

DREAMLAND ADVENTURES

Folks of the Woods
By DADDY

Jack and Janet, while in the woods are stung on their noses by a flying ant. The magic poison from this sting makes them as small as ants. The same thing happens to their dogs, Toddie Pupkins and Johnny Bull, and to their ponies, Trizzie and Topsy. Ants catch them and take them into the ant city.

CHAPTER V
The Ant Queen

THE Ant Queen frowned upon Jack, Janet, Toddie Pupkins, Johnny Bull, Trizzie and Topsy when they were brought before her.

"Who are these folks?" she asked in the queer sign language of the ants. She didn't say a word, but talked with her feelers and yet Jack and Janet understood exactly what she said.

"They are new slaves," answered one of the ants. "They were caught in the woods with the magic poison of Flying Wizard Ant, and he sends them to you as a present."

The Ant Queen frowned more darkly than before, and her feelers twitched crossly as she answered: "If Flying Wizard Ant thinks he has pleased me,

he hasn't a bit. More slaves mean more work for me in training them, and I am not a worker ant."

The Ant Queen glared at Janet. "You shall be a nursemaid and tend to ant babies," said the Ant Queen. Then she turned to Jack and the dogs. "You shall watch our cows," she said to them, and her eyes went on to Trizzie and Topsy. "You shall carry food to our storehouses."

Then, as if she had done a big day's work, the Ant Queen sank back with closed eyes.

The other ants hustled Jack and Janet, the dogs and the ponies out of the Ant Queen's chamber. Jack and the two dogs were put to work watching three of the ants' cows. And very queer-looking cows they were—more like insects than real cows. And, indeed, they were insects that the ants had caught and trained.

Trizzie and Topsy were trotted off to join processions of worker ants carrying food to inside caverns.

As for Janet, she was shoved into a long chamber filled with ugly ant babies. Janet liked babies and she had thought no babies could be ugly, but these ant babies were certainly far from pleasant. They were more like round, fat worms than like real babies.

Janet was put to work looking after one fat baby. The baby was very cross, and Janet couldn't keep it quiet, though she petted it and sang to it.

Janet worried over this and didn't know what to do. Then she felt a gentle touch on her arm, and looked

around to see a pretty creature looking down at her with kindly eyes. The creature was shaped like a deer, but it was the size of an ant.

"Feed the baby," whispered the pretty deer to Janet, and then she showed Janet how. She got milky honey from a closet in the nursery and this she forced into the fat baby's mouth. Janet then noticed this was the way all the other slave nurses were feeding the ant babies.

"You are a new slave, I see," whispered the pretty deer to Janet. "And like myself you are under the spell of the magic poison of Flying Wizard Ant. Poor, poor child!"

"Who are you, and how did you get here?" asked Janet; for the deer seemed much different from the other slaves.

"I was a free deer in the woods," answered the slave sadly. "And I was the Deer Deer of a very handsome buck. We were to have been married in the spring, but on our very wedding day I was stung on the nose by Flying Wizard Ant. His magic poison made me the size I now am, and I have been a slave ever since."

"Oh, oh, is there no way to get out of this ant city and away from these dreadful babies," cried Janet. "I do not want to be a slave."

Dear Deer looked around to see that no one was listening. "Yes, there is a way," she whispered. "I'll tell you about it."

(What the slave deer whispered, and how they burst out of the ant city will be told in the next chapter.)

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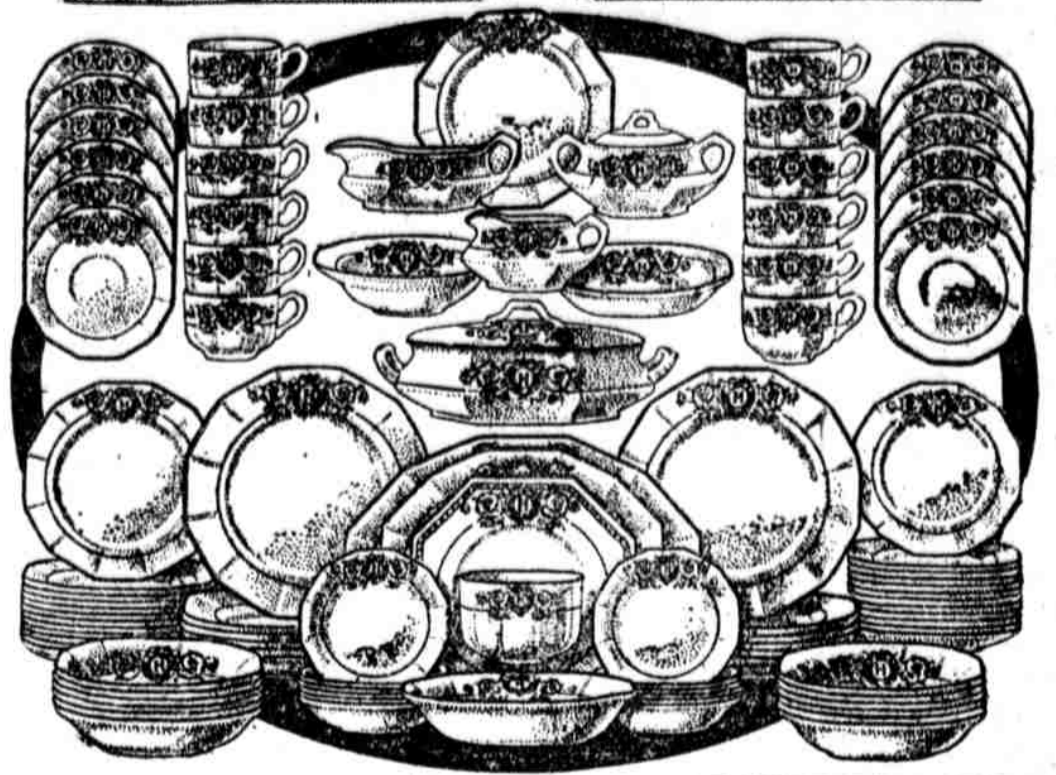
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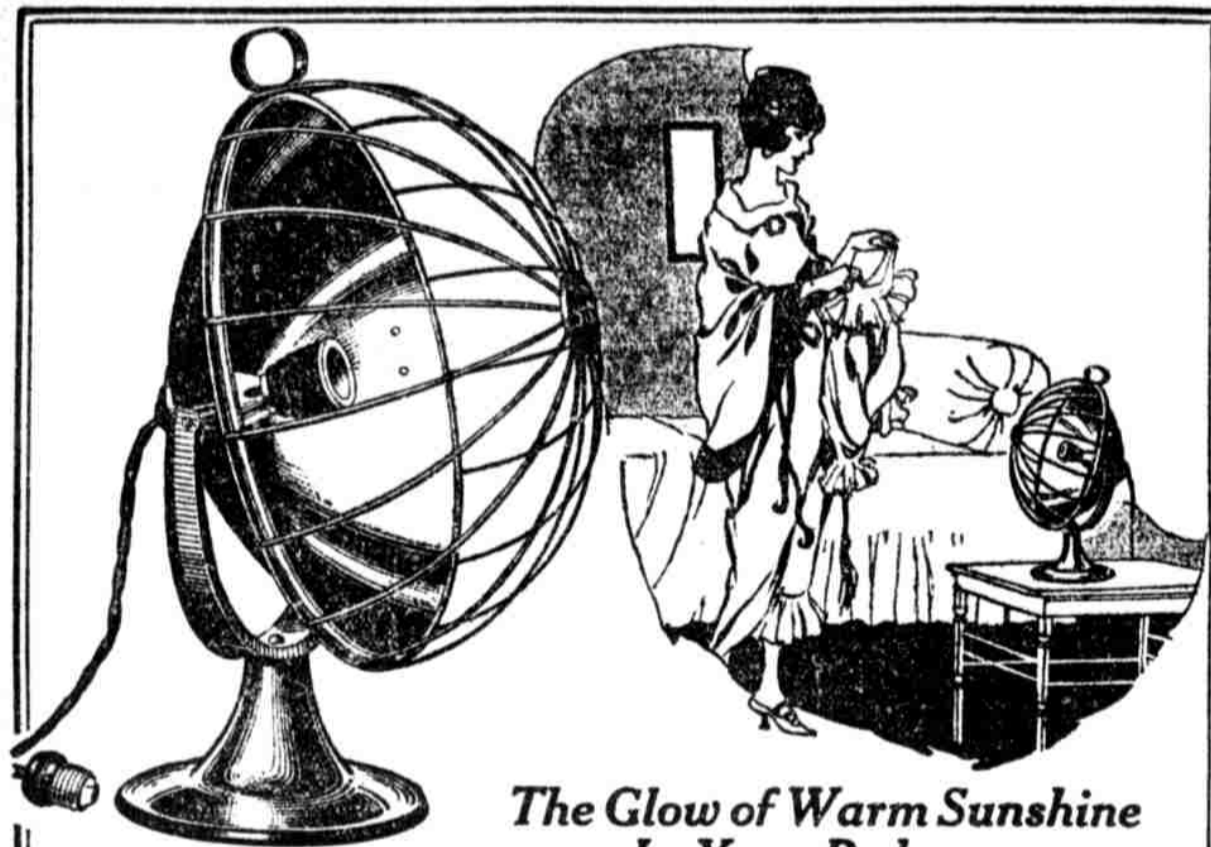
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