



Ririro

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The Theft of the Fairies' Wands

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The Goblins and the Gnomes were jealous of the Fairies, and one night they decided to steal their wands. They knew, of course, it would be very hard to do so, for the Fairies were always awake at night. So they arranged a plan to frighten them, thinking that they would drop their wands, and they could pick them up and run.

The Fairies lived in a mossy valley, where there was a river, and the Goblins and Gnomes hid in this river with just their eyes above the water so that the Goblins looked like so many frogs and the Gnomes like brown leaves floating about.

"Now, we must wait," said the Goblins, "until all the Fairies are in sight. They will have to pass this river to get out of the valley, and then we can jump and splash the water so that it will fall on their faces. They do not like to be wet, and they will drop their wands and cover their faces with their hands. The rest will be easy."

By and by, the Fairies began to appear, and when they were all together, the Queen drove along, and they started out of the valley.

When they reached the river, the Goblins and Gnomes jumped, screaming and splashing the water over the poor little Fairies, who dropped their wands and covered their faces and ran. Out of the water hopped the Goblins and Gnomes and picked up the wands and ran into the woods, and by the time the Fairies had dried their eyes so they could see, the Goblins and Gnomes were out of sight.

"What shall we do?" cried the Fairies. "They have taken our wands, and we are powerless, and no one knows what harm those wicked creatures may do with them." But the Queen quieted them by holding up her wand. It had dropped in the bottom of her carriage when she let it fall and was not noticed by the Goblins and Gnomes.

"Do not worry," she told them. "They will very soon be begging you to come and get your wands, for I intend to make them very uncomfortable. Wait here," she told the Fairies, and away she drove in the direction the Goblins and Gnomes had gone.

The Goblins and Gnomes had gone into the woods, and as soon as they found a clear space, they stopped running. "Now," they said, "we will transform

everything here and make a place worth having."

One of them touched a tree with the wand, and there appeared a large house, but the others did not want a house. Then a Goblin turned a rock into a pond, and the Gnomes said it was one of their doors, and they fell to quarreling and striking one another with the wands, and each one that was touched with a wand was turned to stone. Then the wands burned the hands of the others, and when they threw them on the ground, they became like serpents of fire and chased them about until those that were not turned to stone were running about in all directions to escape from the fiery wands.



In the midst of all this, the Fairy Queen appeared, and when the Goblins and Gnomes saw her, they ran to her and begged that she would take away the wands. But she told them if they wished to be rid of them and have their companions changed into their natural forms, they must go to the Fairies and beg their pardon and ask them to come for the wands, as each wand was governed by the Fairy to whom it belonged. Away ran the Goblins and Gnomes. They found the Fairies and told them they were sorry they had frightened them and splashed the water in their faces. Then they begged them to come and take away the wands. When the Fairies came to where the Queen was waiting, the wands lay quietly on the ground, and each Fairy picked up her wand.

"Will you please touch our companions who have been turned to stone?" the Goblins and Gnomes asked in a very humble manner, "and the house and pond also," they said. "We do not want anything left to remind us of those dreadful wands."

The Queen granted all but one request. "The pond must stay as it is," she said. "That will remind you of your wrongdoing, and if ever you annoy the Fairies again, the water will boil and run over your rocks and sink into the earth and burn you." The Goblins and Gnomes ran away as fast as they could, promising never to bother the Fairies again.