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The North Wind at Play

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Once upon a time, in a house under a hill, lived Aeolus and his four sons: North Wind, South Wind, East Wind and West Wind. One day, North Wind said to his father, "May I go out to play?"

"Oh, yes!" said his father, "if you don't stay too long."

Then away ran North Wind with a merry shout and song, banging the door behind him. As he ran along the road, he saw in the orchard a beautiful tree upon which were green apples. "Oh! Come and play with me," said North Wind. "Come and play with me!"

"Oh, no!" said the tree; "I must stay quite still and help the apples to grow, else they will not be large and round and red in the autumn for the little children. Oh, no, North Wind, I cannot go."

"Puff!" said the North Wind—and down all the apples fell to the ground.

The next thing North Wind saw was a beautiful waving field of corn. "Oh! Come and play with me! Oh! Come and play with me!" said North Wind.

"No, no!" said the corn; "I must stand quite still and grow. If you will look under this beautiful green silk, you will see some little kernels lying. These must grow big and yellow to be ground into meal to make golden pudding for the children. So you see, I cannot go to play."

At this, the North Wind sighed— "Ah-ha-a-a!"—and the corn lay down on the ground.

Running along, North Wind saw a lily growing under a window. "Oh, you lovely lily! Come and play with me," said North Wind.

"I cannot," said the lily, gently; "I have to stay here because the farmer's little girl is not at all well, and I am her friend. Every morning, she comes and smiles down at me and I smile back again. I am sure she would miss me very much if I should go; so I must stay here, dear North Wind."

North Wind touched her very gently, but she hung her head and never again looked up.

Now the farmer went out to work, and when he saw the corn and the apple tree, he said, "Ah! Mr. North Wind has been here!" But when he went home, his little girl told him about the lily. And the farmer said, "I'll go right up to Mr. Aeolus and tell him all about it!"



So away he went; and he said, "Good morning, Mr. Aeolus. Your boy, North Wind, has been down my way; and he has blown the apples from the trees, and the corn is lying down on the ground; but, worse than this, he has hurt my little girl's lily!"

"Ah!" said Mr. Aeolus, "I am very sorry. I will speak to North Wind when he comes in." And then the farmer went home.

By and by, in came North Wind.

"My boy," said Aeolus, "the farmer has been here, and he has told me all the harm which you have done." And then the father told North Wind the story of the apples and the corn and the lily.

"Oh, well," said North Wind, "I know I did it; but I didn't mean to. I just meant to have a little fun with the apple tree; but when I said 'Puff-f-f' all the apples fell down. It was just the same with the corn; it lay down before I knew that I had hurt it. As for the lily, that was the loveliest thing you ever saw, father; I only kissed it when I came away."

"I believe that what you tell me is true, my boy; but if you cannot help being so rough and rude when you play, you must go out only when the farmer has gathered the apples and corn, and when the flowers have been taken safely into the house. When the snow is on the ground, you and Jack Frost may have fine frolics together."

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