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The Goblins' Feast

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Florence and Nicholas were sister and brother, and one day while they were playing in the weeds, they met a Goblin who was running toward a big rock. "Why are you in such a hurry?" asked Nicholas. "Stop a minute and tell us where you live."

"I must hurry home," said the Goblin, "for it is a feast-day with us, and all the trees will be full today."

"What have the trees to do with your feast?" asked the children.

"Why, don't you know," said the Goblin, "that once a year where I live, the trees are filled with all kinds of good things to eat, and you can eat and eat, and nothing will hurt you!"

"I wish we had a tree like that," said Florence.

"So do I," said Nicholas. "Can't you take us with you?"

"Yes," replied the Goblin, "if you will hurry."

Florence and Nicholas followed him as he ran, and when they were at a big rock covered with moss, the Goblin tapped on it three times and said, "Su ot nepo," and the rock opened. It was dark at first, and the children walked very carefully, but in a few minutes, they saw the light, and then they saw an orchard filled with trees, and the Goblins were flying around, picking things from the branches. Some of the Goblins were on ladders, picking sandwiches.

"You will have to help yourselves," the Goblin told Florence and Nicholas, "for this happens only once a year, and each one has to look out for his share," and off he ran.

"I like chicken sandwiches best," said Nicholas. "Let us find that tree."

"Here it is," said Florence, looking between the pieces of bread.

Florence filled her apron, and Nicholas took all he could carry in both hands, and they sat down to eat them. Then Florence saw a tree filled with pickles. Nicholas ran and picked some, and then he saw a tree of potato chips. "Oh, I do love these!" he said. "I wish I had a basket."

"Borrow one from the Goblins," said Florence.

The Goblins were good-natured that day and let him have a large one, and soon they were enjoying the food they had gathered.

"I am going to eat all I want," said Nicholas. "The Goblins said it would not hurt you on this day."

When they had eaten all the sandwiches, Nicholas saw a tree filled with cake of all kinds, and next to that was a tree of cones which were filled with all kinds of ice-cream. And the strangest thing was that after they had eaten all they wanted, they could eat as much more and not feel uncomfortable.

"Oh, there is a candy tree!" said Florence. Nicholas filled his pockets and Florence her apron, for they had never eaten all the candy they wanted, and this was their chance. There were many kinds, and the children were soon running back to the tree for more.

"There is a well," said Nicholas; "I am thirsty," and when he drew the bucket to the top, he found it was filled with ice-cream soda instead of water.

"Let us sit right beside this well," said Florence, "and drink ice-cream soda the rest of the day." But they grew tired of that after a while and looked around for the Goblins. "Where are they?" asked Florence, as they came near the orchard. "I do not see them anywhere."

"They are lying on the ground," said Nicholas, as they came nearer.

"Are they dead?" asked Florence, as Nicholas shook one of them and he did not awaken.



"No," said Nicholas, "they are asleep. Oh!" he cried, jumping back as a loud snore came from the Goblin, and then all the sleeping Goblins began to make such a noise that the children put their hands over their ears and ran.

When they reached the rock where they entered the Goblins' land, they stopped and sat down on the ground. "Oh, I am so sleepy!" said Florence, leaning her head against the rock, and she was sound asleep before Nicholas realized what she was doing. And then she began to breathe hard just as the Goblins had.

"Oh dear! What will I do!" said Nicholas. "I feel sleepy, too, but I dare not go to sleep, for no knowing what might happen." So he tapped on the rock three times and said "Su ot nepo," and the rock opened.

"I cannot leave Florence here. Wake up," he cried, shaking her, but she only breathed louder than ever.

A rabbit, running along, saw him. "What is the matter?" he asked.

Nicholas told him they had been to the Goblins' feast and that Florence had gone to sleep and he could not awaken her.

"She will sleep a month," said the rabbit, "if you do not get her out of that place, and you will go to sleep, too, if you stay in there. Can't you pull her out?"

Nicholas took Florence by the shoulders and dragged her to the entrance of the rock, and as soon as she breathed the air of the outside world, she opened her eyes.

"Where am I?" she asked, looking around.

"You have been asleep," said Nicholas, "and you made a terrible noise breathing, just as the Goblins did."

"The food you ate at the Goblins' feast will not hurt you," said the rabbit, "but it will put you to sleep for a whole month. You are lucky to get out, for you might have turned into a rock or a tree in that time, as some of the Goblins will."

"It is strange," said Nicholas, as they walked home, "but I feel just as hungry as though I had not eaten a thing at the Goblins' feast."

"So do I," said Florence. "Let us hurry home, for it must be dinner-time."

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