

BOYS' & GIRLS' STORY BOOK N°5 By ENID BLYTON



WHAT HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FAIR

JANE and Jimmy were very happy because there was to be a big fair in the next town, and a famous Prince was going to open it.

"We can go to the Fair, can't we, Mummy?" asked Jane.

"Yes," said Mummy, "but I can only give you sixpence each to spend. Since baby has been ill, I haven't many pennies to spare."

"Oh, Mummy—but the bus-fare is twopence each!" said Jimmy in dismay. "That only leaves us fourpence each to spend, and they charge threepence for going in at the gate."

"So that only leaves us a penny to spend," said Jane. "Well, I know! Jimmy, let's walk all the way there—then we shall save our bus-fare."

"All right," said Jimmy. "But it's a very long way, Jane. We shall have to start very early."

"Well, we *must* be there at the opening," said Jane; "I do so want to see the Prince, don't you?"

When the day came the children were so excited. Mummy had washed Jane's white frock, and Jimmy had a clean shirt to put on. They wore their strongest shoes, because they had a long way to walk. Mummy kissed them, gave them a sixpence each, and said good-bye.

They set off down the road. They had quite five miles to walk, so it really was a long way. The sun shone, and Jane and Jimmy felt happy. The bus passed them, and two cars—and then a very beautiful car slipped by. It was blue and silver, and Jimmy said it was the nicest one he had ever seen.

It wasn't long before they saw it again! When they turned the next corner, there it was by the side of the road. It had stopped, and a big man was busy doing something to it. He had the bonnet up and he was looking at the engine.

"Something's gone wrong," said Jimmy. They walked up to the car, and stood looking.

"Hallo, Sonny," said the man. "Where's the nearest garage?"

"Oh, it's a good way off," said Jimmy, pointing away to the south.

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“It’s down the first turning there, and keep straight on till you come to a village. Mr. Brown the mechanic lives there, and he often mends cars.”

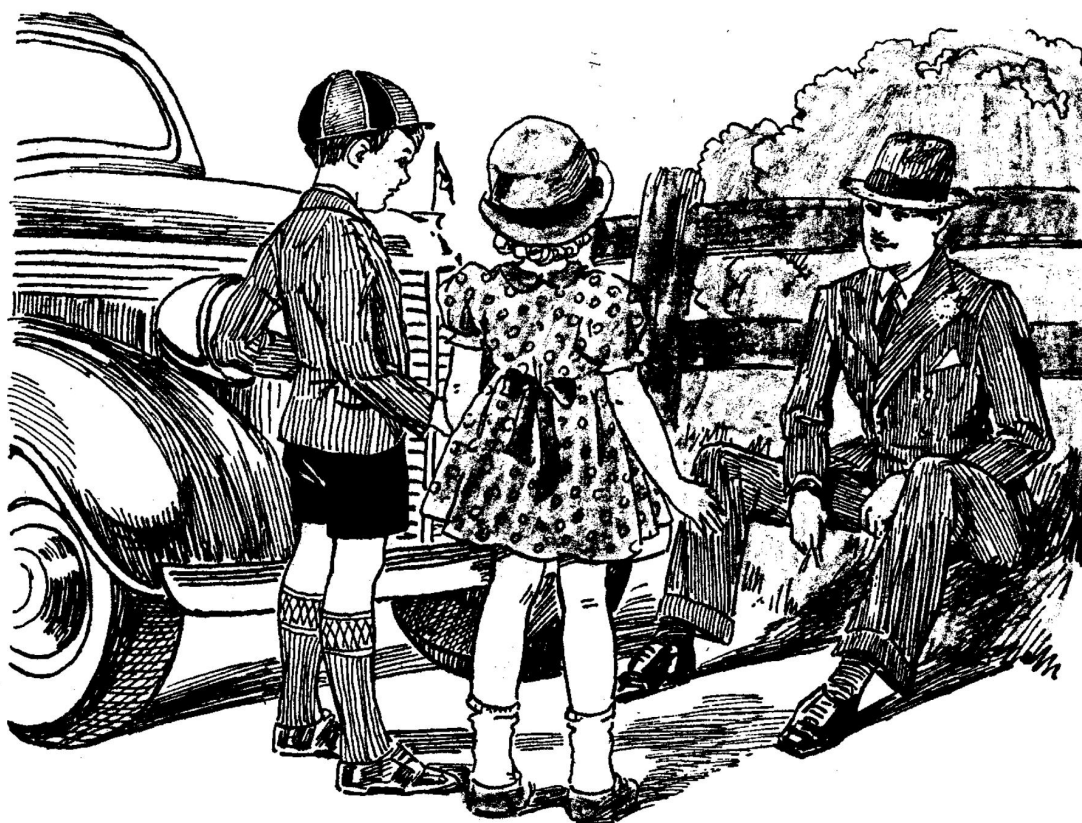
“Dear me!” said the man. “That’s very awkward. I have sent my driver straight on down the main road. Will he come to a garage soon, do you know?”

“Not till he gets to Burlton, where the fair is,” said Jimmy. “And that’s a long way off. Perhaps a car will come by and help you.”

But no car came by at all. The big man sat on the grass and waited, but nothing passed, not even a farm-cart.

“Hadn’t we better be getting on, Jimmy?” whispered Jane. “We shall be late for the fair and we shan’t see the Prince.”

Now Jimmy was a scout cub, and he didn’t like leaving the man there with his car and nobody to help him. So he went up to him and spoke politely.



“If you like, sir, I’ll just run down the lane and race on to the next village to get Mr. Brown for you,” said Jimmy.

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"If you like, sir, I'll just run down the lane and race on to the next village to get Mr. Brown for you," he said. "It wouldn't take me more than twenty minutes."

"Thank you very much, Sonny," said the big man, smiling. "You trot off then. I'm afraid that no one is going to come by this way for the rest of the day!"

So Jimmy ran off. Jane was left by the roadside, and she was too shy to talk to the big man. But he wasn't too shy to talk to her, and presently she found herself telling him all about the fair they were going to at Burlton.

"I was going there too," said the big man. "I'm afraid I shall be late."

"We wanted to see the Prince open the fair," said Jane. "But we shan't be able to now. But I'm glad Jimmy stayed to help you, of course."

"Dear me, I *am* sorry!" said the man. "Never mind! Perhaps Jimmy will be back soon."

In twenty minutes back came Jimmy with Mr. Brown. Jimmy had met him, and had told him all about the broken-down car, and Mr. Brown had popped the little boy on the back of his motor-bicycle and taken him along with him to the main road.

"Good afternoon," said the big man. "Just have a look at the engine, will you. Something's gone wrong."

Well, it didn't take Mr. Brown long to find out what was the matter, for he was a very clever man. He did this and he did that, and then, hurrah! The engine started once again and the car was all right!

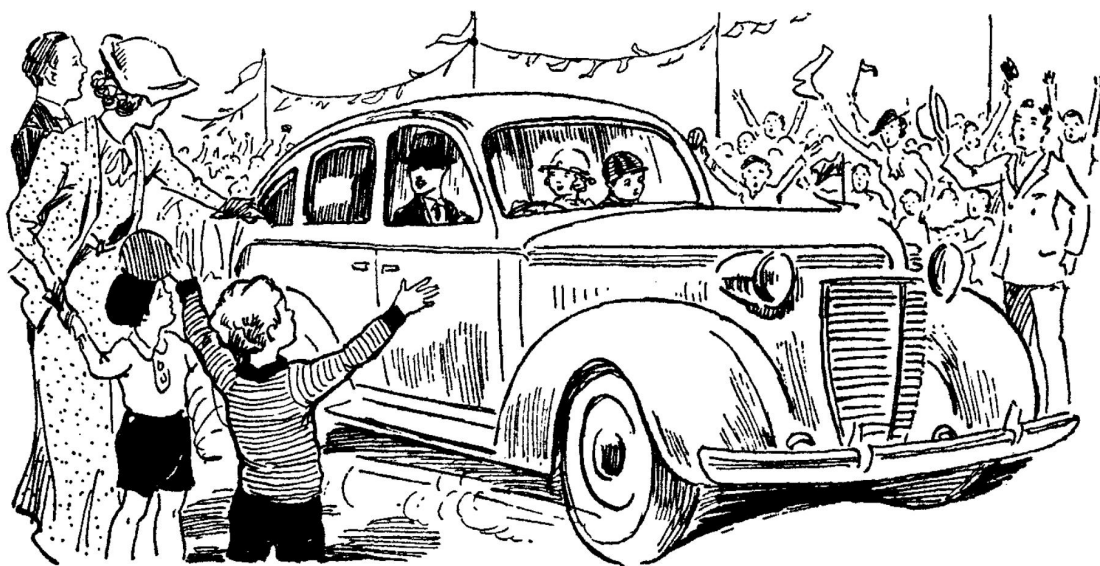
"Well, that's fine!" said the big man. "Now I shall be able to get on. I expect I shall pick my driver up somewhere on the road to Burlton."

He paid Mr. Brown, and then got into the car, which he was now going to drive himself. Jimmy and Jane waved good-bye.

"Oh no, you mustn't say good-bye!" he said with a laugh. "I'm going to take you two children with me. You don't suppose I'm going to leave you here to walk all the rest of the way, do you, after you've been so kind and helpful? No, you're just going to hop into the car and come with me!"

"Oh, thank you very much!" said Jimmy and Jane. The man opened the door for them and they climbed into the front seat beside

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him. Then off they went. Oh, it was lovely! The car sped along very fast, and the hedges rushed by. Jimmy and Jane loved it. It seemed that they were in Burlton almost before they had started, so quickly did they go.

“Oh, look at all the flags!” cried Jane. “Aren’t they pretty! I expect they’re put up to welcome the Prince.”

“I wonder if he’s come yet,” said Jimmy. “I do wish I could see him.”

The man at the wheel gave a chuckle.

“Yes, he’s arrived all right,” he said. And then a curious thing happened. All the people at the sides of the road began to cheer as if they were mad. They wanted to run out into the road, but some big policemen kept them back. The car that Jimmy and Jane were in slowed down, and crawled along the street. The people waved flags, and cheered more loudly than ever.

“The Prince!” they cried. “God bless His Royal Highness! The Prince!”

“Oh, where’s the Prince?” cried Jane. “Oh, I do want to see him! Oh, do stop the car please, and let me get down and see the Prince.”

“It’s all right, Jane,” laughed the big man beside her. “You can see him without getting out of the car. I’m the Prince, you see!”

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Well, what do you think of that? Jimmy and Jane were so surprised that they couldn't say a single word. They just sat and looked and looked. They couldn't believe their eyes!

It was the Prince whose car had broken down, and whom they had helped! It was the Prince's car they were riding in, and the Prince they were sitting beside! What a very exciting thing!

Soon the car came to a platform, beautifully decorated with flags and flowers. The Prince got out, and lifted down Jimmy and Jane. Then before they knew what was happening, he had taken their hands, and was leading them up the steps to the platform. And there they had to stand beside him!

"Good people," said the Prince. "Thank you for your wonderful welcome. I expect you want to know who my little friends are. Well, they are Jimmy and Jane, and if it hadn't been for their help when my car broke down, I shouldn't be here. So what about three cheers for Jimmy and Jane!"

You should have heard the people shout! Jimmy and Jane smiled all over their faces and felt as happy as a King and Queen. The Prince made another little speech and then he declared the Fair to be open. After that he stepped down from the platform and took Jimmy and Jane to a toy-stall and bought Jimmy a fine drum and Jane a big pink rabbit.

Then they all went on the roundabouts together, and before the Prince said good-bye he slipped two shillings into Jimmy's hand and two shillings into Jane's.

"Have a good time," he said. "And thank you again for helping me!"

Jimmy and Jane waved good-bye, and then looked at one another.

"It's just like a dream," said Jimmy. "Oh, Jane, what an adventure! Let's save our two-shilling pieces and take them home to Mummy. She will be so pleased."

And Mummy *was* pleased! She almost cried for joy to hear their wonderful story, and she said she couldn't possibly spend the two-shilling pieces. So she had them neatly framed and hung up on the wall—and there they are to this day. You'll see them if ever you go to tea with Jimmy and Jane.