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In Dreamland

Mary Graham Bonner

"We have a lot of work to do tonight," said the Dream King, and the Dream Fairies asked what was the matter.

"The Fairy Queen came to me this afternoon, and she looked very sad. She's been listening to children, and she's heard some things that trouble her.

"For instance, she heard one little girl say to another: *Oh, Sally, I heard Mamie say she thought you were awfully mean and selfish. I told her I didn't think so — I stuck up for you. I was your friend.*

"The Fairy Queen was quite angry. She said that girl who came and repeated the unkind thing was worse than the girl who'd said it in the first place. Mamie's words, perhaps, were foolish and unkind. But the girl who carried them — wrapped them up like a little gift and delivered them — she did it on purpose.

"So tonight we have dreams to give. I want to show children a great room full of other children — all crying, all unhappy, with not enough handkerchiefs to go around — and I want to tell them that every child in that room is crying because someone carried a mean word to them.

"But that isn't all.

"I also want to tell them this: every cruel thought a child has and *doesn't say* — every mean speech that dies in their throat before it reaches anyone — comes straight here to Dreamland. And every week, we build a bonfire of them."

The Dream Fairies looked up with delight.

"Yes," said the Dream King, smiling. "Every week we pile up all the unkind words that were never spoken — and we burn them, and all the fairies laugh and sing as they go up in flames.

"So hurry. Tie up the dreams. We have a great many children to visit tonight."



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