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Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

The snowman and the boy

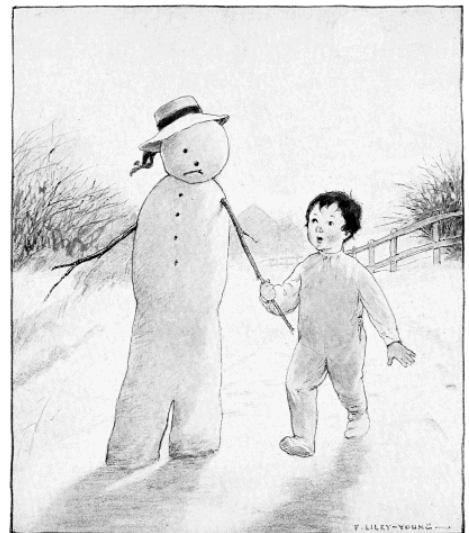
Once upon a time there was a man who was made of snow. He had sticks for his arms, and stones for his eyes; his nose was made of an icicle, and his mouth was a bit of bent twig, which turned up at the ends, so he looked as if he were smiling.

"He's the finest snowman we've ever seen," said the children who made him; and they joined hands and danced around him until their mother called them in for dinner.

"Goodbye," they called to him as they climbed the fence that divided the field from the yard. "Goodbye. We will bring you a hat tomorrow."

There were a half dozen of the children, and the youngest of them was a little boy who had never helped to make a snowman before. He thought of this one all the time he was eating his dinner, and even after he had gone to bed that night. He knew just how the snowman looked with his smiling mouth and stick arms.

"I wish we had taken him a hat tonight," he thought, as his eyelids dropped down like two little curtains over his eyes.



"Archoo! archoo! I wish that you had," said something outside the window; and—do you believe it?—it was the snowman sneezing as hard as he could!

"This is what comes of standing out in the cold bareheaded," he said. "I shall sneeze my head off—I know I shall. Archoo! archoo! archoo!"

"Dear me!" said the little boy. "I will get you a hat but it will have to be my sailor, for I wear my new hat to parties, and my everyday cap will not fit you, I am afraid,—we made your head so large."

"The sailor will do nicely," said the snowman, "if I may have it at once. As it is, I am catching a cold. Archoo! archoo! archoo!"

When the little boy heard this, he jumped out of bed and ran to the cupboard and got the sailor hat from the top shelf and gave it to the snowman.

"How do I look in it?" he asked as soon as he had put it on.

"Well enough," answered the moon, who had been watching all the while; "but you will have to make haste if you want to go anywhere before daylight."

"Don't you hear what the moon is saying?" said the snowman to the little boy. "What are you waiting for?"

"Am I going anywhere?" asked the child.

"Of course," answered the snowman. "Why shouldn't you go?"

The little boy could not think of an answer to this; and the next thing he knew he was out of the window with the snowman.

"Where are we going?" asked he.

"Why," said the snowman hurrying away into the street, "I have never thought of that, but since you speak of it I think we had better go to the Winter King's palace, and ask him if he cannot do something to keep the sun from shining tomorrow."

"Oh!" said the little boy, for his mother had promised that he might go to his

grandmother's if the day was fine. He had no time to say

anything about this, however, for just then the snowman cried

out:— "I have dropped one of my eyes, and I cannot go on without it."

"Dear me, dear me!" said the little boy. "How shall we ever find it?"



But while he was talking, a little dog that he knew very well came by. His name was Fido, and he could find anything that was lost. He had found the little ball when it rolled under the house, and his master's shoes when everybody else had failed; and when he heard of the lost eye he started back at once to look for it.

"Don't worry," said the little boy, "Fido will find it;" and sure enough, in the twinkle of a star he was back with the stone in his mouth! The little boy put it in its place as quickly as he could, for the snowman seemed to be in a hurry.

"Didn't you see that we were at a baker's shop?" he said. "I know I must have been near the oven, too, for one of my ears is almost melted off."

"Why, you haven't any ears!" said the little boy. "We did not know how to make them."

"No ears?" cried the snowman. "Then how do I hear what you say? But there now, you are only a little boy, and cannot know everything. Besides, here we are at the palace, and you must be quiet."

The little boy had thought he was passing the building where his big brothers and sisters went to school, but when he went inside he saw that he was wrong, and the snowman was right, for in the place where the teacher's desk should have been, was a throne; and on the throne sat the Winter King with icicles in his beard. As soon as he saw the snowman and the little boy, he began to talk very fast:— "What has this little boy been doing? Why isn't he in bed? Come here, Jack Frost, and tickle his toes."

"Oh! no, no," cried the snowman. "He has done nothing wrong. He is one of my best friends, and I have brought him here with me to ask you not to let the sun shine tomorrow. I don't want to melt."

"Ah! hum! ha!" said the king. "I don't know about that. You will have to melt sometime, won't you?"

"Of course," said the snowman; "but I'd like to last as long as I can." It made the little boy very sad to hear him talk in this way. He thought he would rather not go to his grandmother's than to risk the snowman in the sun.

"We are very fond of him," he said to the king. "He's the finest snowman we've ever seen, and he looks just as if he were smiling."

"So he does," said the king, looking at the snowman again; "and since you ask it I'll tell you what I will do. I cannot keep the sun from shining, but I will ask the North Wind to freeze the snowman, and perhaps he will last anyhow."

When the snowman heard this he began to dance, and as the little boy had hold of one of his stick arms he had to dance too. Together they danced out of the Winter King's palace, down the streets, into the field, where they found the North Wind waiting for them. The first thing he did was to blow the hat from the snowman's head.

"Archoo! archoo!" sneezed the snowman. "I know I shall catch cold."

And "archoo!" sneezed the little boy; and he sneezed so loud that he waked himself up, for—do you believe it?—



he had been asleep and dreaming all the time! One part of his dream came true, though, for when he looked out of the window, the next morning, there stood the snowman in the field frozen hard.