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Ririro

IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Wind's Work

One morning Jan woke up very early, and the first thing he saw when he opened his eyes was his great kite in the corner. His big brother had made it for him; and it had a smiling face, and a long tail that reached from the bed to the fireplace. It did not smile at Jan that morning though, but looked very sorrowful and seemed to say "Why was I made? Not to stand in a corner, I hope!" for it had been finished for two whole days and not a breeze had blown to carry it up like a bird in the air.



Jan jumped out of bed, dressed himself, and ran to the door to see if the windmill on the hill was at work; for he hoped that the wind had come in the night. But the mill was silent and its arms stood still. Not even a leaf turned over in the yard.

The windmill stood on a high hill where all the people could see it, and when its long arms went whirling around every one knew that there was no danger of being hungry, for then the

Miller was busy from morn to night grinding the grain that the farmers brought him.

When Jan looked out, however, the Miller had nothing to do, and was standing in his doorway, watching the clouds, and saying to himself (though Jan could not hear him):—

"Oh! how I wish the wind would blow. So that my windmill's sails might go, To turn my heavy millstones round! For corn and wheat must both be ground, And how to grind I do not know. Unless the merry wind will blow."

He sighed as he spoke, for he looked down in the village, and saw the Baker in neat cap and apron, standing idle too.

The Baker's ovens were cold, and his trays were clean, and he, too, was watching the sky, and saying:—

"Oh! how I wish the wind would blow, So that the Miller's mill might go, And grind me flour so fine, to make My good light bread and good sweet cake! But how to bake I do not know Without the flour as white as snow."

Jan heard every word that the Baker said, for he lived next door to him; and he felt so sorry for his good neighbor that he wanted to tell him so. But before he had time to speak, somebody else called out from across the street:—

"Well! I'm sure I wish the wind would blow, For this is washing day, you know. I've scrubbed and rubbed with all my might, In tubs of foam from morning light, And

now I want the wind to blow To dry my clothes as white as snow."

This was the Washerwoman who was hanging out her clothes. Jan could see his own Sunday shirt, with ruffles, hanging limp on her line, and it was as white as a snowflake, sure enough!

"Come over, little neighbor," cried the Washerwoman, when she saw Jan. "Come over, little neighbor, and help me work to-day!" So, as soon as Jan had eaten his breakfast, he ran over to carry her basket for her. The basket was heavy, but he did not care; and as he worked he heard some one singing a song, with a voice almost as loud and as strong as the wind.

"Oh! if the merry wind would blow, Yeo ho! lads, ho! yeo ho! yeo ho! My gallant ship would gaily go, Yeo ho! lads, ho! yeo ho! In fresh'ning gales we'd loose our sails, And o'er the sea, Where blue waves dance, and sunbeams glance, We'd sail in glee, But winds must blow, before we go, Across the sea, Yeo ho! my lads, yeo ho!"

Jan and the Washerwoman and all the neighbors looked out to see who was singing so cheerily, and it was the Sea-captain whose white ship Jan had watched in the harbor. The ship was laden with linen and laces for fine ladies, but it could not go till the wind blew. The Captain was impatient to be off, and so he walked about town, singing his jolly song to keep himself happy.

Jan thought it was a beautiful song, and when he went home he tried to sing it himself. He did not know all the words, but he put his hands in his pockets and swelled

out his little chest and sang in as big a voice as he could: "Yeo ho! my lads, yeo ho!"

While he sang, something kissed him on the cheek; and when he turned to see what it was his hat spun off into the yard as if it were enchanted; and when he ran to pick his hat up he heard a whispering all through the town. He looked up, and he looked down, and on every side, but saw nobody! At last the golden weather-vane on the church tower called down:—

"Foolish child, it is the wind from out of the east."

The trees had been the first to know of its coming, and they were bowing and bending to welcome it; while the leaves danced off the branches and down the hill, in a whirl of delight.

The windmill's arms whirled round, oh! so fast, and the wheat was ground into white flour for the Baker, who kindled his fires and beat his eggs in the twinkling of an eye; and he was not quicker than the Sea-captain, who loosed his sails in the fresh'ning gales, just as he had said he would, and sailed away to foreign lands.

Jan watched him go, and then ran in great haste to get his kite; for the petticoats on the Washerwoman's clothesline were puffed up like balloons, and all the world was astir.

"Now I'm in my proper place,"



said the kite as it sailed over the roofs of the houses, over the tree tops, over the golden weather vane, and even over the windmill itself. Higher, higher, higher it flew, as if it had wings; till it slipped away from the string, and Jan never saw it again, and only the wind knew where it landed at last.