

DREAMLAND ADVENTURES

"The Magic Artist"
By DADDY

CHAPTER III

The Deer on the Hill

"I DON'T believe there is such a thing as a rabbit ghost," said Peggy, which shows what a sensible little girl she was.

"Neither do I believe there is such a thing as a rabbit ghost! B-but where in the world did that white rabbit go that I shot?" stammered the Giant of the Woods, who was so upset by the way the white rabbit had vanished that his teeth chattered.

Peggy shook her head. "It was a mystery to her where the white rabbit had gone without leaving behind a bit of fur or even a track in the snow."

"Woof! Woof! My hunting nose tells me there has been no real rabbit here," barked Toddie Pupkins, sniffing around the tree where the rabbit had been.

Peggy and the Giant of the Woods looked up in the tree to see if the rabbit in some strange way had got back there. They didn't see the rabbit but they did see something that made their eyes open in surprise. That something was a pert white squirrel peeping at them from a crotch of the tree.

Up came the giant's gun and bang! bang! he fired as fast as he could pull the trigger.

Down dropped the squirrel as if shot dead.

"Oh, the poor little squirrel!" cried Peggy.

"Woof! Woof! I'll get that white squirrel!" barked Toddie Pupkins, plunging into the snowbank where the squirrel had fallen.

But, strange to say, Toddie Pupkins

didn't find the squirrel. Neither did the Giant of the Woods, nor Peggy. They found only snow in the snowbank. "Getwellickers, there's something wrong here!" cried the Giant of the Woods. "First I shot two white rabbits which strangely vanished. Then I shot the white squirrel, and see it drop in the snowbank when we get here we find only snow. I can't understand it, but they say ghosts are always white and have a puzzling way of vanishing."

Peggy said again that she didn't believe in ghosts.

"The Indians tell queer tales about animal spirits," whispered the giant. "Do you suppose this can be the Happy Hunting Ground of the Indians?"

"N-nonsense!" answered Peggy, but as she said it her voice shook as much as the giant's had.

"Woof! Woof! I don't smell any ghost tracks," barked Toddie, frisking about the tree. "But I do smell the tracks of Billy and I don't believe he is far away!"

"Oh, oh, perhaps the rabbit ghosts and the squirrel ghosts have eaten Billy up!" cried Peggy.

"I t-thought you didn't believe in rabbit ghosts or squirrel ghosts," stuttered the Giant of the Woods, looking around as though he were much afraid. And as he looked around he let out a bark and grabbed his gun.

There on the hillside stood a white deer with black horns and a stubby black tail.

"Another ghost!" yelled the giant. "It looks more like a statue," gasped Peggy, for the deer stood very, very quiet.

"I'll soon see if it is a ghost or a statue!" declared the Giant of the Woods, aiming his gun. Bang! Bang! The giant's aim was true, and both he and Peggy expected to see the deer either topple over, or go dashing off through the woods. It did neither. It just stood still, as it had stood before.

"You're right! It is a statue," cried the giant, and he started up the hill toward the deer. But suddenly the giant stood still. The deer had begun to wag its stubby tail as if in friendly greeting!

What do you think about the white rabbits and the white squirrel? Do you think they were ghost rabbits, and do you think they gobbled Billy up? And if they didn't gobble Billy up where do you think you'll find he is?

And what about the white deer? What do you think it is going to do in the next chapter?



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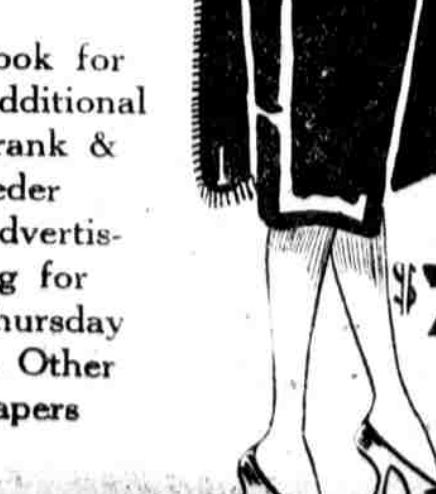
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