

THE THREE LITTLE KOBOLDS

Once upon a time there were three little kobolds, Flin, Tinkle and Dabster, who lived in an old clock.

Perhaps it is not universally understood that the King of all Ghouls and Fairies lives in the moon. Yet it is so, and the Man in the Moon is his steward and gardener, and takes care of the place when Ober III goes off on tour. His Majesty has many subjects on earth at various times, some who visit it for pleasure, and some who are the King's messengers in his business.

Theelves go back and forth on special errands at will, and if they make mistakes or lose their way are chased by owls, to gaze at the moon, but never reach it. The little kobolds, however, have a single home to perform year after year, and come down and dwell in houses on the earth and watch over children. If the little boys and girls are good they help them, if not, they bother them.

They whirl up and down in the fall and report to the King, who gives them a new silver bell to ring when invisible, and sends them the first snowflake. Now the three little kobolds had been about two weeks in force on their little soft avocations, and landed on the chimney.

"I do hope," said Flin, "there is no fire in the house below, for though it would melt till to it the flames would get in my eyes and make me quite cross."

"Dear me," said Dabster, "was now at this time I said, 'if that's the case we'll just sit down there.'"

"I don't see any fire," remarked Tinkle.

Nevertheless, Dabster sat down to the edge of the chimney, selected a good, long stick, lit himself off, and then lay gently down, looking at the fire. He didn't stay very long, for a gust of wind came along, upset him, and he landed him head foremost, rolled up and down, until those elves are glad to put that trick on another. I hand it in to them."

But he didn't like the good-natured little kobolds, so somewhat unwillingly tried to crawl out of the window, but the chink, finding a keyhole and crevices through the brickwork, was too little. He ran up the chimney, but reached another opening, where a queer serpentine led him where his companion had gone.

"What is this?" shouted Flin.

"It's a great big hole," answered the last of the three chimney.

"I'll fix it." Presently the fire went out, and the man got up in time to find his fire out, and much surprised. He came back into the parlor all over the dust, and talked over plans for getting to decide on them. Tinkle suggested the idea to the others that it would be best to be reached through the back door of the doll's room, where he had lived the past few years in very bad places.

"Why, one time," said the baby, "I found a doll in my sister's chiminea, and it wasn't to blame. It was me, but I was so angry I broke the doll, and she scolded him."

They finally decided to clock, and from that moment there. Flit took out his pocket knife, Tinkle took out his pocket knife, and Dabster counted the number of the pendulum, and nothing else to do, so they took notice of the dust. Perhaps they were better off, for it was so near Christmas, and it was to be extra good, but it certainly well-made.

In fact, they were not so pleasant and indulged in a few little kobolds, instead of presents present to the last minute. Year's morning, did not give one to each.

Freddy, who was fast asleep in the snow, and a pair of magic mittens that would build the most wonderful men and ice palaces were given to them and never left them. Addie was to have a pencil which would always sum up right when she wrote in it. Nellie should get a combable that would never let her hair get pricked when she was wearing those magnificent dresses which she often made for her doll.

The baby was a princess, and thought that the best thing he would be a prince, which should play like a king whenever he rolled it across the floor, and the three little kobolds agreed with him. Christmas Day came, and there were great rejoicings in the house. To be sure, the old clock did trip up over the floor, but she was bringing in the new year in time, but that only added to the fun, especially when she could say anything there afterward. A fireplace, and when evening came and the fire was lighted in the parlor, and the door was left open, the three little kobolds in the old clock out in the hall grew much excited, and, hanging to the pendulum, tried to be seen by the little

glass window as they swung by. But the pendulum went so far back and forth, and the window was so small, that they could not swing much, and they wanted to stop the clock. Dabster said, "Please stop the pendulum, but it goes on, and that's bad to hold the little bairns, and they went on. Then the wire ran inside, fastened the wheels, and the pendulum was still, and they stopped up again in the bob, and the clock ticked only once.

They then sat up in a stepladder, and looked at it up and down, and when the door was opened, they said, "Is this King's castle?"

The kobolds then scampered off, and the old, and was not long before they say by a man. The man, who was the stockman, a pair of dogs, a horse, a mule, and a team, and pulled them into the stable.

"Well, you're a pleasant lot of children over there," said the man. "I have been

here before, but I have often heard of the King's castle you?"

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