

But the sea-gull had winged toward his brothers who were small specks in the distance. There was no one about—just the two beings with divided tails standing quietly on the shore. Mur-mur dove deep to the ocean floor and after searching, found a large pink conch shell.

"I shall give you wings like a sailfish," she whispered. Gathering sea grasses, she wove a little sail to a stick of knobby coral and pasted it to the conch with a bit of froth from the rocks.

"Go, little ship, go to the one who waits on the sands for you."

Bouncing with the waves, the little boat sailed straight to the little one who, holding tight to the big one's hand, reached to the edge of the water and picked it up. Tinkling bells of baby laughter came over the water to the little mermaid peering between the rocks and she couldn't understand why it made her feel like cavorting just as the silly porpoises do.

Then the big being picked up the little one, ship and all, clasped them tight to her breast and Mur-mur didn't understand the whispered words: "It is an omen! The sea is going to give him back to me!"

The waters slid by silkily as the little mermaid streaked back to her haven, full of curious feelings. As she neared the Castle Reef, she could hear the others singing as they perched on their favorite pinnacles, tossing pearls to one another or making sea garlands. She swam slower and slower, knowing they would never believe her; but the wonder was still within her, so she made a little plan.

Now the others all smile at Mur-mur after a storm, as she gathers bits of driftwood and coral and shells to make the odd little boats that are launched with a whispered, "Go, little ship. Go to the one who waits on the sands for you." And the little ships sail down a rainbow path to the ones who need them.

## One By One

Karel Kingham

As I sat up in bed I felt danger lingering in the room. It must be late; how long had I been asleep? It was too hot; no, too cold. "Why can't I think clearly?" I said as if speaking to one of the four posts standing guard at each corner of my bed. I chuckled, threw the covers down and climbed from the old sturdy structure. I walked to the French doors and looked over the room.

What was it they used to call these? Boudoirs? How strange it was to be standing in this room on the outskirts of London at this hour. The moon was almost full now and it cast eerie shadows over the canopied bed, the high old chest, the massive draperies and the many stiff backed chairs placed at intervals around the room. The strange designs in the Oriental carpeting seemed to dance. I shivered and remembered the caretaker's words just before I had gone to my room: "People say this 'ouse is 'aunted, but don't you believe a word

of it, Missy. Me and me wife'll take care of you." Was all of this worth the "large sum" I was going to inherit from my eccentric aunt? Perhaps the large sum wouldn't be as large as I had anticipated, and the trip abroad had been quite expensive.

I turned and cast a wary eye on the formal gardens. The moonlight bathed the late chrysanthemums and played with the small ripples on the sparkling pool, but danger seemed to lurk in every shadow. A cold chill ran from my finger tips to my toes. I stepped out on the small veranda-like balcony and walked to the far end. Looking down a short, dark path, I could see the caretaker's cottage. "People say this 'ouse is 'aunted . . ." The words again flashed through my mind. "I can see why." The sound of my voice startled me as it penetrated the late, still night.

I sat down on the cold porch railing and curled my toes up inside my scuffies; I pulled my robe around me tighter. A light flashed on inside the cottage, then off again. In a moment the light came on again and I could see the witch-like bust of the cook, the caretaker's wife, silhouetted against the small window. What was she doing? Up, down, up down, went one arm and hand; she couldn't be sewing, not at this hour! For many minutes she continued this act, simultaneously nodding her head and throwing it back as if in laughter. My curiosity was fully aroused by this time. What could she possibly be sewing that was so amusing? Oh, well, I'd find out in the morning. But to bed now; my eyes were heavy and I felt as if I could sleep. My fear of the spacious estate left me when I saw that other people were close.

As I turned to leave the balcony, the cottage door opened slowly and the witch-like woman walked out and around the house and disappeared among the long shadows. Baffled by all this, I hunched my shoulders and went back into the bedroom. Trying to forget what I had just seen, I locked the large French doors, threw off my robe and stretched out upon the warm ancient bed.

I awoke as suddenly as I had the night before. The sun was shining into the room. How beautiful it seemed after the fears of the night had vanished. The wood of the furniture shone with brilliancy and the lavish Oriental rugs were as splendorous as those of a maharaja's of India. I dressed hurriedly but carefully, for this was the morning the will was to be read.

I ran down the grand staircase expecting to see the cook, but the rooms rang with silence. I tried to swallow the lump that jumped into my throat, then cautiously walked to the kitchen. A mouse scurried into the shadows under a buffet. I shuddered. Where was the cook? I tip-toed up the stairs to get my jacket, came back down, and stole out the kitchen door. The gardens were beautiful in the sun, but somehow looked sinister to me. I walked down the path which had been so dark in the calm of the night. The door of the caretaker's cottage was still open and as I neared the door, some-



thing compelled me to stop. Not one sound could I hear. The soft breeze had stopped, the leaves had stopped scraping. A deathlike atmosphere prevailed.

The heavy silence was broken by a loud shriek, which came from me. A black cat had stolen up behind me and was rubbing against my ankles. I stooped to pick him up. He meowed a raspy cry and as I let him go he ran through the open door. I followed him. As I started to call for the cook, I glanced over the room and the call stuck in my throat. Terror seized every part of my body. I wanted to run but my legs were like jelly. My eyes were arrested by the ghastly scene before me. On the sofa in front of the window lay the caretaker. Most of his body was on the sofa—his head was on the floor. His eyes were staring at me upside down. Yesterday he had had gray hair on his partially bald head. Now it was completely bare.

The persistent laughing motions—those of a woman gone mad. Sewing? No. One by one she had plucked every hair from his severed head.

## Old Jim Norton

George A. Olinick

OLD JIM NORTON is a character. He is a wizened little man with skin like leather from thirty-odd years of working out-of-doors. His reddish-brown hair belies his sixty-five years, but he can remember when mules pulled the rail-cars on the street which was named for Butler College. Jim's nose resembles a rooster's bill, and in the midst of a heated discussion he reminds one of a bantam-rooster.

Jim is proud of his trade, and rightly so, for he is one of the most skillful carpenters in his community. "Old Man Norton" is the personification of independence. And how he will argue—why, if someone said black was white, old Jim would say it was red, just for the sake of argument! Honesty is Jim's middle name, although sometimes, when too deep in his cups, he may forget the terms of a wager or confuse an issue to favor his side of an argument.

He is often caught between two forces. On one hand, he will want a drink, but on the other he will be loath to part with his money. The result is a bartender's dilemma. If, when he orders a drink, payment isn't immediately forthcoming and the barkeeper waits with hand outstretched, Jim is insulted. If the bartender goes on to other customers, Old Jim may forget he hasn't paid, so patience and sagacity are necessary in dealing with the old fellow. Jim's friends are legion, and in spite of all his little idiosyncrasies, everyone likes him, for underneath that leather-like skin is a heart that has room for compassion for his fellow-men.