



STORIES AND POEMS

November 2015

Theme – Through the Eyes of a Child



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Through the eyes of a child by Collin Hilliam

They caught me out! They caught me good and proper, darn them. It was a good story I told them, lots of interesting things. I can't help it, if they want it true! I mean, that story about going to London Zoo, Miss Jackman read that out, when Smitty wrote it. She told us all, it was a good tale and well told, so I just added on the dragons and the unicorn. Should have got a gold star, for that. How should I know, they lost their dragon and their unicorn, in the war. Least, that's what Mrs Jackman reckoned. 'Course, Mrs. Ackers is never going to take me there. She'll feed me and clothe me, she says, what she's paid to do, and I should be grateful. But why did all the class roll about laughing?

And that story I wrote about going to the Baths, with my brothers and my little sister, every Saturday morning, all through the holidays, how I learnt to dive off the top board and how to swim underwater and how we always had two slices of dripping toast, before walking home through the park. Well, that story had Langley sent to the Headmaster's office, for a sweet, so what was wrong when I told it? I thought the bit about us playing tag under the water was pretty clever, especially when we all stayed under and the lifeguard had to leap in to save us. 'Course, Mrs. Ackers don't give me pocket money, so how could I go swimming? And my brothers and my little sister, they're all make-believe, so I'd walk down through the Park, on my own, go and watch the river a bit, watch Langley and his family and his mates come out of the Baths, then I'd know it was time to go back to Mrs Ackers house, and she'd feed me, like she's paid to, and I'd mooch around a bit more. But what's so funny about that? Why did they roll about even more, laughing so much?

Then, that story about the chara. . . chara. . . coach trip to the seaside. Well, that dopey little Pauline Whatsername was called out to read that out loud, in front of us all, then we had to clap, so I just tacked on extra ice-creams and the sea-serpent and how we dug up a mine, on the beach, just building a sand castle, and how they had to clear the whole beach

and the mayor came down to thank us. Now, that was a story! That was worth one of Mr. Hoover's sweets! But they all laughed, instead, not nice laughing. How should I know, the mayor doesn't hang about, in his robes, with his big gold chain? How should I know, it takes hours and hours to reach the seaside? Not as if Mrs. Ackers will take me. She'll just feed me and clothe me, like she's paid for. She wakes me up sometimes, in the night, screaming about the mine that saw off her Bert, in the Atlantic, wherever that is.

But they all laughed at my stories, until Mrs. Jackman stopped them, then she told me, I had to write the composition again, with what I really did in the holidays . And then it was playtime, but they all wanted to laugh at me, so I ran away to hide in here, in the coalhole. Well, it's a sort of a shed, really, not a hole, and there's no coal yet, so I sat on some old wood in the corner, out of sight from the door, and I told the whole story to my brothers and my little sister, but my brothers went out to play football with the big boys, so I only told Elsie. She got really cross with my class. She said, that was no way to treat me, for telling a really nice story. She sat with me and squeezed my hand and promised me, she'd sort 'em out.

She's not bad, for a girl, a made-up girl.

And I reckon I can easily do that composition again, for Mrs. Jackman. In my holidays, I mooched about and sometimes I saw people from my class and sometimes they saw me.

The end.

Alexis Cohen by Christine Racher

“Let grandpa go, let him go”

These words echoed in the mind of Alexis. She hadn't been back to the 'Roch' her maternal family home, since the night of the murder. That was 13 years ago when she was just 12. Parts of the event are a total blank to her. The therapist said something may trigger the return of her memory. What she does remember still haunts her. She used to suffer from terrible nightmares. But they have since ceased. Until, one day recently which took her back to that fateful night.

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The aroma of cinnamon candles wafted Alexis Cohen back to 2002. There was a cold chill in the air. A roaring fire was ablaze in the hearth and the Thanksgiving Day celebration was well under way. They would light cinnamon candles around the house, this had become a tradition over the years. Her grandma and mum were cooking the turkey, while everyone else was in the lounge. She remembered it wasn't late, only about 9pm, when there was a knock at the door. It was odd because they hadn't been expecting anyone to call. The knocking became stronger. Her grandpa had gone to the door with her little brother Tommy.

The next thing she heard Tommy shouting “Let grandpa go, let him go”.

Looking through a crack in the door, Alexis saw a big man who had her grandpa by the shoulders, Tommy was tugging at the man's clothes and shouting. Everyone else was oblivious to the commotion at the front door. She felt scared, and couldn't move. It was as though she had been frozen in time, but everything else was still going on around her. The man was huge, must have been 6'5", with broad shoulders. Her little grandpa and Tommy looked so small. The man grabbed Tommy by the arm to push him away, in doing so, his force was so great, that he pushed him against a metal beam on the porch. There was a loud thud as his little body crumpled to the ground. Alexis let out the loudest scream she had ever screamed, and pointed to the door. Everyone rushed outside. The man made a hasty retreat. He might have been big, but was as fast as lightening when it came to running away.

Grandpa was in a state of shock, someone took him inside and gave him a stiff drink. He was asked if he recognised the man, but remained silent. Alexis was also in a state of shock and was ushered into a backroom along with the other children. They kept the children away from the scene. Within a short time the emergency services arrived. The area was cordoned off and a search ensued for any trace of the suspect. In the meantime the paramedics rushed to Tommy, but it was too late. He had died almost instantly. This had now become a murder scene.

Alexis, pushed her way past several people. Stood in the doorway and shouted “Where's Tommy, where's Tommy, I saw what happened”

Her brother's body was covered. She was overcome with grief and passed out. Someone picked her up and took her inside. Tommy's parents were devastated, and collapsed into each other's arms.

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Amelia nudges Alexis' arm bringing her back to the present time "Are you ok"?

"It was the smell of the cinnamon, it reminded me of "

Amelia butted in "I know sis, I'm often thinking of Tommy".

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Alexis was having more flashbacks, and each time they seemed clearer than before. She was transfixed on the events of that Thanksgiving Day.

The stranger, who called at the door that night and killed her brother, was so clear to her. He had a very distinctive tattoo on the inside of his right forearm, it's engraved in her memory.

She remembered something which happened earlier on that day in 2002. She had been playing in the garden with her brothers and sister, Tommy, Aaron and Amelia. They were in their beloved treehouse, where they often went to play and make up stories. Aaron and Tommy were playing soldiers, while Amelia and Alexis were nurses. Aaron said to Tommy he had seen a sniper hiding in the woods. Then he abruptly fell backwards and landed onto a pile of cushions. He told the girls he had seen someone in the woods. She remembers telling him to stop lying, he was only playing at being a soldier, and it wasn't real.

Then later at brunch, Aaron said he'd seen a light flickering in the woods. He told his Dad, but when he looked there was nothing, so he thought Aaron was making it up.

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A sudden flashback startled Alexis "Oh my god, I think someone was watching us".

Amelia was puzzled. "Watching us? When, where"?

"The day Tommy died".

"What makes you say that"?

"Well, do you remember that Aaron kept seeing someone"?

"Ah, yes".

"I think he **DID** see someone".

"But, why would anyone be watching us"?

"I don't know". Alexis paused and then announced "**I have a mission. I'm going to find Tommy's killer**".

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**Happy Families** by Marylyn Palmer

Beth and Cheryl pressed their noses against the window of the large house and peered into the neat lounge.

‘It looks really cosy.’ said Cheryl.

‘Do you see the wallpaper on the back of the room? I helped my Dad to put it up,’ said Beth proudly.

Cheryl sighed. ‘You lucky thing. I wish my Dad had a job like yours, instead of being a boring Bank Manager. I never get to help at his work.’

Beth beamed with delight. She hoped that when she got older her dad would let her work for him. She could just see the sign on his van - *Timson and Daughter, Painter and Decorators*.

She looked at the wallpaper on the lounge wall again. It was dark maroon with beige patterned flowers. ‘When you touch the pattern on the wallpaper,’ she said turning to Cheryl, ‘it feels like material. My dad said it cost a lot of money to buy.’

‘Cheryl nodded. She didn’t seem impressed. ‘I see Ben has hogged the settee, look at him lying there,’ she commented, ‘no room for poor Molly. She doesn’t look very comfy on that chair does she, she’s half on half off. Do you reckon she’s asleep or watching TV.’

‘I think she’s watching her favourite programme,’ said Beth.

‘I bet Ben’s snoring and she’s having trouble hearing it,’ said Cheryl. They both giggled.

Cheryl peered through the window again. ‘No sign of poor Wendy. Must be in her room. And where’s the dog.’

‘I think Casper’s in the kitchen, waiting for his dinner.’ The girls moved along to look in the next window. ‘Yes there he is.’ Beth pointed to a Scottie dog.

‘Why’s his name Casper?’

‘Because he is white, like a ghost,’ said Beth

‘Of course. I wish I had a dog, added Cheryl wistfully.’

‘Do you really, you’d have to go round scooping up his poo!’

‘Yuk!’ said Cheryl. ‘I wouldn’t like that, but at least having a pet would be company,’

They moved back to look through the front room window again. Cheryl’s gaze was drawn to the curtains. Those are just like the ones in your lounge aren’t they?’ She said.

‘Yep. My mum made both of them’

Cheryl gave another sigh. ‘My mum’s never got time to make anything or even do any cooking, she’s too busy being spending time in meetings. We even have to pay someone

to do the cleaning and ironing. And of course, there is Ellen who picks me up from school, and looks after me until they get home. You are so lucky. You're parents are so brilliant, making stuff for you, taking you out to the park. They are always smiling and happy and so nice to me too. Not like my parents,' she said sulkily. 'They are so boring. They rarely get home before 8pm and when they are at home, they spend time talking on the phone, have people from work to dinner or fall asleep in the front of the tv. Just like Ben and Molly,' she added her mouth down-turned.

Beth was surprised at her friend's outburst. Until then she had envied Cheryl - living in a big immaculate house, wanting for nothing - while her (Beth's) parents struggled to make ends meet and lived in a two-up two-down council house. But at least her parents always had time for her. It seemed from what Cheryl was saying that her mum and dad were far too busy; working, making money and entertaining people to spend time with their daughter.

She'd wanted to boast to Cheryl by showing her the house her parents had done up, but realised all she had done was upset her. It wasn't a nice feeling.

'Come on,' she said standing up, 'let's go and play outside.'

'Okay.' Cheryl smiled and took Beth's outstretched hand and let her pull her up from her kneeling position.

'Tomorrow,' said Beth, 'you can help me paint the bedrooms and you can choose the colours.'

'Oh can I?' Cheryl's eyes shined with delight. 'Thank you, you are my bestest friend.'

'I'm just going to go to the loo, you go downstairs I'll catch you up,' said Beth.

Beth waited until Cheryl had left the room, and then opened the front of the doll's house - her father had recently made - leaned in and picked up the miniature TV and put it in her pocket. Then reached over and took hold of the two figures, bringing them up to her face.

'Ben, Molly no more TV for you,' she said sternly. 'It's time you started paying your daughter attention, And next time Cheryl looks through your window you had better be busy doing something or else I'll find some new dolls to replace you.'

She reached into the bedroom and took hold of Wendy and sat her and Ben down on the settee facing each other. 'Right Ben,' she said. 'Now you and Wendy can play Snakes and Ladders together while you Molly,' she picked the Mother doll up and put her in the kitchen, standing her in front of the toy oven, 'you make Wendy a nice cake for her tea, like a real mother. Then after that you and Ben and Wendy can take Casper out for a walk to the park and don't forget to take a football with you and see what it's like to be happy family and have lots of fun.'

With that, she closed the front of the doll's house and ran down to join her friend and family for a game card game of Happy Families.

**Bonfire Night at Aunty Doff's** by David Cullis

The year, for a seven year old boy, growing up in the 1950's, was marked by distinct "seasons". There was always something to "look forward to". The year opened in the grip of winter with "fun in the snow", making "slides" on the school playground and tobogganing down the slopes at the local park.

Easter and Spring-time followed with excursions to the countryside to pick primroses or bluebells. The long and lazy days of summer arrived with fun from dawn to dusk; games of cricket, "cowboys & indians", making homemade "bows 'n arrows" and camps in the woods. The seemingly endless school "hols" continued through August and the advent of the new school year was heralded, in late August, by the appearance of the first "pocket-money" fireworks in local newsagents and toy shops. The next season to be "looked forward to" was "Bonfire Night".

David and his brother Martin began their preparations for the celebration of "Bonfire Night at Aunty Doffs". In those days the "Health & Safety Police\*" had not yet been established and school children were free to purchase cheap fireworks over the counter. Saturday was pocket money day so David and Martin would make a bee-line for the newsagents to gaze longingly at the brightly coloured display of fireworks for sale in the glass display cabinet. The fireworks had evocative names and included many varieties, now extinct, being considered "too dangerous" by the H&S P\*. The agonising choice had to be made from the funds available (half a crown each). The Half Crown was a substantial pre-decimal coin equivalent to twelve and a half new pence. The choice having finally been made the fireworks purchased were packed and stored in a large biscuit tin, pending the grand display at Aunty Doff's on Bonfire Night. David and Martin favoured Penny Bangers and Jumping Jacks. Their collection also included the following "essentials" :- Catherine Wheels, Squibs, Crackle Pots, Roman Candles, Rockets, Golden Rain, Traffic Lights and a Vesuvius Volcano. The assembly of the collection continued through September and October. David and Martin would appraise their collection weekly and would try to imagine the joy of the future display. Occasionally they would succumb to the temptation and let off a banger or two but, generally this temptation would be resisted as Bonfire Night approached.

Aunty Doff, Uncle Reg and cousins Jane and Eileen lived in a Victorian Cottage in a street called Roses Cottages located in central Dorking. Aunty Doff's cottage was chosen as the venue for the street's Bonfire Night Celebrations as the cottage had a spare piece of land opposite the front garden. A large bonfire was built on this land, milk bottles were



strategically placed to serve as rocket launchers and Catherine Wheels were nailed to fence posts and given a trial pre-ignition manual spin.

That year the 5th of November fell on a school day and David and Martin kept glancing at the school clocks, during their lessons, which seemed to drag on interminably. At last it was “home time” so David and Martin sprinted the half mile from school to Auntie Doffs. Their cache of fireworks had been pre-delivered a few days before to await the big day. David and Martin’s collection was pooled with Jane and Eileen’s and comprised a total approaching 100 fireworks and also included some packets of sparklers.

Auntie Doff, Jane and Eileen greeted David and Martin at their front door and ushered them in to share in their sumptuous Bonfire Night Supper. The meal included baked potatoes, mugs of soup and enormous, squidgy, sticky cream buns.

When darkness fell the party was joined by Uncle Reg, home from work, together with friends and neighbours and the grand display commenced. Rockets were let off with a whoosh and broke with a star burst over the roofs of the houses; Catherine Wheels whirled into life spinning off a myriad of multicoloured sparks; Roman Candles flared upwards and shot coloured balls of light into the inky black sky. An occasional Jumping Jack or Banger would be let off to be greeted by squeals of delight from the girls. The Crackle Pot was ignited and gave forth its’ noisy display like a mini bonfire. Then a “pretty one” the Golden Rain was lit to be acclaimed by “oohs” and “aahs”. Finally Mount Vesuvius erupted again but this time Pompeii escaped!

The firework display had lasted nearly an hour and then Uncle Reg proceeded to light the bonfire. It soon developed into a roaring blaze, fanned by the autumn breeze. David and Martin could feel the intense heat on their faces and were then able to share in the distribution of the sparklers. All of the children followed the time honoured tradition of tracing their names in the glow of the sparklers and then wove intricate patterns in the air. As David and Martin squinted at the dying embers of the bonfire they declared this was the “Best Bonfire Night Ever!” and were greeted by Mum and Dad who had arrived to take them home to bed. Bonfire Night was over for another year but the next season to “look forward to” on the calendar was Christmas!

**Gordon the Dragon** by Terry Page

“There is a certain etiquette that should be observed when approaching a dragon.” He said rather indignantly.

Little Timothy didn’t have a clue what the dragon was on about and was just fascinated by the dragon’s scales.

“They’re very green. Oh! and look, they are changing colour,” he exclaimed excitedly. Timothy had been brought up on a farm and had never been afraid of the big horses, cows or other animals he came into contact with. So what was different about a dragon? It was a lot bigger, had scales rather than hair, but not so different, he thought.

“I don’t think you are taking any notice of what I am saying.” Said the dragon, rather exasperated. “You’re supposed to ....to quake and tremble when you come into my presence. I, I ..., I can shoot flames of fire that will burn-up everything in sight and consume you.” He was becoming more and more exasperated at the nonchalance of this small child.

“Can I see you make some fire?” said Timothy, excitedly.

“Well I don’t know as I want to just at the moment,” said the dragon indignantly.

“Oh please, please?” said Timothy begging.

The dragon reluctantly shot flames across the entrance of his cave burning the surrounding foliage.

“Oh wow, that was lovely.” said Timothy standing amazed at the spectacle.

“Yes, well, lovely it may be but don’t you ever play with fire,” admonished the dragon. “It can be very dangerous.”

“Yes I know. My mum and dad have told me that.”

“And haven’t your parents also warned you not to go walking into caves where there are dragons?”

“They told me to always be careful of all the animals on the farm but they never said anything about coming here to the cave.

“Well, now you’re here, what is your name?”

The dragon was gradually softening to this vulnerable child before him.

“I’m Timothy. What is your name?”

“I’m Gordon, probably the last in a long line of venerable dragons that goes back many thousands of years.” He replied, proudly.

“I don’t know anybody called Gordon so you shall be my first friend with that name. You will be my friend?

“Well, ....well,” replied the dragon, slightly abashed. “I don’t see any reason why I can’t be your friend, although I’ve never had any human friends hitherto: I’ve tried to avoid humankind to be frank. You see young Timothy, most humans don’t like dragons. They look upon us as .... “ Gordon struggled to think of a suitable word. “well ....’dragons’ and history does not paint a very wonderful coexistence.”

This was completely ‘over the top’ for Timothy, who didn’t have a clue what Gordon was on about but he was pleased that they could be friends.

“Is this where you live?” asked Timothy

“This is my humble abode, which is rather large for one dragon but sadly my dear wife passed on a few hundred years ago. I think it was something she ate,” he added quizzically.

“Would like to see around?”

“Oh yes please!” said Timothy, thrilled.

“By my guest,” proffered Gordon, “After you!”

“Oh, ...oh, it’s very dark,” exclaimed Timothy, after going barely a few metres.

“Ah well, Timothy, I have no problem because dragons can see in the dark but here, my flaming nostrils will light the way for you.” Gordon’s nose burst into flame, enabling Timothy to see further into the vast cave.

It was enchanting. There were bright shiny rocks reaching up to similar rocks coming from the roof of the cave. Some were slim and pointed others were fat and knobbly.

“These are called stalactites and stalagmites,” explained Gordon. “The rocks from the roof are the stalactites and the rocks from the ground are the stalagmites. Do you think you might remember that Timothy?” asked Gordon. Timothy was too excited to remember such things. He was having fun dancing after the shadows cast by the flames from Gordon’s nose. In one huge cave there was a wonderful waterfall cascading down the rocks into a large pool.

“I like to bathe in the pool most days,” said Gordon. “It keeps my scales sparkling clean and I do love a good swim. Would you like a swim?” suggested Gordon

“Oh! It’s a little bit cold,” said Timothy, dipping his hand in the pool.”

“Ah, yes, but I can soon warm it up,” replied Gordon.

“Oh, then yes please!” said Timothy excitedly but then added a little uncertainly, “It’s not too deep is it, because I’m not very good at swimming?”

“It’s deeper on the far side,” said Gordon “but you can hang on to me. You’ll be safe. Now stand back while I heat things up.” With that Gordon gave a deep roar and flames shot from his mouth and nostrils to dance across the pool. Within minutes steam was rising from the water so Gordon and Timothy plunged in.

“This is lovely,” said Timothy clinging to Gordon’s neck as they swam through the crystal clear water.

After some time when the water began to cool Timothy and Gordon scrambled to the side. Gordon gave a swish, swash, shake of his body giving Timothy a shower. Timothy laughed but then realised he somehow needed to dry off. Gordon had the perfect solution. Once again

tongues of flame shot from his mouth, heating up rocks till they were glowing to warm Timothy until he was dry as toast.

They eventually arrived back at the entrance to the cave where they heard the anxious voice of Timothy's mother calling:

"Timothy, Tim! Are you in there? It's time to return home."

"Oh dear, I have to go," said Timothy. "Thank you for a lovely, lovely time."

Before he'd given much thought to what he was saying, Gordon asked. "You will come again won't you?"

"Oh, yes please," said Timothy, "Good-bye!"

"Ah, there you are Timothy. I was getting worried." His mother had become anxious and breathed a sigh of relief when Timothy appeared from the cave.

"I've had a wonderful time Mummy, and I've met a new friend, he's a dragon."

"Oh, that's exciting Timothy. I do hope you will be able to meet-up with him again" She smiled, thinking, what a wonderful imagination children have.

**Through the Eyes of a Child** by Adam .

My cot was enormous with bars all around.  
A cage for a baby like me?  
I could never get out or even climb in,  
much harder for “littleluns”, you see.

In a world filled with pain, though the nurses were nice,  
'till mother came shedding her tears.  
Much shaking of heads, “No he'll never be right,  
if he does it will take many years”!

I remember the smells and the Christmas tree bells,  
the laughter and hymns sung with joy,  
when the children did dance to a homecoming prance,  
each with a gift of a toy.

Came the day, if I may, went to school , learned to pray,  
tasted love that I knew once before,  
the tears of a mother, the love she did have  
for a cripple she'd love evermore.

So I walked free at last from a cold metal cast.  
I could run, I could jump, I could swim  
I could run with the boys, I could play with their toys,  
I could lose, but I knew how to win!

When I'm no longer young and I'm filled with the years  
I'll remember the laughter, the fun and the tears.  
I'll remember my mother, my brother and sis  
and to each of my nurses I'll blow a big kiss.

**Through the Eyes of a Child** by Bettina Kulsdom

"You're going to be packed into a big case and go away for ever and ever! Just like your dad" declared Michael with ghoulish excitement. Natalie regarded him with her clear blue eyes and sucked the end of her plait thoughtfully. Michael had been her playmate and best friend ever since she could remember but since starting school a few months ago he had started to tease her and call her a baby. His teasing had hit home. A few weeks ago Natalie had woken up to her parents' shouting. In the morning her daddy had kissed her goodbye and left the house carrying two large suitcases. Mummy had explained that mummy and daddy had got cross with each other and daddy had decided to leave. This morning, Natalie had made mummy cross. Large cardboard boxes lay everywhere, with lovely soft tissue paper spilling over the side. Natalie had pulled at the tissue paper and a glass had fallen out and broken onto the tiled floor. "For goodness sake Natalie stop getting under my feet. Go next door and play with Michael, it might be the last time you see him' Mummy had shouted. "Is this what happens when Mummy got cross?" Natalie thought to herself. " Would she be wrapped in tissue paper and put in a box too?" Natalie wondered what the glass had done wrong to be packed away but then Mummy seemed to be packing everything away into boxes. Had everything made mummy cross? Suddenly she didn't want to be with Michael anymore and she turned and ran back next door to her house. A large truck was parked outside and two men were carrying the squishy sofa from the playroom into the truck. It was already half full of boxes. "Is this where I am going to be packed away?" she sobbed silently to herself.

She crept sadly up the stairs. She wasn't sure she wanted to be packed into a box, soft tissue paper or not. She peered into the room her mummy and daddy had slept in. The big soft bed she had snuggled into every morning was all gone. By the wall, standing on one end were several large cardboard boxes. Mummy's clothes were hanging from a rail inside the box. Natalie could smell a mummy smell and wanting her reassurance she stepped into the box among the clothes. At least it was a better box than the ones downstairs she thought. She could stand up in it and move around a little. But inside it was dark, and she was very frightened. " But where will I go to the toilet?" She thought to herself as a signal to her brain reminded her she needed to use the bathroom.

The little red step that she used to reach the basin was no longer in its place and she could scarcely reach the taps. Reaching right up on her tiptoes she just managed to tip the soap dish

with her fingers where it slid into the sink with a loud crash. The soap slid from side to side along with another object that was stuck into it. " Oh Becky, that's where you got to" exclaimed Natalie, "I wondered where you had gone. Oh no!, you must have thought you were being packed away too but you weren't Becky, you weren't. Full of contrition at having forgotten she had made Becky a little bed in the soap dish, Natalie jumped up and made a grab for her. " I'm going to take you back to your house and your mummy and daddy straight away" But where was Becky's house? Natalie went along the corridor to her room, but it was empty. All her toys and games were gone. So was her dolls house and Star, her rocking horse, all gone.

"I think they must all be packed into the big truck 'Becky' she whispered. "But where do you want to go? Do you want to be packed in the truck or stay with me.? Oh you want your mummy do you" she said as a feeling of great sadness and longing overcome her. " Well I'll find them for you then" mustering all her courage Natalie went back downstairs and out to the truck. She looked inside through the back, where the sofa had disappeared. Inside it was like an Aladin's cave. The cavernous space was piled high with tables and chairs. She spotted Star behind the sofa, his dark mane and red reins looking bright against the dark rugs covering the rest of the furniture. Then high up near the ceiling she saw her dolls house perched on a bedside cabinet. How was she going to get Becky home? First she had to get into the truck. A slope led up to the inside, it was very steep and as she got towards the top she slipped and had to grab at a little step that stuck out from the floor. Breathing heavily, both from the exertion and from fear and unhappiness she reached the top. She stood looking about her, was this going to be her home for ever packed into. A little box on the floor. " I must get you home Becky" she muttered. Clambering over the back of the sofa, she managed to stand on Star's saddle. From there she wriggled onto the top of a cabinet. She reached up towards the dolls house door just as the cabinet rocked under the heavy tread of the sofa men. ' You stupid kid' shouted one man ' what the heck do you think you are doing?' 'Aw leave off Bert, she don't understand she's going away' said the taller of the two men. Two hands encircled Natalie's waist and started to lift her down. "No no ' she cried ' I have to give Becky back to her mummy and daddy' and she wriggled violently in the man's hands. ' whose Becky' he said. ' She's my dolly and her mummy and daddy are in the house and she wants to be with her mummy and daddy. She doesn't want to be packed away with me.' Of course she doesn't the big man said, ' Well here you go then' and he opened the door and high on his shoulder Natalie was able to return Becky to her home and her mummy and daddy.



'Now you run along to your mum' said Bert, ' we aren't quite ready for you yet'. The big man set her down on the path and patting her bottom gently turned her towards the house.

"Natalie, Natalie, where are you.' She heard her mummy shouting, ' we are nearly ready to go." "Nearly ready to go" thought Natalie, " but I don't want to be packed away in the big truck and go off with the two men. Suddenly she spotted Button, her teddy bear. He was seated on a pile of pillows and duvets that were piled high on the back seat of the car. " I can't go anywhere without Button. The back door was open, and as she heard her mummy shouting, Natalie dived inside and clutching Button to her chest, she buried herself beneath the bedding, pulling the duvet over herself. She lay there in the dark listening to her mummy calling. She would not be packed into a box in the truck she was going with her mummy and Button. Perhaps mummy would stop being cross with her once she had got to where she was going!