startled poor cowslip who cried all the harder. However, the elephant's trunk appeared to be raised a bit higher as if the melody had a pleasing odour and Bonnie squealed in enthusiastic delight.

### The Garden Tea

One warm spring afternoon, Little Missy took all the porcelain dolls out into the garden. She laid out a picnic tea on the garden table with fruit and cakes she had taken from the pantry. In a very short time Buttercup Bib ended up with icing all over his face while little Bluebell became entranced by a butterfly turning cartwheels in the air. I don't have to tell you how poor Cowslip was feeling. Needless to say when the mother called Missy and the other children into the house and the tiny tots were gathered up, Cowslip was very relieved to leave the din of the garden. Bonnie Tuliptoes was accidentally left behind on the table all alone but she didn't mind at all. She watched the flowers waving and the insects sparkle and buzz as they dusted pollen from the blossoms.

All at once something amazing occurred. Through an open parlour window she saw the canary making an escape. Someone had carelessly left his cage door open. The little bird didn't think about what might happen out there in the big world and he didn't hesitate at all. He seized the moment and flew up into the glorious sun. His wings weren't used to the swelling surge of take off and so he rested on a tree branch above Bonnie's table to catch his breath. He looked around in bewilderment before the accomplishment dawned on him. He was free! A jubilant song rushed out from deep within his breast.

The melody fell into the garden like shimmering rain. Insects stopped buzzing. Robins looking for worms paused to listen, rabbit ears quivered, even the flowers stood still with their heads up. The backyard hovered for a moment in a bubble of perfect, shining stillness as the last note echoed into infinity, – but then a scream was heard from the parlour. A few minutes later Little Missy's brother ran outside toward the tree with a large butterfly net. Time returned to the garden and the garden returned to its toil. Bonnie sighed and wondered if her friends would miss her.

### A Night in the Garden

Bonnie was still lying there on the table as the shadow of evening quietly slid over the back lawn. An orchestra of crickets somewhere near the back gate began to tune their instruments but never quite progressed to a full blown melody. A mother raccoon made her way across the lawn with a small train of babies following her. There were six in all including the caboose who threatened to derail them all by sniffing out a few fallen crumbs under the picnic table. The mother stopped patiently to give him a stern look and he took his place again as they disappeared around the side of the house in the direction of the goldfish pond.

Bonnie could hear the stars singing as they winked into life and there was one that streaked across the sky in the note of high C. She was sure it had fallen close by. The climbing white roses suddenly began to glow on the arched trellis that led into the lower garden, and everything was humming with stardust. There had even been a small explosion as the star hit the earth because immediately afterward, a cloud of bright embers rose up and began to dart here and there. Of course they were fire flies, but Bonnie couldn't differentiate them from pieces of stars. She smiled in delight and didn't mind at all that she had been left outside.

Inside the house when all the excitement had died down Little Missy fell asleep and dreamed she heard Bonnie laughing outside her window. The first thing she did in the morning was run out into the garden to look for her. She was overjoyed to find the tiny figure still there and told her how sorry she was to have abandoned her

out in the cold all night. As they went back into the house through the hallway Bonnie heard the canary singing from the library. He had been captured after all and his cage put in a room where the windows were always kept closed. In spite of this he still hopped and sang a greeting. It seemed he had forgotten all about his glorious moment in the sun though Bonnie thought his song had a wistful air to it.

All Bonnie's friends were happy to see her safe and sound. Cowslip had one less tear on her cheek, Buttercup smiled broadly and Bluebell sucked her thumb contentedly. By the evening Bonnie's glorious night out in the garden was forgotten too, as everyone in the house gathered in the parlour to listen to Little Missy playing "Twinkle twinkle little star" on the old piano.

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