



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Shadow Child

Laura Rountree Smith

Mother said to Girl Goldy Locks,

"Eight o'clock is time for bed.

Don't you hear what mother said?"

Girl Goldy Locks replied, "Do I have to go now? Can't I sit up a little longer?" Will you believe it? This little girl pouted and teased every night when bedtime came, and she always begged to stay up a little longer.

Mother hummed softly,

"If the fairies were about,

they'd help me train you without doubt."

The clock struck quarter past eight, half past eight, quarter of nine. Still, Girl Goldy sat playing with her blocks on the floor.

Suddenly, the lights went out. Fairy Whistling Wind blew the window curtains, saying,

"To make you good, I often try.

Don't you hear me whistling by?"

Girl Goldy stamped her foot and said, "I will never go to bed to please you, Old Whistling Wind."

Then the Raindrop Fairies came, patter, patter, patter, against the window pane, singing,

"Don't you hear our sleepy song?

To nighttime, pleasant dreams belong."

Girl Goldy tossed her lovely curls and said, "I won't go to bed to please you, Raindrop Fairies. You may patter away as hard as you like."

My! How the Fairies then did clatter,

"Pitter, patter, pitter, patter."

By and by, the Star Fairies began to peep timidly out, singing,

"Stars are peeping in the sky,

by-low by, by-low by."

At this, Girl Goldy was furious. She said, "I am no baby to hear lullabies."

Then the Moonlight Fairies came and kissed her, singing,

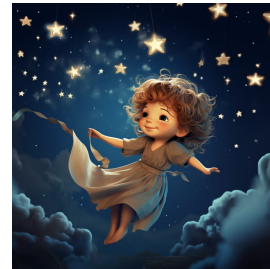
"My! This girl is very wild.

We'll have to call the Shadow Child."

Before Girl Goldy could answer a word, a little Shadow Child came stealing and creeping. She came slyly peeping. She sang,

*"The Shadow Child comes stealing, creeping,
and in your window she comes peeping."*

She put her arms round Girl Goldy and went with her away, away, away to Shadow Land. There, they heard a great weeping and sighing, for one thousand and twenty-five mothers were weeping,



*"We cannot find a child, 'tis said,
who really likes to go to bed."*

The Shadow Child said, "Look at me, how thin I have grown. I am tired and sleepy too. Will you give me no rest at all?"

Girl Goldy said,

*"Take me home, tuck me in bed,
pull the covers high over my head."*

The Shadow Child said,

*"I'm your jolly companion all the day.
I run with you in work and play."*

Girl Goldy said,

*"I don't like this weeping in Shadow Land.
Take me home, don't you understand?"*

The Shadow Child said,

*"One little mother'd be happy, I know,
if cheerfully on up to bed you'd go."*

Girl Goldy said, "I like you very well in the daytime, Shadow Child, but can't you understand I am really sleepy now?" Her head went nid-nid-nodding as the Shadow Child said,

"In Shadow Land, you have to stay."

We keep awake both night and day."

Girl Goldy began to cry, and the Moonlight Fairies trooped around her, singing,

*"Home again, home again, let us fly.
Perhaps she'll be good again, by and by."*

So home again they went, and the Shadow Child kissed her, singing,

*"Sleepy time, sleepy time,
comes again in every clime."*

Then Girl Goldy awoke with her head resting on an old red hassock. The Clock Fairy called,

*"I listened, and I heard it said
that all the family went to bed."*

Girl Goldy felt like crying, for she was all alone downstairs, but she only said, "I must not start all those mothers sighing again in Shadow Land," and she went upstairs "pitter, patter, pitter, patter" and crept into her own little bed.

The Moonlight Fairies danced about her and sang,

*"So very pleasant, now she seems,
that we will bring her happy dreams."*

The Clock Fairy said,

*"Tomorrow night, at quarter of eight,
I'll sing to her. Now don't be late."*

The Clock Fairy did really sing out at quarter of eight the next night, and Girl Goldy put her playthings away, kissed mother, and went quietly to bed. Her little feet went "pitter, patter, pitter, patter" on the stairs.

*She never went back to Shadow Land
but danced with the fairies, hand in hand.*

Mother said, "How did she happen to go to bed?" The Clock Fairy sees so many things as he swings to and fro, to and fro, on the pendulum, night and day, that he might have spoken volumes, but when mother asked again,

*"How did she happen to go to bed?"
He only replied, "Tick, tock," instead.*

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