

THE MOONMAN'S LITTLE BOY.

I went to the moon in a toy balloon
One cloudless night in the middle of June;
But I was lonely as lonely as could be
Till the Moonman's little boy played with me.
He looked at me sort of puzzled and queer,
Then picked up a star and scratched his ear.
And said in a voice sounding faint and far,
"My, what a funny little boy you are!"
I wanted to play with his bat and ball;
But since he hadn't any toys at all,
We took a stone that was light as could be,
And he played the jolliest game with me.
When we were weary from romping and play
We wandered far down the Milky Way,
And drank our fill from a dipper of stars,
Which the moonboy got from the hand of Mars.
After the Moonman had tucked us in bed,
A fleecy cloud pillow in under my head,
I dreamed my balloon went floating away
And that I had come to the moon to stay.
—By Alice Hoffman.

THE ORDER OF THE DAY.

The girl was small and meager, and her meager-looking suit was small and meager-looking also; almost absurd, in fact, with that pitiful absurdity of yesterday's fashions. There were other things less apt to be noticed by a careless observer—courtesy, and a glint of laughter in the straightforward brown eyes; firmness in the line of the jaw, delicate though it was; a carriage that was by no means lacking in spirit.
The house sat among its rhododendrons, behind its marvelous hedges and wrought-iron gates, with conscious arrogance. It was perfect of its kind, magnificent, isolated. The girl, catching sight of the number over the gate, gave a small gasp of dismay. She had not expected anything quite so formidable. For a moment she could not muster courage to pass through the wrought-iron tracery, and walked rapidly by. Then she stopped.
"Coward!" she cried. This was to herself. Her next remark was to the house:
"I'm not asking to governess you!"
And immediately upon the heels of that remark came a vision of a homey, sunny room strewn with boyish treasures, and three eager boyish faces bending over their play. It was a shabby room; the servants' quarters of this house would have scorned to recognize it. Strange, the effect it had upon the girl. Looking at the great insolent building, with its windows veiled in laces and brocades, she murmured, "Oh, the poor little fellow!"
And went straight up under the porte-cochere (which expressed its scorn of callers on foot all in vain, since she never noticed it at all), pressed the bell and faced without a tremor the astonished being who opened the door.
"I am Miss Dupre. I called in reply to Mrs. Grosvenor's note in regard to a governess."
That placed her at once, and she was shown—carelessly—to a small reception-room in old rose and ivory and gold.
She sat there for some time—twenty minutes, half an hour. Then she was summoned upstairs to more roses, this time blooming in French gray and silver. The great house was very still; there were none of the sounds that every-day houses know so well—the tinkle of dishes; children's voices and scampering feet; somebody singing with half-spoken words; somebody dropping a pair of scissors, or opening a desk or drawer, or pulling a curtain up or down. The soft, pitying look deepened in the brown eyes.
"Oh, poor house!" she was saying to herself. "Oh, poor, dead house! Why, you aren't living at all. You don't know what living is!"
She sprang to her feet with a start at the sound of a soft stir in the doorway, and stood waiting, her pale face flushed and her eyes darkening. It was a way she had when she saw beautiful things; and the woman in the doorway, in dull blue velvet and wonderful silver fox, was very beautiful at a first glance, and quick to detect the genuineness of admiration. Little Miss Dupre did not guess it, but it was that startled tribute that won her her position. It was not settled, of course, without words.
"You are Miss Dupre?" Be seated, please. You do not look old enough to have had much experience."
"Only with my own brothers. There are three of them, so I know boys very well. And I have tutored for a year. I have references."
A shabby little glove, the kid nearly worn through, but beautifully mended, offered the references eagerly. She remembered suddenly how very much she needed the place. A white-gloved hand waved the references away.
"But you don't look French," Mrs. Grosvenor said.
"But you don't look French," Mrs. Grosvenor said.
"I am American, but my grandparents were French. I always used to speak it with them—I learned as a child."
A little half-breathless pleading crept into the clear voice; she had not allowed herself to doubt before, but it was so very necessary, something to do.
"Herbert is extremely high-strung and sensitive," his mother declared.
"I don't know."
"I am so used to boys," the clear voice urged. "I always get along with them."
"I suppose," Mrs. Grosvenor said doubtfully, "I could try you for a month and see how Herbert gets along with you—one has to take chances. Will you ring that bell beside you? Thank you, Felice,"—to the maid who noiselessly presented herself—"take Miss Dupre up to Master Herbert. You will come at ten o'clock tomorrow, Miss Dupre. And you understand that Herbert is not to be forced—he must be kept interested. I shall expect you to teach him by means of games and such things. You, of course, will understand that, since it is your business."

Miss Dupre did not understand fully. The three noisy, eager little fellows at home had not been taught that way. But she answered promptly:
"Thank you, Mrs. Grosvenor. I will do my very best. I hope I shall please you." And she added, which was not at all businesslike: "You see, I love boys so!"
Mr. Grosvenor nodded a careless dismissal, and Miss Dupre following Felice's pert little back, passed through more beautiful, silent, dead corridors, where the sunlight was shut out by shimmering silken hangings at the windows, and sound was shut out by deep, soft rugs, and life was shut out by—what? Money? Luxury? Miss Dupre could not only guess. It was like a dream.
Finally, up a second flight of stairs and down a third great hall. Felice opened a door. The windows here had no silken lids—only lace pulled aside to allow a narrow parallelogram of light.
At one of those windows stood a boy, looking idly out. Felice's crisp voice snapped like a whip-lash:
"Master Herbert! Here's your new governess. And Barker will come for you at four."
The boy at the window turned. Felice, entirely uninterested, vanished. The two left alone took measure of each other.
The boy was thin, with a handsome, sullen, fretful face, and long, nervous, unboyish hands. He looked like some little wild thing trapped and at bay. It was as if the soul of him realized in some dim way that it was missing its heritage, and was fighting blindly, desperately, for what it did not know. He strode forward and eyed the girl insolently.
"I hate governesses," he declared.
"I hate studies. I'm not going to study—I don't like you."
The girl's brown eyes met his coolly. Inside, the woman-heart of her was aching with pity. She longed to gather him up in her warm arms—to turn him out into the sunlight, to get dirty, and race, and fight perhaps, and then at night to hold him close and tell him stories in the firelight, and finally tuck him in bed. But she had to do the truth when she said that she knew boys. She looked him over; her eyes narrowed a bit.
"I'm not at all sure that I shall like you, either," she remarked thoughtfully.
The boy stared at her, started.
"Why, you've got to. You're my governess. You're"—where did he get that, at eight?—"you're paid to."
"Oh, no, I'm not," she replied calmly. "That's something money can't buy, you know—liking people. I'm paid to teach you—that's all."
"I ain't going to learn," he replied.
"I wonder if you really can't," she said. "That would be too bad, wouldn't it?"
"I could!" he cried in a fury. "I could learn anything if I wanted to. I just don't want to. That's why I won't—because I don't want to."
She nodded. "I know," she said.
A silence fell. The boy fidgeted, started toward the window, turned suddenly back, and planted himself before her.
"You don't know how to!" he flamed.
"How to what?"
"Teach me."
"Why, of course not," she agreed cheerfully. "Nobody can teach you."
It was infuriating; it was like trying to beat water that slipped smoothly beneath one's touch and then flowed unconcernedly back again. The boy's delicate face reddened with rage.
"I hate you!" he cried. "I hate you, hate you, hate you! You're—he sought for a vulnerable place, and stabbed fiercely—"you're homely—that's what you are; and your dress is awful!"
The most annoying thing of all happened then. The girl's face changed. Little puckers came about the corners of her eyelids; her lips twitched; lights danced in her eyes. She was laughing.
"That's so funny!" she said—only she didn't say it; it came out in ripples of laughter. "Oh, that's so funny! You're the funniest boy I ever saw."
Something in him weakened treacherously at that friendly laughter. He never had heard anybody laugh like that before—not his father or mother or Felice or Barker, or the long trail of attendants and governesses who had, so far, made up his lonely little world. It sounded—nice. He longed to laugh with her, but he frowned instead.
"Why am I funny?" he demanded.
"I ain't funny. I'll tell my mother."
He had done it now. A sudden faintness in Miss Dupre's staunch little heart frightened her. If she should—and she should lose this place! It was only a flicker; then she had control of herself.
"Oh, yes, you are," she returned, with that confident friendliness of hers. "You see, you're different from any boy I've ever known. Because—the brown eyes twinkled again—"because they all think I'm pretty. Maybe—the audacity of it was almost too much for her—"maybe it's because you haven't seen me with my hat off. They have. I know," she looked at him pleasantly, "such heaps of boys."
It was horribly lonely being left out. He had been so left out of a boy's world all his life. He hated being different. And, besides, she wasn't homely. He took refuge in a hasty retreat to the second line of attack.
"Anyway, your dress is ugly."
She looked down at it. "Isn't it?" She agreed frankly. "I think so, too. I hate it. But then, you see—did she believe it, herself?—"dress doesn't matter."
"My mother thinks it does," he retorted unexpectedly.
Miss Dupre caught her breath.
"Oh, your mother—that's different. She goes to places where you need beautiful gowns. I don't. The boys like me better this way. It's better for frolics."
"What frolics?"
"All kinds. Soldiers, hunters, explorers. Louis's too old now. He"—she watched his face—"he's captain of the baseball team at school. But Dun-

can and Jack and their chums want to play."
The boy turned to ask questions, wavered, almost yielded, suddenly hardened.
"You said nobody could teach me."
"Of course. Nobody can, really. You have to do things yourself, just the way you have to do your own walking. I couldn't walk you."
A stir at the door, and another maid Barker, it seemed, was waiting to take Master Herbert for his riding lesson.
Master Herbert frowned.
"I won't go," he began. But Miss Dupre, apparently not hearing, broke in:
"You take riding lessons? Jack will be so interested when I tell him. He has always wanted to ride. Oh, I'll want to hear about it tomorrow."
The change was magical—instantaneous. The boy was transformed.
"I'll tell you," he cried. "They can't ride—can they—those boys? You tell 'em I can. And—and you'll take your hat off tomorrow, won't you?"
Out on the avenue once more, Miss Dupre drew a long breath.
"Oh, the poor little fellow!" she cried, as she had before she saw him. Then she just saved herself from disgracing the avenue by an impulsive skip. For she had work—she had work—she had work!
The boy was watching for her the next morning.
"Did you tell them that I know how to ride?" he cried. "Take off your hat."
Miss Dupre nodded. "I told them," she replied taking off her hat. In her soul she knew that she had an unfair advantage. She did look prettier without her hat—any woman would, when the hat had seen two winter's services. But Miss Dupre's hair was in no wise remarkable, and she knew it, yet she looked at him with confident expectation. She knew that he would see it through the eyes of all those other boys, so calmly included in her sweeping statement of the day before.
"You do look better without it," he told her. "What did the boys say about me?"
"The boys, it seemed, had said various things, some of them puzzling, but, on the whole, satisfactory. The delicate, fretful face kindled.
"I'd show 'em," he boasted. "They can't any of them ride, can they? I can."
"Jack thought it would be so splendid for playing St. George and the Dragon."
"Who's St. George?"
"You don't know St. George?"
The boy's brows drew together; it would be long before he could stand any mention of ignorance.
"I could if I wanted to," he declared.
"I don't believe he was much."
"He's Jack's hero—or one of them. All the boys have their heroes." Miss Dupre, learning rapidly, did not ask him who his hero was. Instead she plunged into a vivid recital of the story of St. George. The boy listened carelessly, attentively, finally breathlessly.
"I'd like him too," he cried jealously. "Can I have him too? I'd do

just like him. I'd ride and kill dragons."
"Oh, yes, you can have him if you want to. Lots of people do. But maybe you'd like some one else better—maybe even some one who is living to-day. Suppose we talk about a different one every day for a while, and then you can choose."
"Tell me more now," he commanded.
"Only one a day," she replied firmly. "You've got to think them over

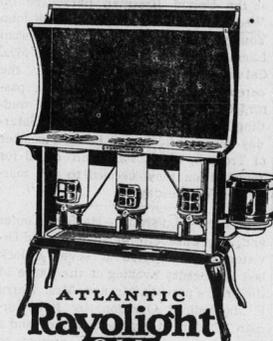
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