

THE EIGHTH HOLIDAY BOOK

Enid Blyton





ONCE Margery had a tiny little man out of a Christmas cracker. He was so small that he wasn't much taller than a pin!

" Oh, *look* \ " cried Margery in delight, as he fell out on to the table. " A teeny little man—dressed in blue and white—with the tiniest smile on his face! " She held him up. " Look, Mummy, isn't he sweet? *I* know he's a lucky man! "

Well, it did really seem as if the little man was lucky, because all kinds of things began to happen to Margery after that. She had invitations to four parties and a pantomime. She found a shilling she had lost. She was given a big box of chocolates by an uncle who had never given her anything before.

" I'm sure it's this tiny man who's bringing me luck! " said Margery to Jack, her brother. " Ever since I've had him nice things have been happening to me. Oh, little lucky man, I shall keep you safe. I should hate to lose you. You might take your good luck away with you! "

" Lend him to me," said Jack, who had not had very good luck that week. Daddy had spanked him for being cheeky. He had lost a sixpence Mummy had given him for shopping, and he had broken a jug.

" No. You're so careless," said Margery, holding the little lucky man tightly. " You'd lose him! You always lose everything, Jack. You even lost your new ball the day after you had it."

" You're really mean," said Jack. " You won't even spare me a day's good luck! Well, one day I'll get your little lucky man, and I'll hide him

where you can't find him and take him about with me. Then, maybe, all kinds of nice things will happen to me, too! "

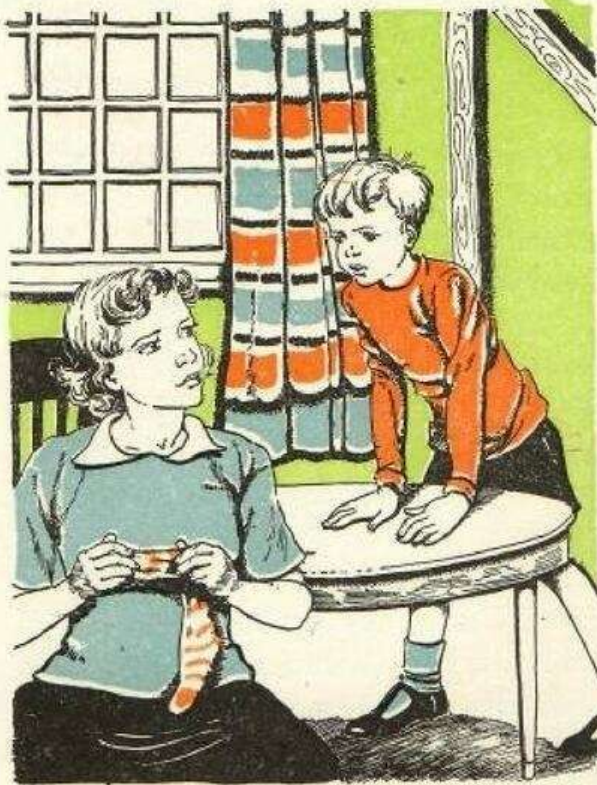
" You're not to take him away from me! " cried Margery. " You'll only lose him. I shall be so upset then."

Well, Margery simply would *not* lend Jack her lucky man, and, really, it wasn't very surprising, because Jack was certainly a very careless boy.

He was always breaking his toys, and had lost his two new handkerchiefs, as well as his ball. But Jack felt certain that if only Margery would lend him the lucky man even for a day he might find everything he had lost, and get some more good luck besides.

He grumbled about it to his Mother. " I do think Margery might lend me the lucky man. Then things would go right for me, too. I'd get extra presents, and not lose things or break things."

Mummy laughed. " Oh, good luck doesn't come to Margery because of her lucky man, though she thinks it does. It comes because she's a careful, thoughtful

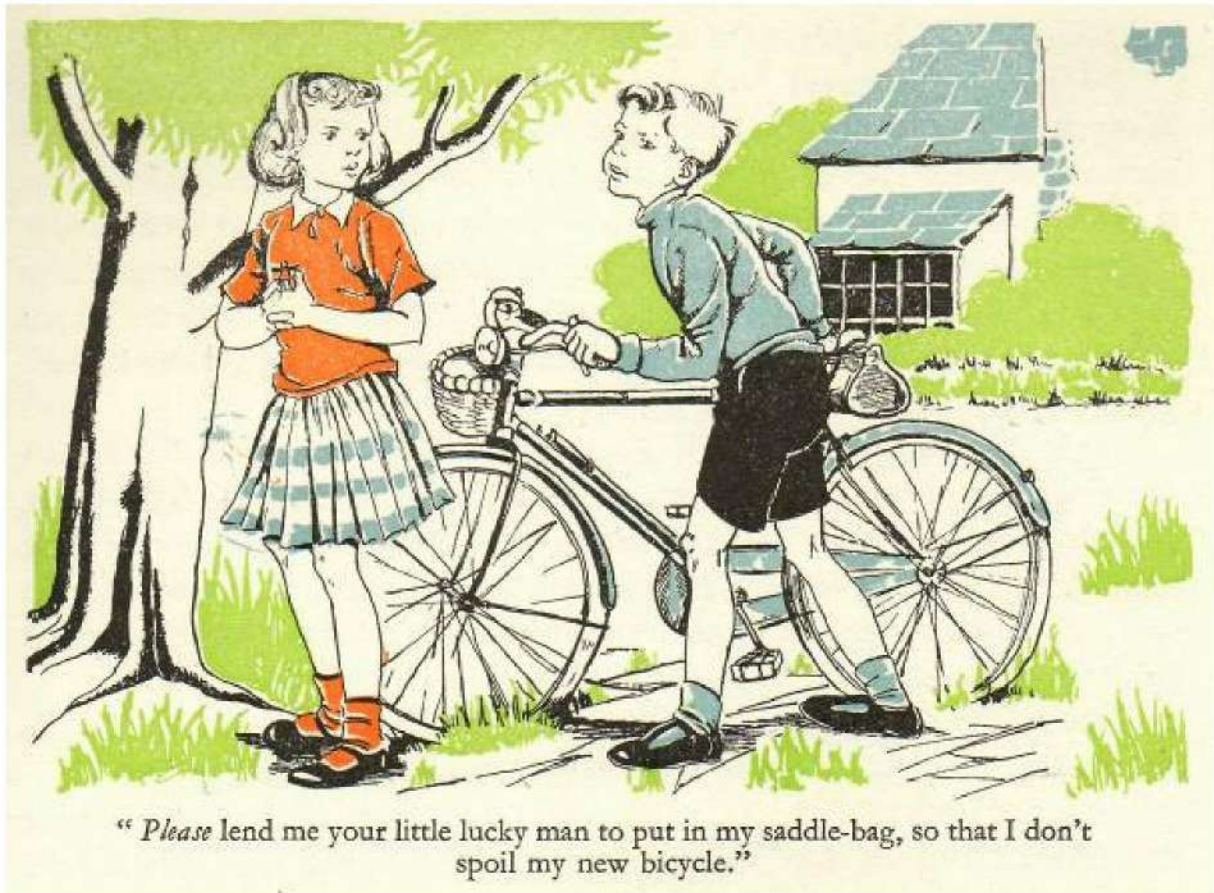


He grumbled about it to his Mother. " I do think Margery might lend me the lucky man."

child, who keeps her things nicely—and it comes because she's generous and kind, so that people want to give her presents. You act the same as Margery, Jack, and things will go right for you, too."

Margery kept her lucky little man on a tiny silver chain round her neck. She only took him off when she washed, and then she was careful not to put him in a place where Jack could find him. Jack was cross and sulky about it. He was more and more determined to get that little lucky man if he could!

When his birthday came, he had a lovely surprise. His mother and father gave him a new bicycle! His old one had



belonged to his cousin and was very rusty and shabby. When Jack saw his new bicycle he could, hardly believe his eyes!

"Oh, Mummy! Daddy! What a wonderful present! *Thank you!* " "Keep it nice, Jack," said Mummy. " It looks so beautiful now."

" Can I ring the bell, Jack? " asked Margery. She rang it. " Ting-aling! " It made a very loud noise indeed. The bicycle had a basket on the front and a saddle-bag full of tools at the back. It really was a beauty. Jack went for rides on it every day. He kept it very clean and bright, because he was so proud of it. Then he ran into another boy's bicycle and scratched some of the brightness from it.

" Oh dear! What a bit of bad luck! " said Jack in alarm. " I hope I'm not going to have more bad luck—I'm not a very lucky person, really.

Wouldn't it be awful if I smashed up my lovely new bike! "

He was so worried that he went to Margery again. " Margery, I believe I'm going to have a bit of bad luck again. *Please* lend me your little lucky man to put in my saddle-bag, so that I don't spoil my new bicycle."

" No," said Margery. " I never will ! "

" Mean thing! " said Jack and went off sulkily. He wondered what Margery did with her little lucky man now. She didn't wear it round her neck any more. The teacher at school had said that no child was to wear necklaces, so Margery had stopped wearing him except at week-ends.

Jack watched to see what Margery did with the little lucky man whilst she was at school. He soon found out! She put him into the little teapot belonging to her dolls' tea-set. That was a very good hiding-place indeed. Jack would never, never have thought of it.

He let Margery go to school before him one morning, and then he ran to the playroom, took out the teapot, and lifted out the little lucky man. He put back the teapot and ran to his bicycle. He must hide that little man somewhere on his bicycle! Somewhere that Margery would never find. Then the little man would bring him luck, and his bicycle wouldn't have silly accidents and be spoilt. Where should he hide it ?

Not in the saddle-bag. Margery would certainly look there. Not in the basket. He would be far too easily seen. Where, then?

Jack had a sudden idea. He unscrewed the top off his bell. He put the tiny little lucky man in the bottom part of the bell, and then screwed the top on again. He rang the bell.

" Ting-a-ling-a-ling! " Yes, it was quite all right, even with the little man inside it. Aha! Margery would never, never find him now. Jack rode off to school, delighted to think that he would have a little good luck himself because he had got Margery's lucky man.



He put the tiny little lucky man in the bottom part of the bell, and then screwed the top on again. He rang the bell.

Well, it certainly was very queer, but things did go very well for Jack that morning. He was top in arithmetic, he got full marks for dictation, and he jumped higher than anyone else at gym. He did feel pleased.

When he got home that morning he told his Mother all about his good luck. Margery looked sharply at him. Then she went to the playroom and took out her dolls' teapot. She looked inside. No lucky man there! She ran to Jack.

" You've taken my lucky man! You horrid, mean boy! Give him back at once. Where is he? "

" Shan't tell you," said Jack. " I'm going to keep him for one whole day. I'll give him back to you tonight. Surely you can spare him just for one day, you mean girl? "

" I know where he is! Somewhere on your bicycle! " cried Margery, suddenly guessing. " I'll find him! I'll find him! "

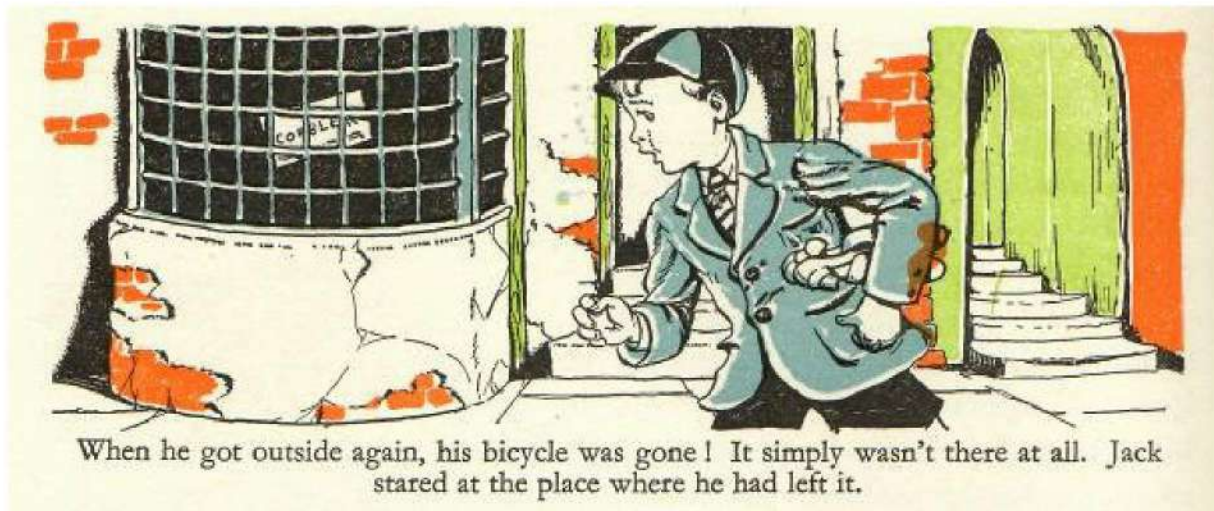
She ran to Jack's bike. He followed her, feeling quite certain that she would never find the little man.

Margery looked in the basket and in the saddle-bag. Jack stood by, grinning broadly. Margery felt very angry indeed. " Well, he won't bring you any luck, so there! " she said, almost crying. " He won't, he won't! "

" He has already—and he'll bring me lots more! " said Jack. And you know, it was very strange, but that afternoon Jack kicked three goals at football, found the shoes he had lost at school the term before, and was asked out to a party the next day. What luck !



She went to the playroom and took out her dolls' teapot. She looked inside.



When he got outside again, his bicycle was gone! It simply wasn't there at all. Jack stared at the place where he had left it.

On the way home he had to call and get some shoes from the cobbler's for his Mother. He put his bicycle against the outside of the shop and went in. He had to wait whilst the cobbler looked in the rows of mended shoes for his Mother's pair.

And would you believe it—when he got outside again, his bicycle was gone! It simply wasn't there at all. Jack stared at the place where he had left it, but it was quite empty. He went inside the shop and told the cobbler.

" Well, there, now—what a pity! " said the cobbler. " There's a lot of bicycles been stolen this week—two of them from this very street, too. So your lovely new one has gone, has it? What a bit of bad luck! "

'*Bad* luck? It was *dreadful* luck, the worst possible! He had lost his beautiful new bicycle—and goodness knew if he would ever see it again. Those bicycle thieves were so very clever.

Jack went home slowly and sadly, carrying the shoes. He thought of the little lucky man inside the bell. He had gone, too. Margery would never see him again. Oh dear! It seemed as if he had brought bad luck now instead of good.

Margery was very upset and angry. " I told you that you would have bad luck if you took away my little lucky man!" she scolded. " It serves you right! Now your bicycle has gone, and I expect my good luck has too."

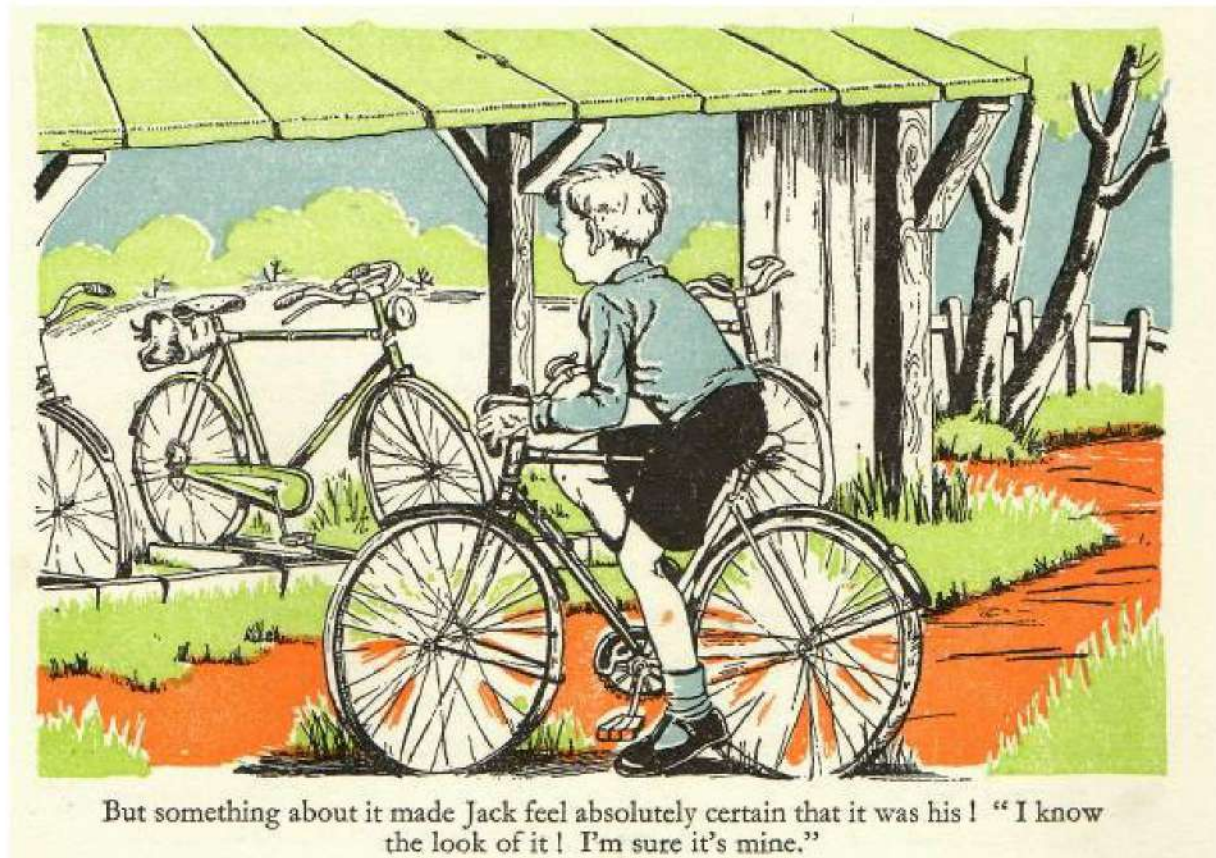
" Don't be so angry with poor Jack," said her Mother. " He is very unhappy about his new bicycle. Daddy is ringing up the police to tell them."

But the police did not think they could get back the bicycle for Jack. " You see, sir," they said to Daddy, " these thieves are very, very clever.

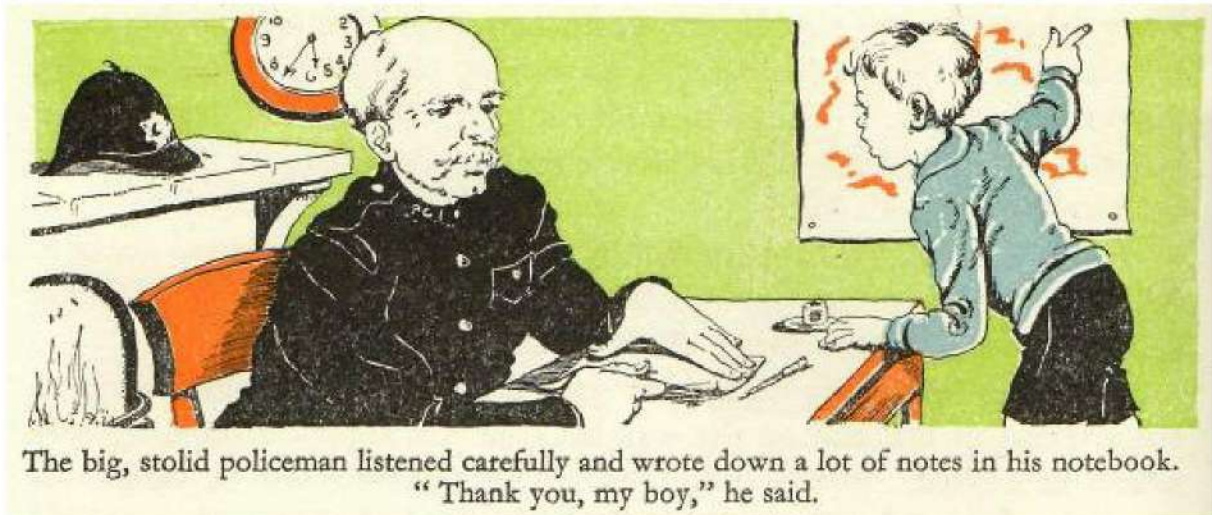
They'll have painted that bicycle green or red or blue by tonight, taken off the basket and saddle-bag, put on others, and done everything they can to make it look like another bicycle altogether. And even if your boy thinks he can recognise his bicycle under its new coat of paint there's no way of telling it's his."

So Jack had to use his very shabby one again, and he was sad about it. He tried to make things up with Margery by giving her his old Meccano set, but she was very unhappy about her lucky man.

And then something happened. Jack rode over to the next village to see a friend of his, and on the way back he saw a bicycle standing with others in a shed. It was padlocked so that it could not be stolen. It was painted a bright green, and had on a lamp, no basket, and a very old saddle-bag. But something about it made Jack feel absolutely certain that it was his! "I know the look of it! I'm sure it's mine, even though it's green now. Oh dear! How can I possibly know for certain that it's mine? "



But something about it made Jack feel absolutely certain that it was his! "I know the look of it! I'm sure it's mine."



The big, stolid policeman listened carefully and wrote down a lot of notes in his notebook. "Thank you, my boy," he said.

He suddenly thought of something. He looked for the bell. Yes, that was still there. Could he unscrew the top and look inside before the owner came out—because the little lucky man might still be there? And if he was, that would prove that the bicycle really was Jack's!

There was no one about. All the men were working in the factory nearby. Jack went up to the green bicycle and began to unscrew the top of the bell. His fingers trembled so that he could hardly take it off.

But at last it was off. Jack looked into the bottom part of the bell—and, yes, the little lucky man *was* there! Jack stared in the greatest delight. Should he take it out? No, because then he would have no proof that the bicycle was his.

He must go to the police station and tell the police there all about it. They could easily telephone the police in the next village where Jack's home was and hear all about how his bicycle was stolen.

So off went Jack to the police station and was soon pouring out his news. The big, stolid policeman listened carefully and wrote down a lot of notes in his notebook. "Thank you, my boy," he said. "Now come with me and show me which is your bicycle."

So off went Jack and pointed out his bicycle. He unscrewed the top of the bell and showed the little lucky man inside. The policeman chuckled. "Aha! The thief didn't think of anyone popping a little fellow like that inside the bell! Well, well—it was a lucky thing for you that you put him there."

Jack was told to go home and wait. Nothing could be done till the man

came out of the factory and unpadlocked his bicycle. A plain-clothes policeman was going to follow him home and see where he lived and who his friends were.

Jack rushed home and told his mother and Margery all about it. Margery was so thrilled to hear that her little lucky man was inside the bell still that she hugged Jack like a bear. " Oh, if I get him back I'll forgive you for taking him! " she said. " Oh, Jack—it was bad luck that your bicycle was stolen, but very *good* luck that the little man helped you to know it was yours! "

Two policemen arrived that evening, one with Jack's bicycle. " We followed the thief," said one of them. " He didn't go home. He went up on the heath to a deserted hut—and there under a pile of sacks we found three other stolen bicycles he was in the middle of repainting. We've got them all now. We arrested the man, of course. He's a thief we've been looking for for a very long time. Thanks to the sharpness of this boy here we've caught him, and been lucky enough to get back other bicycles for their owners as well! "

Margery watched whilst Jack undid the bell. He took out the lucky man and gave him to her. She was so pleased to have him again.

" He *is* lucky! "she said. "I don't care what anyone says! He helped you to get back your bike, Jack—and he got back three other stolen ones—and gave the police enough good luck to catch the thief. He's a very, very lucky little man! "

Well—he certainly seems to be, doesn't he?

