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Professor Inkspot's Academy. (As told in Adam's Diary.) Synopsis.

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PROFESSOR INKSPOT'S ACADEMY

(As told in Adam's Diary)

SYNOPSIS

By

ERIKA MANN

I

I.

THE WAY WE LIVE

My name is Adam. I am twelve years old and have been living at Professor Inkspot's Academy for more than half a year now. At home I was a goodefor-nothing and always late at school. Never did I do my homework in time; I was all thumbs; I dropped everything and broke any number of glasses and cups; in fact, they used to break at the mere sight of me. When one fine day I spilled the ink, and ruined not only the table-cloth and my own trousers but also mother's new dress, my parents decided to let me have some real education at the Academy.

Located at the end of Chocolate Street, Professor Inkspot's Academy is a big three-story building of multicoloured bricks. On the third floor, the Professor keeps his secrets which nobody has ever laid eyes on. No one must enter these rooms; nor could anybody possibly get there, since the stairway ends on the second floor, and Professor Inkspot reaches his secrets through the chimney. The classroom is on the ground-floor; the bedrooms and the diningroom make up the first story while the second floor is occupied by Professor Inkspot and Mathew. The two of them live in one single room, though; all the others are locked.

Only boys whose names begin with an A are admitted to the Academy, for the Professor wouldn't dream of crowding his head with the entire alphabet. That's why we have four Adams, five Alexanders, three Andrews, three Alfreds, six Anthonies, one Arthur, one Albert and one Abrahan - 24 boys, all told. The Professor's christian name is Ambrosy. Mathew is the only one in the whole Academy whose name doesn't start with an A. But then, Mathew is not a pupil; he is the Professor's learned starling. Mathew speaks beautifully except that he never pronounces the beginnings of the words. He'd call himself "Athiew" and at first called me something

I don't want to repeat, until I asked him to make it "Am" instead. Strangers find it hard to understand him but we at the Academy don't.

Our Academy lies in the midst of a big park surrounded by a high wall. Nobody must leave the building without the Professor's permission. Nor is the wall an ordinary wall. Where it faces the street, it looks quite normal with only one center-door of glass. Its three remaining sides, however, consist of innumerable iron gates one adjoining the other, and locked, all of them, with small silver-locks. Through these gates you may enter the realm of our neighbours, the fair^y-tales, with whom the professor is on excellent terms. A small plaque on each gate states which fairytale the respective ~~entrance belongs to~~ entrance belongs to. There are all the fairyt^yales - the Andersen ones and the ones by Grimm - Snow-White, Cinderella, the Ugly Duckling and heaps of others. The Professor always carries the fairytale-keys with him in a large silver box and knows precisely which key fits what lock. Sometimes he'd send us on errands to one fairytale or the other. Mostly I am the one chosen, because I have red hair and am, therefore, easily spotted. One day we were short of matches; so the Professor called me in, gave me a golden key and said: "Adam, dear, kindly run over to Mr. Andersen's fairytale of 'The Little Match^ygirl' and ask for a box ^{of matches. ✓} ~~what~~ ~~What~~ What fun! Snow was falling in Andersen's fairytale and it was very cold. All the people on the street were trembling with cold but I felt none of it. Then, a fine elderly gentleman approached me; he smiled and said: "Don't you recognize me? I am Mr. Andersen. Don't be start^yled by all this snow. We are in a fairytale, after all, and while out there in reality you are having June, it's winter around here."

When he'd heard who had sent me, and what for, he clapped his hands and at once there appeared the poor ragged "Little Match^y Girl" ~~who was frozen to death~~. She had frozen to death and I felt so sorry for her that I am afraid I cried.

Mr. Andersen took a box of matches from her, gave it to me and said:

"That's for the Professor, and as for yourself, you'd better stop crying. All this is a fairytale, don't you see, and though the Little Girl has frozen to death, I've made it all up myself and it isn't actually true." - The Little girl smiled at me, waving goodbye, and Mr. Andersen led me back to the gate.

As time went by, I was sent on errands to all kinds of fairytales. I'd go to get a pair of shoes from the Puss in Boots, and one day, when mice had been sighted among the Professor's secrets, I had to set forth and fetch the Puss in person. As for the Professor's secrets, we never knew the first thing about them. Mathew was the only one who could have told us, and Mathew wouldn't talk, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ unless you gave him plenty of freckles to eat. Fortunately, the Professor's face chances to be covered with freckles which he puts on every morning. At night, he takes them all off again and places them in a golden tobacco-box where they are being kept until it is time to put them on back to his face.

Each Thursday, a barber called Philip comes from town to supply the Professor with a fresh crop of freckles. Philip uses a razor-blade to apply the ~~ink~~ stuff to his leanned client's face. Professor Inkspot thinks the world of nic^e, big, red or brownish freckles; every now and then he'd bestow one on a deserving pupil as a special award. Alexander, for instance, has been given as many as three; others have one or two which they proudly display on their noses or cheeks. How I envy them and what I would not do to obtain one myself! But professor Inkspot says I am not as yet worthy of the distinction.

Mathew loves to eat the Professor's freckles and turns very talkative, whenever you bring him a few. One day, the Professor was so badly bitten by gnats that he scratched all his freckles off his face. Sorry, though I felt for him, I quickly and secretly collected the entire lot and turned them over to Mathew. It was only then that Mathew really came to trust me

and that he told me the whole wondrous story of his life.

II.

MATHEW'S WONDROUS STORY.

Mathew spoke as follows:

I am no bird - I am a prince. My father's kingdom was probably the most beautiful in existence and mine were surely the most magnificent horses ever raised. There were 68 of them, one finer than the other, and I loved them so much that I could scarcely think of anything but them. Also, I so much preferred riding and hunting to studying and writing, that my father, the King, felt finally compelled to forbid all my gallant princely activities and to separate me completely from my horses. I was then eight years old; but hard, as I tried, I could not get myself to forget my darlings who kept peopling my every dream.

One night, I was wakened by a gentle neigh. I rushed to the window and beheld my favorite stallion, Ali Baba. Swiftly I dressed in the dark, reached for my gun, and jumped out of the window, and straight on Ali Baba's waiting back. And off we went, jumping over 7 fences and galloping towards the forest. So happy was I to be riding again that I recalled neither my father's ban nor the dangers held by the woods. But when on a sudden Ali Baba began to tremble violently and refused to move any further, I knew what to expect. And there it was; a huge and fearful looking wolf, snarling, foaming, and showing his teeth, and coming nearer and nearer. I tried to flee but the monster followed. "In the name of the King", I shouted at last, "let us pass! Unless you do, I shall have to kill you." --

And Mathew went on to tell his wondrous story. I learned how Mathew, the Prince, had shot and killed the wolf, and how he had been bitten by the dying beast. Half unconscious with pain and shock, he raced back to the palace with packs of howling wolves in pursuit. When, in the morning,

he awoke from a dead faint, all the doctors in the kingdom had gathered at his bedside, along with the King and Queen and innumerable servants. It wasn't a great deal of blood that kept trickling from the wound in his hip but it dropped on and on and no one could still it. Even so the disobedient prince dared not recount his adventure in the forest. - Time passed; the blood went on trickling; despite the efforts of scores of physicians from all over the world; despite the dearest and rarest ointments, ^{liquids} ~~liquids~~ and pills, the prince grew weaker and paler by the hour. There seemed but little hope for his survival. Then, Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo, the court physician of China's last Emperor, accepted the King's most urgent invitation, and arrived at the palace. Left alone with his noble patient, the doctor pressed his mouth against the wound and, breathing into it, pronounced a number of unfathomable words. Presently, the blood ceased to trickle and strength began to return into Prince Mathew's body. "You have", the Doctor announced, "been bitten by the King of the Wolves ^{yes} ~~Wolves~~ whom you killed. Knowing your secret, I have been able to heal your wound but I shall not be able to protect you from the wrath of your foes. The wolves will not rest before they have taken revenge for the ⁱⁿ ~~murder~~ of their king, and your life, oh Prince, will never again be safe."

Having thus spoken, Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo produced a small cap adorned with one button. The button was as red as blood; it was square, rather ^{than} ~~round~~, and had six holes in it, rather than four or two. "Take this", said the Doctor, "and put it on in the face of danger. It will transform you into whatever animal you may desire to become and thereby facilitate your escape. When the danger has passed you will regain your human status by pulling the button."

Great happiness reigned throughout the kingdom, and since Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo departed without having accepted the fabulous reward due him, the grateful King had 24 sacks of diamonds and rubies distributed among the poor. -/ Alas, his generosity was ill repaid.

Mysteriou/sly, and with ever increasing fury, packs of wolves made their appearance in the fields, towns and cities of the kingdom, and finally reached even the capital. They ruined the crops, killed the cattle, destroyed much property, frightened the people, and endangered the lives of their children. And as the king proved powerless in the face of this curse, the people grew exceedingly angry and one day stormed the palace, ~~in~~ shooting and slaying everyone in their way and burning the place to ashes. When the murderous mob was about to fall upon Prince Mathew - then 14 years of age - he reached for his magic cap but - to his horror - found the button missing.

"I meant", Mathew, the starling, concluded sadly, "to turn myself into a bird. But was I to make the fateful wish, knowing full well that with the button missing I'd have to remain a bird until the end of my days? My father's infuriated subjects left me no choice: as they got ready for the slaughter, I wished ~~from~~ from all my heart to become a starling. At least as ~~such~~ I'd be able to talk. -- Having escaped I flew to many a land to confide in my married sisters. For my noble parents were dead and our land lay in ruins. But wherever I flew, I failed to be recognized. I was kept in a cage and when my youngest sister had grown tired of me, she gave me to one of her servants who in turn sold me to a street peddler. - Years passed. - Then, at a bird's fair in Salamanca, a learned foreigner, attracted by the strangeness of my tongue, bought me and took me with him. His name was Ambrosy Inkspot."

III.

PROFESSOR INKSPOT'S PECULIARITIES.

Here, to begin with, is what the Professor usually wears: trousers so wide, that they resemble balloons whenever the ~~w~~ind blows them up; tails, very wide and very long, chocolate-coloured or wine-red; a brightly

yellow waistcoat of velvet and adorned with glass-buttons; a high standup-collar, and a small velvet-bow instead of a necktie. The Professor's clothes are rich in pockets. I counted 16 in his trousers alone, and 24 in his waistcoat. His tails, on the other hand, have but one pocket which is Mathew's domain; he may sit in it whenever he pleases. In his vest-pockets the Professor carries various objects, such as the tobacco-box with the freckles in it; the dream-acid; several candle-lights and the magnifying pump, all of which oddities I intend to describe in due and proper time. -

Professor Inkspot's head is quite unlike any other. His thick and tousled hair is rainbow-coloured; the long, long beard, pitch-black. The movable nose occupies most of the face and may be turned to the right and the left alike. The circular eye-glasses on his nose look rather like a small bicycle. His long, stiff moustache is orange-coloured; his eyes are black and penetrating like stilettos.

Professor Inkspot can fly - or, rather, he is able to float in the air, if only at a very moderate height. This particular peculiarity of his is perhaps the one which we admire most. At some time or other everyone at the Academy tried to imitate the Professor in this respect - needless to say without any success whatsoever.

IV.

SCHOOL AT THE ACADEMY.

Punctually at five o'clock each morning, Mathew opens what we call "the sluices" - small openings in the ceiling, one over each bed. Then, cold water comes dripping down on our noses, whilst Mathews cries "Iseoy, iseoy", thus admonishing the boys to rise. With every new day promising a lot of new and interesting fun, we'd get up very quickly. Besides our 24 beds, our large bedroom contains 24 showers which we love to use, since

what they pour down on us, is sparkling water with juice. There is a different fruit-juice for each day of the week which is why I like my Wednesday-shower best, raspberry juice being my favorite. Professor Inkspot's juices produce the most beautiful lather; in more than one respect they are far better than soap.

We all wear the same things: blue shirts, long white trousers, blue socks and white shoes. As a punishment for disobedience or poor marks, red ties with green dots have to be worn all day long. - At 5.30 we go to the dining-room, taking our dream-mirrors with us. In the center of the table, Mathew will sit on the edge of a flower-vase to see to it that nothing remains on our plates. But it is not until luncheon that the Professor will float over our table, sprinkling ^{out} food with various sauces. - Prayer is at 6 a.m., when Mathew will ring a small bell. After prayer, the Professor enters a closet and through an open window ^u collects our dream-mirrors. All night our dream-mirrors stand besides our beds, mirroring and preserving our every dream. Now, the Professor will inspect our dreams. Silly, stupid, and improper ones get thrown on the dunghheap; so do dream-fragments that fail to make sense. But dreams which please the Professor are removed from the mirrors. This is a fascinating procedure, if not quite as complicated as the one that follows. For subsequently, our better dreams are being made into pills which we'll be given to swallow before going to bed. ~~Minutemen~~ ^{10 of course, will} Nobody ~~will~~ ever get a pill derived from ~~any~~ one of his own dreams.

School starts at seven and we all like it. For we don't have to bother with either grammar, or arithmetics, or calligraphy, or the like. Instead, we study - for instance - Inkspotology. This science is the Professor's personal invention. Applied correctly and ingeniously, Inkspotology produces the most arresting pictures with which we illustrate

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stories we make up to match them. After each Inkspotology lesson we all have to wash our arms with lemon juice, as they'll be covered with ink up to the elbows and no other juice will do. - In the second period we usually string letters. We are supposed gradually to string all the letters contained in the Professor's library. Finished strings are being coiled and handed to the Professor. Late in the eveningⁿ Professor Inkspot will sit for hours, letting the strings glide through his fingers. He likes to read that way, as it spares his eyes. The third lesson takes place in one of the locked rooms on the second floor where we learn how to take care of the sick objects kept in those chambers.

Fourth period: out-door games. One of these comprises Geography, since we use a globe for a ~~game~~^{foot} ball. Our ~~game~~^{football} is a bit out of the ordinary, though. All that you have to do is to toss the ball over to the other team, while calling the name of the city, the river, or mountain that is being hit by your foot. Both sides keep shouting - "Radom", "Australia" "London", "Philadelphia", "Greece" etc. Mathew serves as referee and will disqualify anyone calling the wrong name. It's a beautiful game. We'd fall over each other, shouting the names of oceans, deserts^t and countries, and learning more in one hour than ~~the~~ other school-children^{will} in a year.

Once, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Alexander ~~lost~~^{lost} the ball so forcefully that it went over the wall into one of the neighbouring fairytales- we didn't know which. As we pondered what to do, we heard Mathew cry "tention", "tention"! - and here they were, striding through their^{particular} gate: Snow-White and the Seven Dwarfs. The latter carried our globe-ball on their shoulders, looking even smaller under the terrific burden.

We ran towards them, thanking them heartily for their kindness. As a counter-courtesy, they asked that we teach them geography which we gladly promised.

V.

PROFESSOR INKSPOT'S KITCHEN

All work in the house and the kitchen is being done by the Professor and his pupils. Abraham will open and lock the door; ~~and be in charge of the balloons.~~ The five Alexanders will take care of our clothes and our laundry; Anthony and Albert will keep the park and the playground in order; Alfred will set the table, - and so forth and so on. Only the kitchen is the Professor's exclusive realm which nobody must enter. Which is why I am particularly proud to have been nominated his special kitchen-apprentice. - Here are just a few of the items to be found in our kitchen: the Professor's magnifying-pump by means of which he'll turn tiny bits of meat into roasts, large enough to feed us all. Looking rather like a small oil-tankard, the pump will magnify any object desired. Even live animals may be thus enlarged - as I was eventually to discover. - Our kitchen-shelves contain long rows of tins, filled ~~with edible paint~~ coloured glass, pots, with edible paint, and countless brushes in all sizes. - Attired in his white kitchen-frock, the Professor tastes all that he cooks and won't ever permit a dish to be served, unless he's found it entirely to his liking. When he's prepared, say, stewed gooseberries, and doesn't think them very good, he'll select a suitable brush, dip ^{it} into red paint and trans-paint the gooseberries into raspberries. I understand that it was no other than Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo of Peking who told the Professor the secret of the edible paint - the same Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo who figures so prominently in Mathew's wondrous story. And I think that there's something quite mysterious about this particular coincidence.

VI.

FLIES

No matter whence they ~~came~~ came - one day they were there: literally billions of flies, filling the air and making it unfit to live in. After ~~a number of gallant but fruitless efforts to rid us from the~~

a number of gallant but fruitless efforts to rid us from this plague, the Professor finally caught a hungry spider, and, by applying his magnifying-pump to its right ear, succeeded in producing an insect as big as a dog. Hundreds of thousands of flies fell victim to the giant's appetite but billions still remained. Then the Professor prepared a novel sort of liquid, consisting of soap, water, and glue, and eminently suitable to blow bubbles with. We all blew bubbles, and presently ^{tens of} thousands of the sticky things floated about, glittering attractively. The bubbles attracted the flies; the flies got stuck on the bubbles; and the bubbles, now too heavy to stay in the air, fell onto the floor where the trapped flies soon piled up in enormous heaps. When we had at last managed to sweep the house clean, it took three two-and-a-half-ton trucks to ship the flies off.

VII.

ONE SUNDAY AT THE ACADEMY

On Sundays everyone at the Academy does as he pleases, and on this particular Sunday, Mathew had flown over the wall into the fairy-tale of "The Nightingale" to take a singing lesson. Feeling a bit lonely without him, I went to the garden to find that all the water had run out of our lake and that the poor fish lay on the dry ground, kicking and writhing and threatening to die. Quickly I went to call the Professor and whomever else I could get hold of. - Having gathered the fish into big linen-baskets we all went over to the fairy--tale of "The Fisherman and his Wife". The Ocean there proved a bit unruly; the fisherman's wife had already made her second immoderate wish, and the Magic Fish was growing angry. Even so, we emptied our baskets into the excited sea, and afterwards had a wonderful swim, struggling with waves as high as houses and as ineffective as dreams.

VIII.

VICIOUS THINGS BEGIN TO HAPPEN.

Fall came; it rained most of the time, and the park lay deserted. Everything and everybody seemed a little sad and depressed, so that I was scarcely surprised, when one day I heard the Professor speak rather impatiently to Philip. "You fool!", he said; "you're trying to fool me when you cannot but realize that I will not be fooled. Look at them!", he exclaimed; "do they even look as if their names started with an A? They most assuredly do nothing of the kind!" - And he pointed an indignant finger at two unkempt boys whom Philip must have brought along. "Alfons!", he cried angrily; "Alfons and Adorable, indeed! These boys' names are Bertie and Brian, as you know only too well, and as truly as Mathew is a prince, and they will not ~~be admitted~~ be admitted!"

The barber and his sons departed quietly but I could see that Philip was exceedingly hurt and rather furious. Even so, the ~~unpleasant~~ incident pleased me in a way. For it served to prove that Mathew was indeed the prince whom I'd always believed him to be. Any slight doubt in his veracity that I might have harbored had now been dispelled by the Professor's authoritative confirmation.

Poor Mathew! How could I have known what new ordeals Philip's wrath would bring both upon him and the whole Academy?

IX.

A TURN VERY MUCH TO THE WORSE.

Was it that in the grayish light of these autumn-days, the Professor's cherished freckles were losing their brightness, or was he actually ~~growing~~ sporting fewer and fewer of the things which grew paler and paler to boot? And what had happened to Mathew's gay and gallant spirit? Even his commands had lost their crispness; his "tention" and his "Iseoy" sounded like so

many cries for help/and dear Mathew, normally a splendid eater if ever there was one, began to refuse even the Professor's most elaborate dishes. In fact, he seemed bent on starving to death, as he grew thinner and thinner whilst his once smooth and glossy plumage was turning sadly cross-grained. "Unless", he finally told me in a low and sorry ^{voice} ~~tone~~, "unless something miraculous occurs, and occurs soon, I am lost, and dire days will dawn for all of you. Philip, the infuriated barber, is withholding from our dear Professor ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ the freckles without which I cannot live; and though Professor Inkspot's very life does not depend on a steady supply of freckles, some of his most precious gifts and peculiarities will disappear as the last freckle fades from his face; his secrets will leave him; and, worst of all, our neighbours, the fairy-tales, will move away and establish residence in a more congenial climate; for our Academy, this I want you to know, will become an ordinary brickhouse in a large but neglected garden - a place that no self-respecting fairy-tale would wish to adjoin!"

I felt tears coming to my eyes. "But what", I said, "what could we possibly do to avoid all this"?

"I am", Mathew replied, "but a dying bird, and in no condition to do much about anything. And even if I were full of the most delicious freckles, I would still lack the power to force Philip into submission. For he, too, - as you surely realize by now, - has his precious gifts and peculiarities, and it would take more than a starling's strength to cope with him. Nor will any ordinary man succeed where Professor Inkspot appears to be failing. Only a Prince - and I venture to suggest only one Prince, - could solve the task that confronts us. His name is..."

"Prince Mathew!", I cried, kindling a strange flame in the bird's feverish eyes. Then, hardly knowing what I was doing and wholly ignorant as to where I was going to turn, I rushed out of the house and into the

garden. "I'll find it!" I heard myself shouting; "Mathe~~us~~^s, my dearest, do not despair,- I will find the magic button!"

X.

THE GREAT EXPEDITION

Out in the garden I noticed something quite out of the ordinary. The gates, - all of the fairy-tale-gates-were wide open, a most unusual and almost incredible sight. This side of the wall, only Professor Inkspot would have been in a position to unlock all these golden locks, and for some time past the dear Professor had hardly left the house, let alone ventured out into the rainy garden~~2~~_x. Consequently, it must have been the fairy-~~tales~~ themselves who had opened the gates. Perhaps, they knew how desperately we needed their assistance, and though they didn't wish to take the first step, they meant to indicate that they were ready to help. - Presently, I found myself rushing towards one of the gates, and entered without having bothered to read the legend it bore. The huge forest into the midst of which I fell was a little frightening; it was the kind of a forest that one is bound to get lost in. In fact, I seemed lost already, when, on a sudden, the air was filled with the most enchanting music. As I followed the sound, bushels of light appeared in the sky and a gentle breeze whispered soothingly in the dark and silent fir-trees. Then, after a few more steps, I knew where I was. There they lay, sleeping on the mossy ground, - Hansel and Gretel, lost like myself but, like myself, protected by the angels, of whom - this I knew, - there must be 14 in their particular case. There were. And there also was the luminous ladder leading into the sky whilst invisible instruments played the melody which alone belonged here but which no earthly orchestra could have played in such a heavenly way. Holding my breath and trying to make no sound I just stood there, watching and listening. The thought that I might^{deliberately} wake the two sleepers never entered my mind.

They were now in the midst of their fairy-tale with grave dangers still before them and I must not disturb the sequence of events which I knew and loved so well. So, when the angels withdrew, and darkness descended once more upon the scene, I departed - somewhat apprehensive as to whether I should be able to avoid the witch.

Presently, though in some distance, ^Iperceived what looked like an insurmountable hedge; it was black as ebony and bore no leaves, but innumerable dew-drops shimmered pearl-like among its branches. Unnoticeably, night had passed and it was bright day-light. As I approached the hedge, it grew more and more immaterial until, when I was about to reach it, there proved to be no hedge at all.

Instead, there was an immense hall which I must have entered without knowing it. And so vast and cold was it that I realized at once where I was. The walls here were made of drifted snow, and the windows and doors of the biting winds. I crossed the wall, and walked into another and then into another still and there seemed no end to the glittering expanse of these palatial rooms every one of which opened into another, and the biggest of which stretched for many miles. They were all lighted by the strongest northern lights, as befitted what I knew to be the Snow Queen's Ice-Palace. Thrilled though I was by my new surroundings, I hoped fervently not to encounter the Snow Queen whose kiss would turn my heart to ice and who would make me forget all the people I liked. For that was what she had done to little Kay whom I presently beheld. There he sat, blue with cold - nay, almost black - but he did not know it, for the Snow Queen had kissed away his icy shiverings, and his heart was little better than a lump of ice. Nor did he seem to see me. He sat so still and immovable that one might have thought he was frozen to death. - "No", I thought by myself, "I shall not talk to him; for, surely, he can't be expected to help me. What with the splinter in his eye and the grain of glass in his heart and

the Snow Queen's kisses ~~as~~ his only memory, he is not at present a human being. Fortunately, little Gerda may be counted on to arrive very shortly and in the end all will be well. For the moment, however, I'd better make haste and try to find a more promising fairy-tale." No sooner had I thought thus and walked a few steps whilst thinking, than I neared the well known hedge, black as ebony and with innumerable dew-drops shimmering pearl-like among its branches. And as I approached the hedge, it grew more and more immaterial until, when I was about to reach it, there proved to be no hedge at all. This, then, - I decided - is what separates the fairy-tales from each other, this wondrous ebony-hedge that looks forbidding enough to keep you from even attempting to surmount it; if, however, you are really determined, and in need - and, I dare say, on friendly terms with the fairy-tales, - it will vanish the moment you reach out to touch it.

How many times in the course of my wanderings did I arrive at the hedge? How many invisible border-lines did I cross? Was there indeed any fairy-tale in existence that I failed to visit? If there was, I could name it as little as I could enumerate all the forests, the castles, the lakes, and mountains; all the animals, the princes and princesses, the dwarfs and the elves; and all the fairy-tale people I saw. But kindly though most of my new friends received me, none was able to give me the advice I sought, and despite the marvels all about me ~~and~~ I grew more and more dispirited. At last, and when I was on the verge of giving up, I found myself at the "Gallant Taylor's" shop. Having just slain seven flies at one blow, the Gallant Tailor was mighty proud of himself. "Now this is indeed something", I heard him say; "the whole town shall know about this.". Then he hastened to cut out a belt, and he stitched it and put on it in large capitals: "Seven at one blow". As the job was bound to take some time anyway - time during which the Gallant Tailor was not supposed to do anything but stitch, I boldly approached him, and asked

poor Mathew's story, and asked that Little Red Riding Hood part with her button. "It's the only one I have" she said, doubtfully, "and once it's gone I may lose my little red velvet cloak." But grandmother would have none of this. "Now listen, dearie", she said in a surprisingly stentorian ~~xxx~~ voice, "it's I who found that button in the first place. You weren't even born then; in fact, your mother wasn't even born then, and I lived with my own parents in a faraway kingdom which has since been destroyed. When I found the button in the streets of our capital, I had not the faintest idea whom it belonged to but thought it a noteworthy little thing. This impression ~~was~~ was deepened when an impressive looking stranger - a Chinese, I think, - whom I'd never before encountered and whom I haven't seen since, stood suddenly at my side and said: 'You've found a most important button, my child; guard it well; keep it in the safest of places and when the time comes, give it to your grandchild to wear, who in turn will at last return it to its owner'".

The old woman paused. But Little Red Riding Hood rushed over to the huntsman and with the knife that was still wet with the wolf's blood, severed the button from her little red velvet cloak. "Here", she said, handing me the button; "it's Mathew's, and I shan't mind losing my little cloak, if only your friend regains his human and princely status."

I kissed everybody in the place before hurrying towards what I expected to be the ebony hedge but which turned out to be one of the gates leading into our own Academy garden. The gate was open but when I'd passed through it, the ~~y~~, whoever they were, closed and locked it behind my hurrying back. One glance, moreover, sufficed to show me that all the fairy-tale gates were once again closed and locked in the usual way, their golden locks glittering ^{prettily} in the brilliant sunshine.

XI.
IN THE NICK OF TIME
~~ONCE UPON A TIME~~

A strange bird sat on one of the two trees flanking the Academy entrance. As for sheer size the bird might have been a stork but for the rest he looked much like an overgrown starling, and one who wasn't feeling a bit good for that matter. He was thin, sad-eyed and of bristling plumage, and his face somehow gave you the impression of being pale. "Elcome?" he said ardently, making the salutation contain an all-important question. "Mathew???" I cried, adding at least three question marks to the name. For, if this huge and ^{emaciated} ~~emaciated~~ animal was indeed dear old Mathew, most extraordinary things must have occurred in my absence. "I found it" I said nevertheless, and presently the bird's identity ceased to be a matter of doubt. Weeping with joy and excitement, Mathew alighted on my shoulder, and rubbed his tear-stained face against my cheek. When he saw the button, he nearly fainted. "Uick! Uick!" he breathed into my ear; "Rofessor, Rofessor!" It was only then that I realized on a sudden what must have happened. Left entirely without freckles, poor Mathew had kept on starving and shrinking and would have surely perished, had it not been for Professor Inkspot's magnifying pump. Though incapable of providing nourishment, the pump had served to turn the dying little starling into a bird of far sturdier built and big enough to survive the ordeal. Now, however, even Mathew, the enlarged, seemed on his last legs. "Uick, uick!" he repeated but proved unable to move. With the huge bird ^{clinging} ~~clinging~~ to my shoulder, and ^{the} ~~the~~ magic button glittering in my out-stretched hand, I ran into the house ~~and~~ and up the stairs and straight into Professor Inkspot's bedroom.

XII.

PRINCE MATHEW

From then on the most breath-taking events followed each other with such speed, that I am scarcely able to report their sequence in an orderly fashion. At first the cap had to be found. Grown useless for lack of the button, it lay hidden and neglected among the Professor's secrets. Poor Mathew passed out during the prolonged search and had to be sprinkled with wine and rose-water. Then the button had to be sewn on, and it appeared that no ordinary thread would do the job. So sharp-edged were the button's holes that they cut to bits any thread you attempted to insert. Mathew had come to - but was not as yet able to speak. Staring at me with wide and feverish eyes, he did not seem to have regained his sense of direction either, for though his gaze was of the utmost urgency, it failed to meet my eyes but rested burningly upon my hair. Then, suddenly, I understood its meaning. Was not my hair red? Was it not strong and silky and admirably suitable for our great purpose? Swiftly, I pulled out the six longest specimens that I could find, re-threaded the needle, and presently the magic button stuck to the cap as if forever.

Made for a man's head, the cap was far too large for even a very large bird. It covered all of dear Mathew's face, and made him unable to see. He was, moreover, too weak to pull the button. When the Professor was about to perform that all-important operation, Mathew, under his cap, began to mutter in an agonized voice. "If I should die", he said, "as well I may, have Adam use the cap which will transform him into whatever animal he wishes to become. He may then go, or fly, or creep, to Philip's house and recover all that's needed. Asked why on earth he expected to die at this happiest of all moments, Mathew pointed out, not unreasonably, I thought, - that he was not at present the very bird ^{into} which the cap had ^{transformed} him ~~was~~. Professor Inkspot's magnifying pump had made him into an animal scarcely

reminiscent of Mathew, the starling, and it was anything but certain that the magic button would function properly. "Conceivably", we heard him mumble, "I might get killed in the process and even if I am not, - even if your pulling the button should have no result whatever, I would still be dying; for, unless the miracle occurs, I am indeed a doomed bird. Nor - " he said, and suddenly his voice sounded quite manly and determined - " nor should I mind to die, now that all is sure to be well at our dear Academy."

He sighed in conclusion but it was not an unhappy sigh, though it was the last sound that emanated from Mathew, the giant starling.

For now the great moment had come, and Professor Inkspot pulled the button. In utter silence, Mathew, the cap still covering his face, began to grow until he was almost a head taller than the Professor. Spreading his prodigious wings, he stretched his legs, tossed his head in all directions, and presently started to shake and tremble in the most alarming fashion, only to stand wholly motionless the very next moment. And what a moment this was. Although the windows were closed, a strong gust of wind made itself felt that played havoc with the Professor's cherished beard and blew my hair into my brow, so that I had to close my eyes. When I opened them again, dear Mathew's plumage lay on the ground - a limp and formless heap crowned by the magic cap - but as I raised my gaze, I beheld the most handsome youth under the sun. He was tall; and his were broad shoulders, narrow hips, and long, shapely legs. His hair was black; his eyes were blue; and his smiling lips were as red as was the cap at his feet. "It's I!" he said, spreading his arms and looking at them, successively, and as if to make sure that they were actually there and his; "It's I, it's I, It's I!"

XIII

ALL IS WELL.

Prince Mathew lost no~~x~~ time. Having mounted a magnificent stallion whom we'd found waiting in front of the Academy, and whom he called Ali

Baba, he galloped away, his blue eyes blazing and his black hair tousled by the wind. But soon thereafter, he was back again. With him on Ali Baba's back sat Philip, the barber, and Bertie and Brian, his unkempt sons. "They've come voluntarily!", he announced. "Even while I was shedding my feathers and becoming myself again, the king of the wolves^{CS} dropped dead in front of Philip's door. And even then, the barber^{CS} knew that his game was up. But as I arrived at the house, Dr. Pa^{CS}-Chi-Wo was about to enter. Happy though I was to see the man who'd saved my life, I wondered what had brought him here. I was soon to find out. 'You have', the Doctor told Philip, 'made an utter fool of yourself while ruthlessly endangering the lives and happiness of many people. Now, through no merit of your own, things at the Academy will be well once more - so well indeed that a number of additional pupils may be admitted. And since boys whose names start with an A are not easily found, B-boys will henceforth^{CS} be accepted'. Having thus spoken the Doctor disappeared. Bertie and Brian packed their belongings; Philip packed his freckles; and the three of them shed bitter^{CS} tears of joy, gratitude, and remorse."

Here, Prince Mathew paused. "Well," he finally exclaimed, eying Professor Inkspot with astonishment. And was it not truly amazing? Our dear Professor who, only a few minutes ago, had been of a frightening pallor looked like life personified. There was not, however, a single freckle to be noticed on his movable nose and his pink and radiant cheeks. And I use^{CS} the word "single" advisedly. For, in his understandable eagerness to satisfy his mighty client, Philip had applied such a multitude^{CS} of freckles that they covered the Professor's entire face, plating^{CS} it, as it were, with a fresh coat of lovely, healthy looking skin. Even so, a substantial number of freckles remained in Philip's tool-case. Prince Mathew who up to then had displayed such unmistakably princely manners that I found it somewhat difficult to feel close to him, bent over the

tool-case, and suddenly something in the eager movement of his head proved curiously reminiscent of my dear friend, Mathew, the starling. "Ay I?", he said, grabbing himself a handful of freckles. This made me very happy. For, while I much preferred Mathew, the gallant Prince, to Mathew, the unhappy bird, I was glad to know that something was still left of the latter and that I needn't be overawed by the former's royal status.

XIV.

AN INCOMPARABLE CELEBRATION.

Although we'd told nobody, the whole Academy seemed aware of what had happened. And everybody had gone to work, so as to make our school the cleanest, tidiest and most festive looking place in the world. For, that a feast was in the offing was a matter of no doubt, though no-one could have foreseen just how splendid a feast it was to be. When house and garden looked their very best, each of us was given a golden key, and some got as many as two or three. Only Bertie and Brian were not as yet considered worthy of the distinction. But then, everything here was still new and exciting to them, and while the rest of us went to invite the fairy-tales, the new boys enjoyed themselves exploring the Academy's outstanding features.

They all came. They were all there: The Mouse, the Bird, and the Sausage; The Wolf and the Seven Goats; The Frog Prince; The Ugly Duckling; Cinderella; The Fisherman and His Wife; The Robber Bridegroom; Snow-White and Rose-Red; The Girl Who Tread on a Loaf; Great Klaus and Little Klaus; The Steadfast Tin Soldier; The Princess and the Pea; The Swineherd; and many, many others. As for myself, I was especially happy to greet Hansel and Gretel, Little Kay, The Gallant Tailor, and whomever else I'd met during my recent wanderings. Little Red Riding Hood - I noticed - had grown quite a bit, since I'd left her, and was now a very lovely young lady. I don't know how the huntsman felt about her; Prince Mathew, at any rate, seemed

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unable to take his delighted gaze from the girl; - "because", as he put it, "it was she who preserved and returned the button." But if this was indeed one reason for his enchantment, there were other reasons besides. The evening was still young, when Prince Mathew kissed Little Red Riding Hood and the two of them declared their intention to become man and wife. As a result, the rest of us grew even gayer and more exuberant. We danced, and we laughed, and we ate, and we drank. The air was full of ~~fairies and birds~~ ^{fairy-tale birds} and sweet music and lovely odors. Those among the fairy-tale characters who liked fruit juice with sparkling water, were taking the most delicious showers in our bedroom. Others had found our foot-ball, and tossed it about, shouting "Salzburg, Austria", or "Washington, D.C.!" ^{Others} ~~Others~~ still were engaged in Inkspotology, whilst some just watched the Professor preparing ever new, surprising dishes, trans-painting gray dust into black chocolate-powder, and magnifying a tiny sardine into what looked like a mysteriously tender whale. In the end, the house seemed to have grown too small for us and we all found ourselves in the garden. Although it was winter, so many fairy-tale characters had brought their own fair weather along, that spring appeared to have arrived. The crowd was dense, and it was somewhat difficult to move. Nor did anyone really want to. Wherever we chanced to be, we were completely happy. Also, wherever we were, we could see Prince Mathew and Little Red Riding Hood sitting on top of the small hill, normally used by the Professor as an observation post, and kissing each other lovingly.

Only Professor Inkspot had to be able to get around and see to innumerable things. But then, he didn't have to walk. His wide trousers blown up by the wind; his chocolate-coloured tails fluttering about him; his movable nose turning in all directions; and his interminable beard waving, he kept floating over our heads - a strange, but kindly and rather graceful apparition.

8/1/34

PROFESSOR INKSPOT'S ACADEMY

(As told in Adam's Diary)

SYNOPSIS

By

ERIKA MANN

I

I.

THE WAY WE LIVE

My name is Adam. I am twelve years old and have been living at Professor Inkspot's Academy for more than half a year now. At home I was a good-for-nothing and always late at school. Never did I do my homework in time; I was all thumbs; I dropped everything and broke any number of glasses and cups; in fact, they used to break at the mere sight of me. When one fine day I spilled the ink, and ruined not only the table-cloth and my own trousers but also mother's new dress, my parents decided to let me have some real education at the Academy.

Located at the end of Chocolate Street, Professor Inkspot's Academy is a big three-story building of multicoloured bricks. On the third floor, the Professor keeps his secrets which nobody has ever laid eyes on. No one must enter these rooms; nor could anybody possibly get there, since the stairway ends on the second floor, and Professor Inkspot reaches his secrets through the chimney. The classroom is on the ground-floor; the bedrooms and the diningroom make up the first story while the second floor is occupied by Professor Inkspot and Mathew. The two of them live in one single room, though; all the others are locked.

Only boys whose names begin with an A are admitted to the Academy, for the Professor wouldn't dream of crowding his head with the entire alphabet. That's why we have four Adams, five Alexanders, three Andrews, three Alfreds, six Anthonies, one Arthur one Albert and one Abrahan - 24 boys, all told. The Professor's christian name is Ambrosy. Mathew is the only one in the whole Academy whose name doesn't start with an A. But then, Mathew is not a pupil; he is the Professor's learned starling. Mathew speaks beautifully except that he never pronounces the beginnings of the words. He'd call himself "Athiew" and at first called me something

I don't want to repeat until I asked him to make it "Am" instead. Strangers find it hard to understand him but we at the Academy don't.

Our Academy lies in the midst of a big park surrounded by a high wall. Nobody must leave the building without the Professor's permission. Nor is the wall an ordinary wall. Where it faces the street, it looks quite normal with only one center-door of glass. Its three remaining sides, however, consist of innumerable iron gates one adjoining the other, and locked, all of them, with small silver-locks. Through these gates you may enter the realm of our neighbours, the fairy-tales, with whom the professor is on excellent terms. A small plaque on each gate states which fairytale the respective ~~entrance belongs to~~ entrance belongs to. There are all the fairytales - the Andersen ones and the ones by Grimm - Snow-White, Cinderella, the Ugly Duckling and heaps of others. The Professor always carries the fairytale-keys with him in a large silver box and knows precisely which key fits what lock. Sometimes he'd send us on errands to one fairytale or the other. Mostly I am the one chosen, because I have red hair and am, therefore, easily spotted. One day we were short of matches; so the Professor called me in, gave me a golden key and said: "Adam, dear, kindly run over to Mr. Andersen's fairytale of "The Little Matchgirl" and ask for a box of ^{matches} ~~matches~~." - What fun! Snow was falling in Andersen's fairytale and it was very cold. All the people on the street were trembling with cold but I felt none of it. Then, a fine elderly gentleman approached me; he smiled and said: "Don't you recognize me? I am Mr. Andersen. Don't be startled by all this snow. We are in a fairytale, after all, and while out there in reality you are having June, it's winter around here."

When he'd heard who had sent me and what for he clapped his hands and at once there appeared the poor ragged "Match Girl" ~~and she was there~~. She had frozen to death and I felt so sorry for her that I am afraid I cried.

Mr. Andersen took a box of matches from her, gave it to me and said:

"That's for the Professor, and as for yourself, you'd better stop crying. All this is a fairytale, don't you see, and though the Little Girl, has frozen to death, I've made it all up myself and it isn't actually true." - The Little girl smiled at me, waving goodbye, and Mr. Andersen led me back to the gate.

As time went by, I was sent on errands to all kinds of fairytales. I'd go to get a pair of shoes from the Puss in Boots and one day, when mice had been sighted among the Professor's secrets, I had to set forth and fetch the Puss in person. As for the Professor's secrets, we never knew the first thing about them. Mathew was the only one who could have told us, and Mathew wouldn't talk, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ unless you gave him plenty of freckles to eat. Fortunately, the Professor's face chances to be covered with freckles which he puts on every morning. At night, he takes them all off again and places them in a golden tobacco-box where they are being kept until it is time to put them on back to his face.

Each Thursday, a barber called Philip comes from town to supply the Professor with a fresh crop of freckles. Philip uses a razor-blade to apply the ~~ink~~ stuff to his learned client's face. Professor Inkspot thinks the world of nic, big, red or brownish freckles; every now and then he'd bestow one on a deserving pupil as a special award. Alexander, for instance, has been given as many as three; others have one or two which they proudly display on their noses or cheeks. How I envy them and what I would not do to obtain one myself! But professor Inkspot says I am not as yet worthy of the distinction.

Mathew loves to eat the Professor's freckles and turns very talkative, whenever you bring him a few. One day, the Professor was so badly bitten by gnats that he scratched all his freckles off his face. Sorry, though I felt for him I quickly and secretly collected the entire lot and turned them over to Mathew. It was only then that Mathew really came to trust me

and that he told me the whole wondrous story of his life.

II.

MATHEW'S WONDROUS STORY.

Mathew spoke as follows:

I am no bird - I am a prince. My father's kingdom was probably the most beautiful in existence and mine were surely the most magnificent horses ever raised. There were 68 of them, one finer than the other, and I loved them so much that I could scarcely think of anything but them. Also, I so much preferred riding and hunting to studying and writing, that my father, the King, felt finally compelled to forbid all my gallant princely activities and to separate me completely from my horses. I was then eight years old but hard, as I tried, I could not get myself to forget my darlings who kept peopling my every dream.

One night, I was wakened by a gentle neigh. I rushed to the window and beheld my favorite stallion, Ali Baba. Swiftly I dressed in the dark, reached for my gun, and ~~leaped~~ ^{dived} out of the window, and straight on Ali Baba's waiting back. And off we went, jumping over 7 fences and galloping towards the forest. So happy was I to be riding again that I recalled neither my father's ban nor the dangers held by the woods. But when on a sudden Ali Baba began to tremble violently and refused to move any further, I knew what to expect. And there it was; a huge and fearful looking wolf, snarling, foaming, and showing his teeth, and coming nearer and nearer. I tried to flee but the monster followed. "In the name of the King", I shouted at last, "let us pass! Unless you do, I shall have to kill you." --

And Mathew went on to tell his wondrous story. I learned how Mathew, the Prince, had shot and killed the wolf, and how he had been bitten by the dying beast. Half unconscious with pain and shock, he raced back to the palace with packs of howling wolves in pursuit. When, in the morning,

he awoke from a dead faint, all the doctors in the kingdom had gathered at his bedside, along with the King and Queen and innumerable servants. It wasn't a great deal of blood that kept trickling from the wound in his hip but it dropped on and on and no one could still it. Even so the disobedient prince dared not recount his adventure in the forest. - Time passed; the blood went on trickling; despite the efforts of scores of physicians from all over the world; despite the dearest and rarest ointments, juices and pills, the prince grew weaker and paler by the hour. There seemed but little hope for his survival. Then, Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo, the court physician of China's last Emperor, accepted the King's most urgent invitation, and arrived at the palace. Left alone with his noble patient, the doctor pressed his mouth against the wound and, breathing into it, pronounced a number of unfathomable words. Presently, the blood ceased to trickle and strength began to return into Prince Mathew's body. "You have", the Doctor announced, "been bitten by the King of the Wolves whom you killed. Knowing your secret, I have been able to heal your wound but I shall not be able to protect you from the wrath of your foes. The wolves will not rest before they have taken revenge for the murder of their king, and your life, oh Prince, will never again be safe."

Having thus spoken, Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo produced a small cap adorned with one button. The button was as red as blood; it was square, rather ^{than} round, and had six holes in it, rather than four or two. "Take this", said the Doctor, "and put it on in the face of danger. It will transform you into whatever animal you may desire to become and thereby facilitate your escape. When the danger has passed you will regain your human status by pulling the button."

Great happiness reigned throughout the kingdom, and since Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo departed without having accepted the fabulous reward due him, the grateful King had 24 sacks of diamonds and rubies distributed among the poor. -/ Alas, his generosity was ill repaid.

Mysteriou/sly and with ever increasing fury, packs of wolves made their appearance in the fields, towns and cities of the kingdom, and finally reached even the capital. They ruined the crops, killed the cattle, destroyed much property, frightened the people, and endangered the lives of their children. And as the king proved powerless in the face of this curse, the people grew exceedingly angry and one day stormed the palace, ~~sh~~ shooting and slaying everyone in their way and burning the place to ashes. When the murderous mob was about to fall upon Prince Mathew - then 14 years of age - he reached for his magic cap but - to his horror - found the button missing.

"I meant", Mathew, the starling, concluded sadly, "to turn myself into a bird. But was I to make the fateful wish, knowing full well that with the button missing I'd have to remain a bird until the end of my days? My father's infuriated subjects left me no choice: as they got ready for the slaughter, I wished ~~from~~ from all my heart to become a starling. At least as ~~such~~ such I'd be able to talk. -- Having escaped I flew to many a land to confide in my married sisters. For my noble parents were dead and our land lay in ruins. But wherever I flew, I failed to be recognized. I was kept in a cage and when my youngest sister had grown tired of me, she gave me to one of her servants who in turn sold me to a street peddler. - Years passed. - Then, at a bird's fair in Salamanka, a learned foreigner, attracted by the strangeness of my tongue, bought me and took me with him. His name was Ambrosy Inkspot."

III.

PROFESSOR INKSPOT'S PECULIARITIES.

Here, to begin with, is what the Professor usually wears: trousers so wide, that they resemble balloons whenever the ⁴wind blows them up; tails, gery wide and very long, chocolate-coloured or wine-red; a brightly

yellow waistcoat of velvet and adorned with glass-buttons; a high standup-collar, and a small velvet-bow instead of a necktie. The Professor's clothes are rich in pockets. I counted 16 in his trousers alone, and 24 in his waistcoat. His tails, on the other hand, have but one pocket which is Mathew's domain; he may sit in it whenever he pleases. In his vest-pockets the Professor carries various objects, such as the tobacco-box with the freckles in it; the dream-acid; several candle-lights and the magnifying pump, all of which oddities I intend to describe in due and proper time. -

Professor Inkspot's head is quite unlike any other. His thick and tousled hair is rainbow-coloured; the long long beard, pitch-black. The movable nose occupies most of the face and may be turned to the right and the left alike. The circular eye-glasses on his nose look rather like a small bicycle. His long, stiff moustache is orange-coloured; his eyes are black and penetrating like stilettos.

Professor Inkspot can fly - or, rather, he is able to float in the air, if only at a very moderate height. This particular peculiarity of his is perhaps the one which we admire most. At some time or other everyone at the Academy tried to imitate the Professor in this respect - needless to say without any success whatsoever.

IV.

SCHOOL AT THE ACADEMY.

Punctually at five o'clock each morning, Mathew opens what we call "the sluices" - small openings in the ceiling, one over each bed. Then, cold water comes dripping down on our noses, whilst Mathews cries "Isecoys, iseoyes", thus admonishing the boys to rise. With every new day promising a lot of new and interesting fun, we'd get up very quickly. Besides our 24 beds, our large bedroom contains 24 showers which we love to use, since

what they pour down on us, is sparkling water with juice. There is a different fruit-juice for each day of the week which is why I like my Wednesday-shower best, raspberry juice being my favorite. Professor Inkspot's juices produce the most beautiful lather; in more than one respect they are far better than soap.

We all wear the same things: blue shirts, long white trousers, blue socks and white shoes. As a punishment for disobedience or poor marks, red ties with green dots have to be worn all day long. - At 5.30 we go to the dining-room, taking our dream-mirrors with us. In the center of the table, Mathew will sit on the edge of a flower-vase to see to it that nothing remains on our plates. But it is not until luncheon that the Professor will float over our table, sprinkling ^{our} food with various sauces. - Prayer is at 6 a.m., when Mathew will ring a small bell. After prayer, the Professor enters a closet and through an open window collects our dream-mirrors. All night our dream-mirrors stand besides our beds, mirroring and preserving our every dream. Now, the Professor will inspect our dreams. Silly, stupid, and improper ones get thrown on the dungheap; so do dream-fragments that fail to make sense. But dreams which please the Professor are removed from the mirrors. This is a fascinating procedure, if not quite as complicated as the one that follows. For, subsequently, our better dreams are being made into pills which we'll be given to swallow before going to bed. ~~Mathew will~~ ^{of course, will} Nobody ~~will~~ ever get a pill derived from ~~any~~ one of his own dreams.

School starts at seven and we all like it. For we don't have to bother with either grammar, or arithmetics, or calligraphy, or the like. Instead, we study - for instance - Inkspotology. This science is the Professor's personal invention. Applied correctly and ingeniously, Inkspotology produces the most arresting pictures with which we illustrate

stories we make up to match them. After each Inkspotology lesson we all have to wash our arms with lemon juice, as they'll be covered with ink up to the elbows and no other juice will do. - In the second period we usually string letters. We are supposed gradually to string all the letters contained in the Professor's library. Finished strings are being coiled and handed to the Professor. Late in the evening Professor Inkspot will sit for hours, letting the strings glide through his fingers. He likes to read that way, as it spares his eyes. The third lesson takes place in one of the locked rooms on the second floor where we learn how to take care of the sick objects kept in those chambers.

Fourth period: out-door games. One of these comprises Geography, since we use a globe for a ^{foot}~~globe~~ ball. Our ^{football}~~globe~~ is a bit out of the ordinary, though. All that you have to do is to toss the ball over to the other team, while calling the name of the city, the river, or mountain that is being hit by your foot. Both sides keep shouting - "Radom", "Australia" "London", "Philadelphia", "Greece" etc. Mathew serves as referee and will disqualify anyone calling the wrong name. It's a beautiful game. We'd fall over each other, shouting the names of oceans, deserts and countries and learning more in one hour than do other school-children in a year.

Once, ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ Alexander ^Tossed the ball so forcefully that it went over the wall into one of the neighbouring fairy^Ttales- we didn't know which. As we pondered what to do, we heard Mathew cry "tention", "tention"! - and here they were, striding through their ^{particular} gate: Snow-White and the ^Seven Dwarfs. The latter carried our globe-ball on their shoulders, looking even smaller under the terrific burden.

We ran towards them, thanking them heartily for their kindness. As a counter-courtesy, they asked that we teach them geography which we gladly promised.

V.

PROFESSOR INKSPOT'S KITCHEN

All work in the house and the kitchen is being done by the Professor and his pupils. Abraham will open and lock the door; ~~and the large~~ ~~the five~~ The five Alexanders will take care of our clothes and our laundry; Anthony and Albert will keep the park and the playground in order; Alfred will set the table, - and so forth and so on. Only the kitchen is the Professor's exclusive realm which nobody must enter. Which is why I am particularly proud to have been nominated his special kitchen-apprentice. - Here are just a few of the items to be found in our kitchen: the Professor's magnifying-pump by means of which he'll turn tiny bits of meat into roasts, large enough to feed us all. Looking rather like a small oil-tankard, the pump will magnify any object desired. ~~Even live animals may be thus enlarged - as I was eventually to discover.~~ - Our kitchen-shelves contain long rows of tins filled ~~with~~ ~~coloured~~ coloured glass, pots, with edible paint, and countless brushes in all sizes. - Attired in his white kitchen-frock, the Professor tastes all that he cooks and won't ever permit a dish to be served, unless he's found it entirely to his liking. When he's prepared, say, stewed gooseberries, and doesn't think them very good, he'll select a suitable brush, dip ^{it} into red paint and trans-paint the gooseberries into raspberries. I understand that it was no other than Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo of Peking who told the Professor the secret of the edible paint - the same Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo who ^gfigures so prominently in Mathew's wondrous story. And I think that there's something quite mysterious about this particular coincidence.

VI.

FLIES

No matter whence they ~~came~~ came - one day they were there: literally billions of flies, filling the air and making it unfit to live in. After

~~a number of gallant but fruitless efforts to rid us from the~~

a number of gallant but fruitless efforts to rid us from this plague, the Professor finally caught a hungry spider, and, by applying his magnifying-pump to its right ear, succeeded in producing an insect as big as a dog. Hundreds of thousands of flies fell victim to the giant's appetite but billions still remained. Then the Professor prepared a novel sort of liquid, consisting of soap, water, and glue, and eminently suitable to blow bubbles with. We all blew bubbles, and presently thousands of the sticky things floated about, glittering attractively. The bubbles attracted the flies; the flies got stuck on the bubbles; and the bubbles, now too heavy to stay in the air, fell onto the floor where the trapped flies soon piled up in enormous heaps. When we had at last managed to sweep the house clean, it took three two-and-a-half-ton trucks to ship the flies off.

VII.

ONE SUNDAY AT THE ACADEMY

On Sundays everyone at the Academy does as he pleases and on this particular Sunday, Mathew had flown over the wall into the fairy-tale of "The Nightingale" to take a singing lesson. Feeling a bit lonely without him, I went to the garden to find that all the water had run out of our lake and that the poor fish lay on the dry ground, kicking and writhing and threatening to die. Quickly I went to call the Professor and whomever else I could get hold of. - Having gathered the fish into big linen-baskets we all went over to the fairy-tale of "The Fisherman and his Wife". The Ocean there proved a bit unruly; the fisherman's wife had already made her second immoderate wish, and the Magic Fish was growing angry. Even so, we emptied our baskets into the excited sea, and afterwards had a wonderful swim, struggling with waves as high as houses and as ineffective as dreams.

VIII.

VICIOUS THINGS BEGIN TO HAPPEN.

Fall came; it rained most of the time, and the park lay deserted. Everything and everybody seemed a little sad and depressed, so that I was scarcely surprised, when one day I heard the Professor speak rather impatiently to Philip. "You fool!", he said; "you're trying to fool me when you cannot but realize that I will not be fooled. Look at them!", he exclaimed; "do they even look as if their names started with an A? They most assuredly do nothing of the kind!" - And he pointed an indignant finger at two unkempt boys whom Philip must have brought along. "Alfons!", he cried angrily; "Alfons and Adorable, indeed! These boys' names are Bertie and Brian, as you know only too well, and as truly as Mathew is a prince, and they will not at present be admitted!"

The barber and his sons departed quietly but I could see that Philip was exceedingly hurt and rather furious. Even so, the ~~upset~~ incident pleased me in a way. For it served to prove that Mathew was indeed the prince whom I'd always believed him to be. Any slight doubt in his veracity that I might have harbored had now been dispelled by the Professor's authoritative confirmation.

Poor Mathew! How could I have known what new ordeals Philip's wrath would bring both upon him and the whole Academy?

IX.

A TURN VERY MUCH TO THE WORSE.

Was it that in the grayish light of these autumn-days, the Professor's cherished freckles were losing their brightness, or was he actually ~~upset~~ sporting fewer and fewer of the things which grew paler and paler to boot? And what had happened to Mathew's gay and gallant spirit? Even his commands had lost their crispness; his "tention" and his "Iseoy's" sounded like so

many cries for help and dear Mathew, normally a splendid eater if ever there was one, began to refuse even the Professor's most elaborate dishes. In fact, he seemed bent on starving to death, as he grew thinner and thinner whilst his once smooth and glossy plumage was turning sadly cross-grained. "Unless", he finally told me in a low and sorry ^{voice} ~~voice~~, "unless something miraculous occurs, and occurs soon, I am lost, and dire days will dawn for all of you. Philip, the infuriated barber, is withholding from our dear Professor ~~INKSPOT'S VERY LIFE~~ the freckles without which I cannot live; and though Professor Inkspot's very life does not depend on a steady supply of freckles, some of his most precious gifts and peculiarities will disappear as the last freckle fades from his face; his secrets will leave him; and, worst of all, our neighbours, the fairy-tales, will move away and establish residence in a more congenial climate; for our Academy, this I want you to know, will become an ordinary brickhouse in a large but neglected garden - a place that no self-respecting fairy-tale would wish to adjoin!"

I felt tears coming to my eyes. "But what", I said, "what could we possibly do to avoid all this"?

"I am", Mathew replied, "but a dying bird, and in no condition to do much about anything. And even if I were full of the most delicious freckles, I would still lack the power to force Philip into submission. For he, too, - as you surely realize by now, - has his precious gifts and peculiarities, and it would take more than a starling's strength to cope with him. Nor will any ordinary man succeed where Professor Inkspot appears to be failing. Only a Prince - and I venture to suggest only one Prince, - could solve the task that confronts us. His name is..."

"Prince Mathew!", I cried, kindling a strange flame in the bird's feverish eyes. Then, hardly knowing what I was doing and wholly ignorant as to where I was going to turn, I rushed out of the house and into the

garden. "I'll find it!" I heard myself shouting; "Mathe^{us}, my dearest, do not despair,- I will find the magic button!"

X.

THE GREAT EXPEDITION

Out in the garden I noticed something quite out of the ordinary. The gates, - all of the fairy-tale-gates-were wide open, a most unusual and almost incredible sight. This side of the wall, only Professor Inkspot would have been in a position to unlock all these golden locks, and for some time past the dear Professor had hardly left the house, let alone ventured out into the rainy garden. Consequently, it must have been the fairy-tales themselves who had opened the gates. Perhaps they knew how desperately we needed their assistance and though they didn't wish to take the first step, they meant to indicate that they were ready to help. - Presently I found myself rushing towards one of the gates, and entered without having bothered to read the legend it bore. The huge forest into the midst of which I fell was a little frightening; it was the kind of a forest that one is bound to get lost in. In fact, I seemed lost already, when, on a sudden, the air was filled with the most enchanting music. As I followed the sound, bushels of light appeared in the sky and a gentle breeze whispered soothingly in the dark and silent fir-trees. Then, after a few more steps, I knew where I was. There they lay, sleeping on the mossy ground - Hansel and Gretel, lost like myself but, like myself, protected by the angels, of whom - this I knew, - there must be 14 in their particular case. There were. And there also was the luminous ladder leading into the sky whilst invisible instruments played the melody which alone belonged here but which no earthly orchestra could have played in such a heavenly way. Holding my breath and trying to make no sound I just stood there, watching and listening. The thought that I might wake the two sleepers never entered my mind.

They were now in the midst of their fairy-tale with grave dangers still before them and I must ~~not~~³ disturb the sequence of events which I knew and loved so well. So, when the angels withdrew and darkness descended once more upon the scene, I departed - somewhat apprehensive as to whether I should be able to avoid the witch.

Presently, though in some distance/^Iperceived what looked like an insurmountable hedge; it was black as ebony and bore no leaves but innumerable dew-drops shimmered pearl-like among its branches. Unnoticeably, night had passed and it was bright day-light. As I approached the hedge, it grew more and more immaterial until, when I was about to reach it, there proved to be no hedge at all.

Instead, there was an immense hall which I must have entered without knowing it. And so vast and cold was it that I realized at once where I was. The walls here were made of drifted snow and the windows and doors of the biting winds. I crossed the ^hall, and walked into another and then into another still and there seemed no end to the glittering expanse of these palatial rooms every one of which opened into another and the biggest of which stretched for many miles. They were all lighted by the strongest northern lights, as befitted what I knew to be the Snow Queen's Ice-Palace. Thrilled though I was by my new surroundings, I hoped fervently not to encounter the Snow Queen whose kiss would turn my heart to ice and who would make me forget all the people I liked. For that was what she had done to little Kay whom I presently beheld. There he sat, blue with cold - nay, almost black - but he did not know it, for the Snow Queen had kissed away his icy shiverings, and his heart was little better than a lump of ice. Nor did he seem to see me. He sat so still and immovable that one might have thought he was frozen to death. - "No", I thought by myself, "I shall not talk to him; for, surely, he can't be expected to help me. What with the splinter in his eye and the grain of glass in his heart and

the Snow Queen's kisses ~~as~~ his only memory, he is not at present a human being. Fortunately, little Gerda may be counted on to arrive very shortly and in the end all will be well. For the moment, however, I'd better make haste and try to find a more promising fairy-tale. - No sooner had I thought thus and walked a few steps whilst thinking, than I neared the well known hedge, black as ebony and with innumerable dew-drops shimmering pearl-like among its branches. And as I approached the hedge, it grew more and more immaterial until, when I was about to reach it, there proved to be no hedge at all. This, then, - I decided - is what separates the fairy-tales from each other, this wondrous ebony-hedge that looks forbidding enough to keep you from even attempting to surmount it; if, however, you are really determined, and in need - and, I dare say, on friendly terms with the fairy-tales, - it will vanish the moment you reach out to touch it.

How many times in the course of my wanderings did I arrive at the hedge? How many invisible border-lines did I cross? Was there indeed any fairy-tale in existence that I failed to visit? If there was, I could name it as little as I could enumerate all the forests, the castles, the lakes, and mountains; all the animals, the princes and princesses, the dwarfs and the elves; and all the fairy-tale people I saw. But kindly though most of my new friends received me, none was able to give me the advice I sought, and despite the marvels all about me ~~and~~ I grew more and more dispirited. At last, and when I was on the verge of giving up, I found myself at the "Gallant Taylor's" shop. Having just slain seven flies at one blow, the Gallant Tailor was mighty proud of himself. "Now this is indeed something", I heard him say; "the whole town shall know about this.". Then he hastened to cut out a belt, and he stitched it and put on it in large capitals: "Seven at one blow". As the job was bound to take some time anyway - time during which the Gallant Tailor was not supposed to do anything but stitch, I boldly approached him, and asked

poor Mathew's story, and asked that Little Red Riding Hood part with her button. "It's the only one I have" she said, doubtfully, "and once it's gone I may lose my little red velvet cloak." But grandmother would have none of this. "Now listen, dearie", she said in a surprisingly stentorian ~~xxx~~ voice, "it's I who found that button in the first place. You weren't even born then; in fact, your mother wasn't even born then, and I lived with my own parents in a faraway kingdom which has since been destroyed. When I found the button in the streets of our capital, I had not the faintest idea whom it belonged to but thought it a noteworthy little thing. This impression ~~of mine~~ was deepened when an impressive looking stranger - a Chinese, I think, - whom I'd never before encountered and whom I haven't seen since, stood suddenly at my side and said: 'You've found a most important button, my child; guard it well; keep it in the safest of places and when the time comes, give it to your grandchild to wear, who in turn will at last return it to its owner'".

The old woman paused. But Little Red Riding Hood rushed over to the huntsman and with the knife that was still wet with the wolf's blood, severed the button from her little red velvet cloak. "Here", she said, handing me the button; "it's Mathew's, and I shan't mind losing my little cloak, if only your friend regains his human and princely status."

I kissed everybody in the place before hurrying towards what I expected to be the ebony hedge but which turned out to be one of the gates leading into our own Academy garden. The gate was open but when I'd passed through it, they, whoever they were, closed and locked it behind my hurrying back. One glance, moreover, sufficed to show me that all the fairy-tale gates were once again closed and locked in the usual way, their golden locks glittering ^{pretty} in the brilliant sunshine.

XI
IN THE NICK OF TIME.

A strange bird sat on one of the two trees flanking the Academy entrance. As for sheer size the bird might have been a stork but for the rest he looked much like an overgrown starling, and one who wasn't feeling a bit good for that matter. He was thin, sad-eyed and of bristling plumage, and his face somehow gave you the impression of being pale. "Elcome?" he said ardently, making the salutation contain an all-important question. "Mathew???" I cried, adding at least three question marks to the name. For, if this huge and emaciated animal was indeed dear old Mathew, most extraordinary things must have occurred in my absence. "I found it" I said nevertheless, and presently the bird's identity ceased to be a matter of doubt. Weeping with joy and excitement, Mathew alighted on my shoulder, and rubbed his tear-stained face against my cheek. When he saw the button, he nearly fainted. "Uick! Uick!" he breathed into my ear; "Rofessor, Rofessor!" It was only then that I realized on a sudden what must have happened. Left entirely without freckles, poor Mathew had kept on starving and shrinking and would have surely perished, had it not been for Professor Inkspot's magnifying pump. Though incapable of providing nourishment, the pump had served to turn the dying little starling into a bird of far sturdier built and big enough to survive the ordeal. Now, however, even Mathew, the enlarged, seemed on his last legs. "Uick,uick!" he repeated but proved unable to move. With the huge bird ^aclinging to my shoulder, and ^{THE}magic button glittering in my out-stretched hand, I ran into the house ~~and~~ and up the stairs and straight into Professor Inkspot's bedroom.

XII.

PRINCE MATHEW

From then on the most breath-taking events followed each other with such speed, that I am scarcely able to report their sequence in an orderly fashion. At first the cap had to be found. Grown useless for lack of the button, it lay hidden and neglected among the Professor's secrets. Poor Mathew passed out during the prolonged search and had to be sprinkled with wine and rose-water. Then the button had to be sewn on, and it appeared that no ordinary thread would do the job. So sharp-edged were the button's holes that they cut to bits any thread you attempted to insert. Mathew had come to - but was not as yet able to speak. Staring at me with wide and feverish eyes, he did not seem to have regained his sense of direction either, for though his gaze was of the utmost urgency, it failed to meet my eyes but rested burningly upon my hair. Then, suddenly, I understood its meaning. Was not my hair red? Was it not strong and silky and admirably suitable for our great purpose? Swiftly, I pulled out the six longest specimens that I could find, re-threaded the needle, and presently the magic button stuck to the cap as if forever.

Made for a man's head, the cap was far too large for even a very large bird. It covered all of dear Mathew's face, and made him unable to see. He was, moreover, too weak to pull the button. When the Professor was about to perform that all-important operation, Mathew, under his cap, began to mutter in an agonized voice. "If I should die", he said, "as well I may, have Adam use the cap which will transform him into whatever animal he wishes to become. He may then go, or fly, or creep, to Philip's house and recover all that's needed." Asked why on earth he expected to die at this happiest of all moments, Mathew pointed out, - not unreasonably, I thought, - that he was not at present the very bird ^{into} which the cap had ^{transformed} him ~~him~~. Professor Inkspot's magnifying pump had made him into an animal scarcely

reminiscent of Mathew, the starling, and it was anything but certain that the magic button would function properly. "Conceivably", we heard him mumble, "I might get killed in the process and even if I am not, - even if your pulling the button should have no result whatever, - I would still be dying; for, unless the miracle occurs, I am indeed a doomed bird. Nor - " he said, and suddenly his voice sounded quite manly and determined - " nor should I mind to die, now that all is sure to be well at our dear Academy."

He sighed in conclusion but it was not an unhappy sigh, though it was the last sound that emanated from Mathew, the giant starling.

For now the great moment had come, and Professor Inkspot pulled the button. In utter silence, Mathew, the cap still covering his face, began to grow until he was almost a head taller than the Professor. Spreading his prodigious wings, he stretched his legs, tossed his head in all directions, and presently started to shake and tremble in the most alarming fashion, only to stand wholly motionless the very next moment. And what a moment this was. Although the windows were closed, a strong gust of wind made itself felt that played havoc with the Professor's cherished beard and blew my hair into my brow, so that I had to close my eyes. When I opened them again, dear Mathew's plumage lay on the ground - a limp and formless heap crowned by the magic cap - but as I raised my gaze, I beheld the most handsome youth under the sun. He was tall; and his were broad shoulders, narrow hips, and long, shapely legs. His hair was black; his eyes were blue; and his smiling lips were as red as was the cap at his feet. "It's I!" he said, spreading his arms and looking at them, successively, and as if to make sure that they were actually there and his; "It's I, it's I, It's I!"

XIII

ALL IS WELL.

Prince Mathew lost no time. Having mounted a magnificent stallion whom we'd found waiting in front of the Academy, and whom he called Ali

Baba, he galloped away, his blue eyes blazing and his black hair tousled by the wind. But soon thereafter, he was back again. With him on Ali Baba's back sat Philip, the barber, and Bertie and Brian, his unkempt sons. "They've come voluntarily!", he announced. "Even while I was shedding my feathers and becoming myself again; ^{new} the king of the wolves ^{yes} dropped dead in front of Philip's door. And even then the barber knew that his game was up. But as I arrived at the house, Dr. Paj-Chi-Wo was about to enter. Happy though I was to see the man who'd saved my life, I wondered what had brought him here. I was soon to find out. 'You have', the Doctor told Philip, 'made an utter fool of yourself while ruthlessly endangering the lives and happiness of many people. Now, through no merit of your own, things at the Academy will be well once more - so well indeed that a number of additional pupils may be admitted. And since boys whose names start with an A are not easily found, B-boys will henceforth be accepted'. Having thus spoken the Doctor disappeared. Bertie and Brian packed their belongings; Philip packed his freckles; and the three of them shed bittersweet tears of joy, gratitude, and remorse".

Here, Prince Mathew paused. "Well," he finally exclaimed, eying Professor Inkspot with astonishment. And was it not truly amazing? Our dear Professor who, only a few minutes ago, had been of a frightening pallor looked like life personified. There was not, however, a single freckle to be noticed on his movable nose and his pink and radiant cheeks. And I use the word "single" advisedly. For, in his understandable eagerness to satisfy his mighty client, Philip had applied such a ^{multitude} ~~multitude~~ of freckles that they covered the Professor's entire face, plating it, as it were, with a fresh coat of lovely, healthy looking skin. Even so, a substantial number of freckles remained in Philip's tool-case. Prince Mathew who up to then had displayed such unmistakably princely manners that I found it somewhat difficult to feel close to him, bent over the

tool-case, and suddenly something in the eager movement of his head proved curiously reminiscent of my dear friend, Mathew, the starling. "Ay I?", he said, grabbing himself a handful of freckles. This made me very happy. For, while I much preferred Mathew, the gallant Prince, to Mathew, the unhappy bird, I was glad to know that something was still left of the latter and that I needn't be overawed by the former's royal status.

XIV.

AN INCOMPARABLE CELEBRATION.

Although we'd told nobody, the whole Academy seemed aware of what had happened. And everybody had gone to work, so as to make our school the cleanest, tidiest and most festive looking place in the world. For, that a feast was in the offing was a matter of no doubt, though no-one could have foreseen just how splendid a feast it was to be. When house and garden looked their very best, each of us was given a golden key, and some got as many as two or three. Only Bertie and Brian were not as yet considered worthy of the distinction. But then, everything here was still new and exciting to them, and while the rest of us went to invite the fairy-tales, the new boys enjoyed themselves exploring the Academy's outstanding features.

They all came. They were all there: The Mouse, the Bird, and the Sausage; The Wolf and the Seven Goats; The Frog Prince; The Ugly Duckling; Cinderella; The Fisherman and His Wife; The Robber Bridegroom; Snow-White and Rose-Red; The Girl Who Tread on a Loaf; Great Klaus and Little Klaus; The Steadfast Tin Soldier; The Princess and the Pea; The Swineherd; and many many others. As for myself, I was especially happy to greet Hansel and Gretel, Little Kay, The Gallant Tailor, and whomever else I'd met during my recent wanderings. Little Red Riding Hood - I noticed - had grown quite a bit, since I'd left her, and was now a very lovely young lady. I don't know how the huntsman felt about her; Prince Mathew, at any rate, seemed

unable to take his delighted gaze from the girl; - "because", as he put it, "it was she who preserved and returned the button." But if this was indeed one reason for his enchantment, there were other reasons besides. The evening was still young, when Prince Mathew kissed Little Red Riding Hood and the two of them declared their intention to become man and wife. As a result, the rest of us grew even gayer and more exuberant. We danced, and we laughed, and we ate, and we drank. The air was full of ~~some~~ ^{fairy-tale birds} and sweet music and lovely odors. Those among the fairy-tale characters who liked fruit juice with sparkling water, were taking the most delicious showers in our bedroom. Others had found our foot-ball, and tossed it about, shouting "Salzburg, Austria", or "Washington, D.C.!" ^{Others} ~~Others~~ still were engaged in Inkspotology, whilst some just watched the Professor preparing ever new, surprising dishes, trans-painting gray dust into black chocolate-powder, and magnifying a tiny sardine into what looked like a mysteriously tender whale. In the end, the house seemed to have grown too small for us and we all found ourselves in the garden. Although it was winter, so many fairy-tale characters had brought their own, fair weather along, that spring appeared to have arrived. The crowd was dense, and it was somewhat difficult to move. Nor did anyone really want to. ^{Wherever} ~~Wherever~~ we chanced to be, we were completely happy. Also, wherever we were, we could see Prince Mathew and Little Red Riding Hood sitting on top of the small hill, normally used by the Professor as an observation post, and kissing each other lovingly.

Only Professor Inkspot had to be able to get around and see to innumerable things. But then, he didn't have to walk. His wide trousers blown up by the wind; his chocolate-coloured tails fluttering about him; his movable nose turning in all directions; and his interminable beard waving, he kept floating over our heads - a strange, but kindly and rather graceful apparition.

ADDITIONAL

REVISION

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