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Peter Goblin's Trip

Mary Graham Bonner

Peter Goblin was close to tears.

"To think," he said, "that children shouldn't like us. Children are the nicest creatures in the whole world — and I love them. That's exactly why it hurts so much when they're afraid."

The Fairy Queen had been listening. She understood how unfair it was: Peter and his goblin brothers had been friendly all along, and the frightening stories had never been true.

"Keep trying," she told him. "Go to the children when they're falling asleep and talk to them. Tell them you never jump out at them in the dark, that you only come when they're nearly dreaming, that you sit quietly on their bedposts and tell stories. Tell them as often as you can."

Peter brightened up immediately and hopped away.

That very night he visited a little girl. He perched on the end of her bedpost and said, in his smallest voice, "Good evening."

She pulled the blankets over her head.

"Oh, please don't do that," said Peter. "It makes people have bad dreams."

She stayed under the blankets. Then, very slowly, she peeked out. And what she saw made her want to laugh — because Peter Goblin was the funniest looking little creature she had ever seen, with his small round face and his fidgety hands. But before the laugh could get out, she noticed something else.

Two fat tears were rolling down his cheeks.

"What's the matter?" she asked, forgetting to be frightened.

"I'm sad," said Peter, "because children think I'm bad. I love children, and I only want to tell them stories. No goblin has ever hurt a child — not ever. We'd disown any goblin who tried."



The girl looked at him for a long moment. Then she promised to tell all her friends.

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