

# Enid Blyton Stories



## The Tale of Higgle and Hum



# Once Upon a Time

The king of fairyland went to his magic cupboard and found that a thief had been there in the night.

My goodness cried the king loudly. Robbers!

Now what have they taken?



He called the queen and together they went through all the things in the magic cupboard and they found that three things had been stolen.

There's my magic lamp gone! Said the king in the dismay. The one that lights up the whole of the wood when the moon doesn't shine for our dances.



And where are my magic scissors said the queen with a groan.  
The pair that will cut through anything iron, steel or stone.

And my fine walking stick, said the king sadly. I'm sorry that has  
been stolen, because I had only to say, UP Stick, and at him and  
it would jump up and defend me.

How shall we get our things back. Wondered the queen. And  
who has taken them?



They soon found out who the thief was. It was a goblin called Groo , a cunning fellow who had long wanted these three things for himself.



He is so clever that I am afraid we shall never have our magic things again, said the queen with a sigh. If we sent our soldiers against him, he would simply turn them into an army of ants, and that would be dreadful.

We'll send out a proclamation saying that if anyone can get back our magic things for us we will give them a sack of gold, a beautiful palace and a free invitation to all our dances and parties, said the king.



So this was done , and soon all the elves , pixies , fairies , gnomes and brownies were talking excitedly of how the three things belonging to the king and queen might be taken from Groo the goblin.



First an elf tried , and oh, dear me , he was turned  
into a frog...





... and it took the king a very long time to find the right spell that would change him back into his own shape again.



The two gnomes tried and they were turned into earwigs .



They went to the king in a fright, and he had to pay a wise man twenty pieces of gold to change them back again.



After that no one tried , for everyone was afraid. Then one day there came wondering into fairyland two imps called Higgle and Hum. As soon as they heard the kings message they looked at one another in delight.

Well get the things back ! They cried.

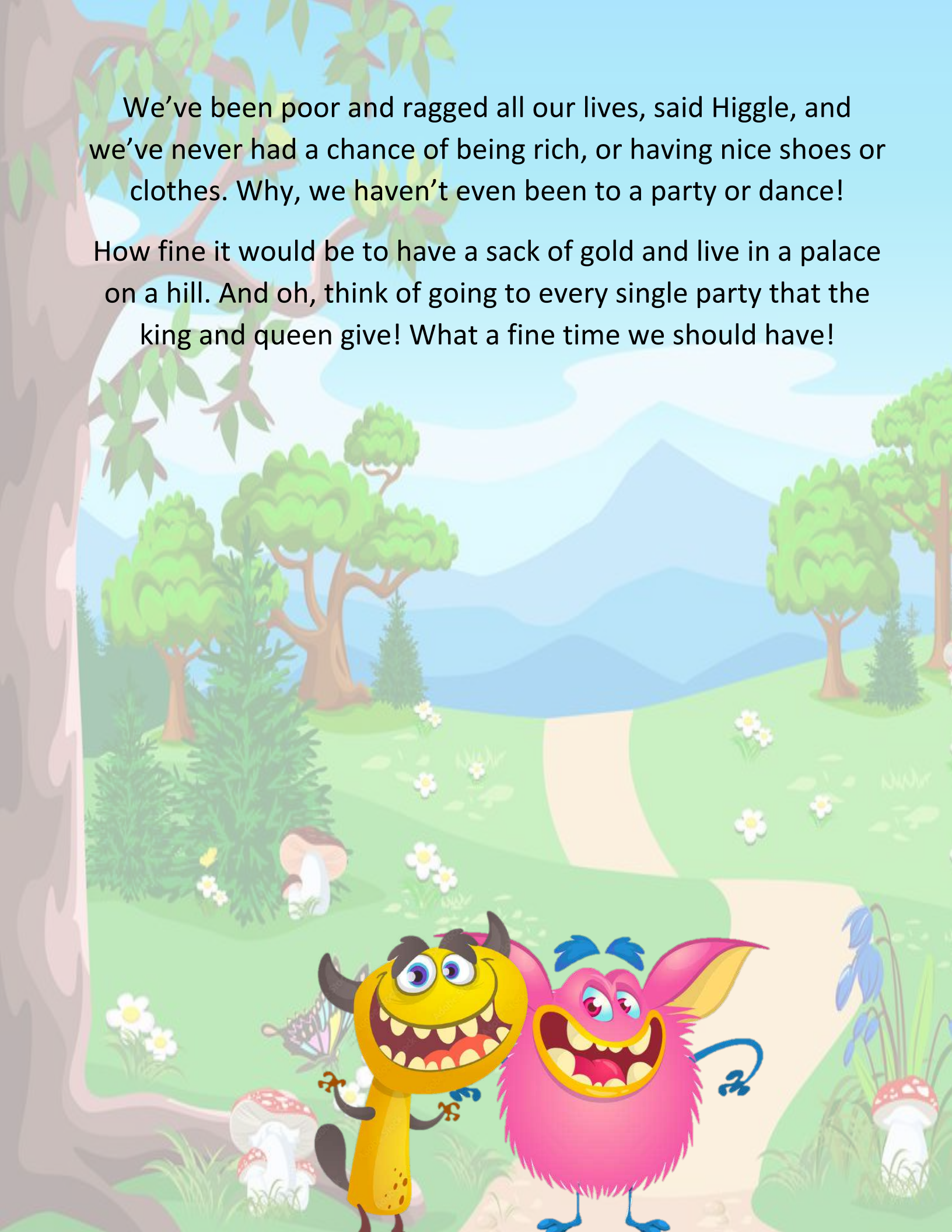


Easier said than done! Said a listening brownie. You don't know how clever Groo the goblin is! Higgle and Hun said no more, but went off to a sunny hedge side to talk about how they should get into Groo's house.



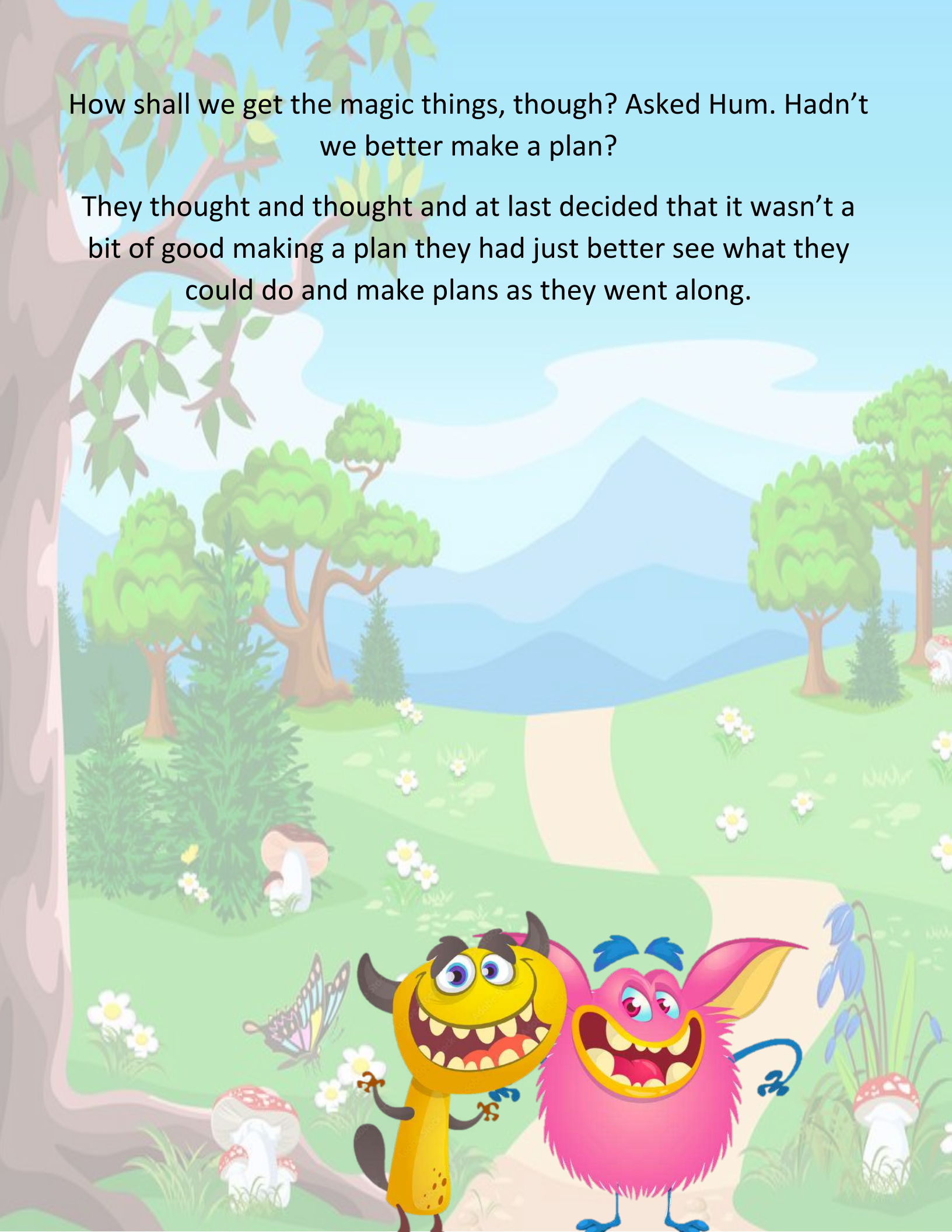
We've been poor and ragged all our lives, said Higgle, and we've never had a chance of being rich, or having nice shoes or clothes. Why, we haven't even been to a party or dance!

How fine it would be to have a sack of gold and live in a palace on a hill. And oh, think of going to every single party that the king and queen give! What a fine time we should have!



How shall we get the magic things, though? Asked Hum. Hadn't we better make a plan?

They thought and thought and at last decided that it wasn't a bit of good making a plan they had just better see what they could do and make plans as they went along.



That night they crept into the garden of Groo's house and peered in through the kitchen window. Look whispered Higgle there's the magic lamp on the dresser.

And there are the magic scissoring that workbasket! Said Hum. Where's the magic stick? Standing on the corner yonder whispered Higgle.





Oh! Oh! Oh!

It was no wonder he cried out for someone had suddenly caught hold of him. It was Groo the goblin, and very soon he had Higgle in one hand and Hum in the other, both imps trembling with a fright.

Ho! He said in a harsh voice. What are you doing peeping praying into my kitchen, I should like to know? Don't you know that I can turn people into earwigs and frogs, if I want to.



Please, please don't don't do that! Said Higgle in a fright. We were thinking what a nice warm kitchen you had and wondering if you wanted any servants .

Well my wife could do with two, said Groo. I'll show you to her and see if she wants you. If she doesn't ill have you cooked for my dinner.



He took the shivering imps into his kitchen and showed them to his wife , who looked at them through her big glasses.

Yes they 'll do it nicely , dear, she said to Groo. I'll have them for servants.

Well if you get tired of them, let me know and ill have them cooked for dinner said Groo.



And mind wife, don't you let them get away! They'll run if they have a chance, I'm sure of that. You keep them safely in the kitchen.

Very well, dear, said Mrs Groo and she turned to the Higgle and Hum. Just draw some hot water from the tap and start to scrub the kitchen floor, she said.



Groo the goblin went out of the room and banged the door. Higgle and Hum ran to the tap and got a pail of water. It was not very hot, and Higgle looked at the fire.

Please, ma am , he said to Mrs Groo. The water isn't hot enough to scrub the floor properly. The fire has gone down and the water is cooling. Shall I stoke it up?



Oh dear , oh dear , there's no wood in the wood box, said the old dame in a flurry. I meant to have asked Groo this morning to chop some for me , I quite forgot. What a temper will he be in when I ask him now, for he does hate to go out to the woodshed in the dark.

Well ma'am let me go , said Higgle. I'm your servant , aren't I?

Of course said Mrs Groo Well out you go and chop me some wood but don't be long.

Higgle grinned at Hum and ran out.



He didn't go to the wood shed , but hid outside the front gate. Soon Mrs Groo became impatient and wondered what Higgie was doing.

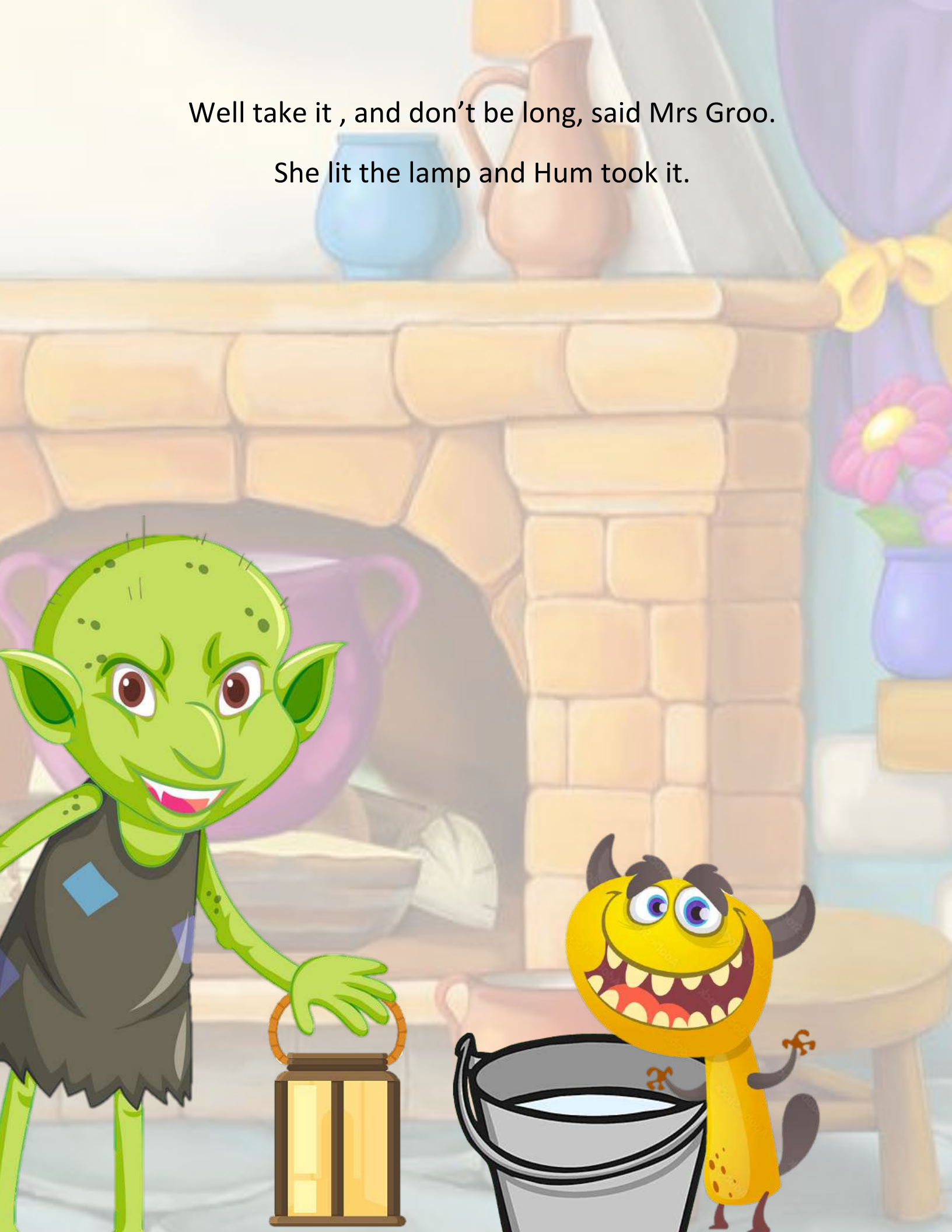
Drat the imp! She said. I suppose I must go and see if his lost his way into the garden.

Ma'am, let me go and find him! Said Hum running over to her. Don't you go out in the darkness. Lend me that lamp on the dresser and ill soon find him.



Well take it , and don't be long, said Mrs Groo.

She lit the lamp and Hum took it.





He ran out into the garden, puffed out the lamp, and made for the front gate. He found Higgie there, and together the two clever imps raced down the lane as fast as their legs would carry them , rejoicing that their trick had succeeded.



The king was delighted to get his magic lamp back and he praised the two imps for being able to outwit the cunning old goblin.

If only you can get the other things I shall be overjoyed said the queen.

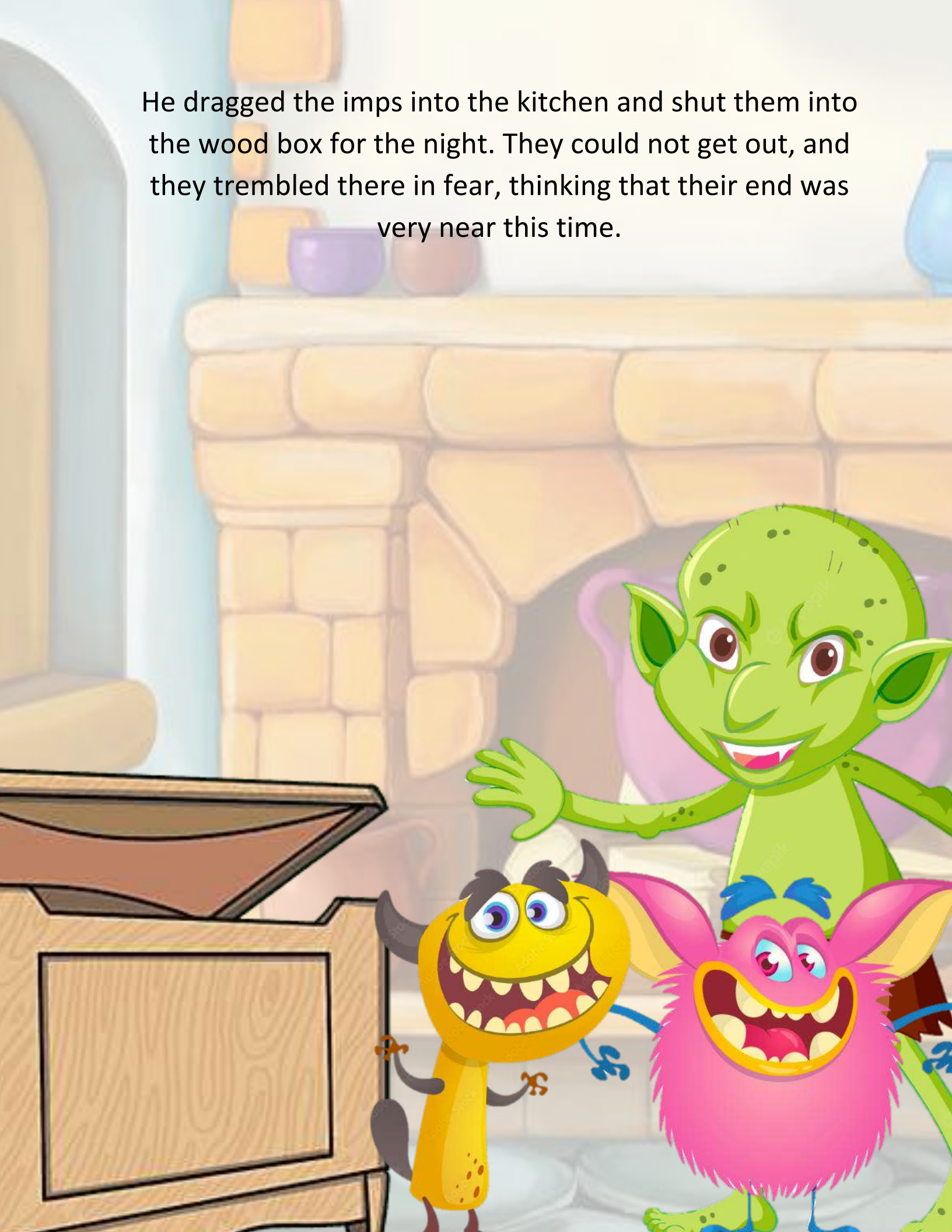


So the next night Higgle and Hum made their way quietly to Groo's house again, meaning to break in at the window when Groo had gone to bed, and take the scissors and magic stick, but the goblin was lying in waiting for them, and pounced on the two scared imps just as they reached the front gate.

Ha! he said. Now I've got you again, and I can tell you, I won't let you go this time! I'll have you for my dinner tomorrow!



He dragged the imps into the kitchen and shut them into the wood box for the night. They could not get out, and they trembled there in fear, thinking that their end was very near this time.



In the morning Mrs Groo took them out and looked at them.

'You are very naughty not to have come back the night I sent you to chop the wood,' she said. 'Now I've got to cook you for my husband's dinner, instead of having you for servants!'



The imps watched her stoke up the fire and trembled all the more.  
Then Higgle spoke.

'I suppose, ma'am, you've got plenty of killy-kolly leaves to cook with us?' he said. 'If imps are cooked without killy-kolly leaves, they will poison whoever eats them.'

'My goodness!' said Mrs Groo in fright. 'No, I didn't know that! Well, I've plenty of killy-kollies in my garden. I'd better go and pick some.'



Let me pick them for you,' said Higgle. 'You've plenty to do in preparing the dinner, I'm sure.

'All right, you may go and pick them,' said Mrs Groo, giving him a plate. But see that you keep in sight of the window for if you run off again Mr Groo will be very angry Higgle took the plate, grinned at Hum and ran out into the garden to the killy-kolly bed.



He began to pick some of the leaves, and he pretended that they were very hard indeed to pull from the stems.





Mrs Groo became impatient and called out of the window to him. Hurry up, now, hurry up! I'm waiting for that dish of leaves. What a time you take picking them!



'Please, ma'am, they're very hard to pick,' said Higgle, standing up in the killy-kolly bed. 'Could you send Hum out with a pair of strong scissors?'



Mrs Groo went to her workbasket and took out the pair of magic scissors there. She gave them to Hum and bade him take them to Higgle and then come back to help her peel some potatoes. Hum ran off.



And as soon as Higgle saw him coming he ran to the front gate,  
and down the lane the two imps tore as fast as they could.

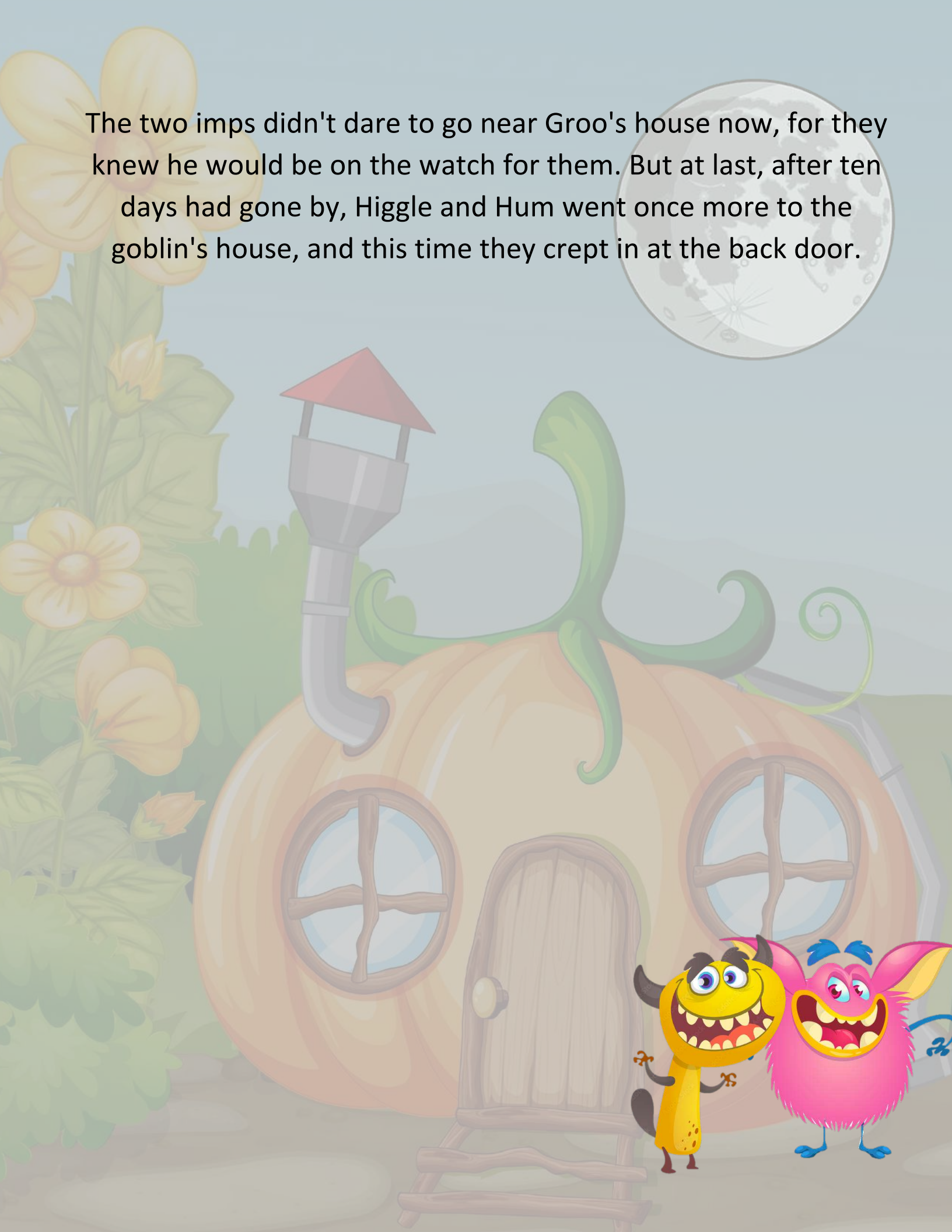


How glad they were to be free and to have the magic scissors! They took them to the king and he was delighted.

"You're a very clever pair!" he said. 'Now if only you can get me my magic stick, I shall be very happy.'



The two imps didn't dare to go near Groo's house now, for they knew he would be on the watch for them. But at last, after ten days had gone by, Higgle and Hum went once more to the goblin's house, and this time they crept in at the back door.



But oh dear me, who should spy them but old Mrs Groo, and she caught them and dragged them into her kitchen.

'So it's you again!' she said. 'Well, you ran away last time with the magic scissors, and the time before with the magic lamp - but this time you won't get away! Mr Groo was angry with me for letting you go, but he will be pleased with me now for catching you!'



'Where is Groo?' asked Higgle, looking round.

'He's gone to see his friend, Mr Topple,' said Mrs Groo, 'but don't you fret! He won't be long, I can tell you, and I shouldn't be surprised if he has you for his supper as soon as he comes home.'

Higgle and Hum were frightened. They felt quite sure that they really would be eaten this time, and they tried in vain to think of some way of escape.





Mrs Groo sat down to her sewing, and for some time there was silence in the warm kitchen. Then the clock struck nine, and Mrs Groo looked up in surprise.

'Dear, dear!' she said. 'How late Groo is! I do hope he hasn't got lost on this dark night.'

'Shall I go and look for him?' asked Higgle.

'No, that you won't!' said Mrs Groo sharply.



'Well, ma'am, just let me go to the front door and peep out,'  
said Higgle. 'You can see I don't escape then, can't you, but as  
I have very sharp eyes,

I can see a long way and could tell you if your husband is  
coming.'

'Very well,' said Mrs Groo, 'but mind - if you so much as put  
a foot over the door step, I'll drag you in and put you into that  
saucepan, Higgle.'



Higgle grinned at Hum and went to the door to open it.



He stood on the doorstep and peered this way and that.  
Suddenly he gave a shout.

'Robbers! Thieves!' he cried. 'Look! Robbers, thieves! Where's a  
stick! Bring a stick to defend me!'



Mrs Groo began to tremble. She picked up the magic stick that stood in the corner and gave it to Hum, who ran to Higgle with it.

Sure enough, someone was coming up the front path, and Mrs Groo felt certain it must be robbers. She began to scream.



'Up, stick, and at him!' shouted Higgle, and at once the stick leapt from his hand and flew at the person coming up the path.



How he yelled and shouted. 'I'm no robber, I'm Groo the goblin!  
Call the stick off, call it off! I'm Groo the goblin, I tell you!'



But Higgle and Hum shouted too, so loudly that Mrs Groo couldn't hear that it was her husband in the garden and not a robber. She hid herself in a corner and didn't dream of calling the stick off.





Higgle and Hum ran to the back gate and halfway down the lane, grinning to think that the wicked goblin was tricked again.

Then Higgle put his hands to his mouth and shouted loudly,

'Stick, stick, come to me!'

The stick flew to Higgle's hand. The two imps set off running as fast as they could and the goblin could not catch them, but could only stumble into his kitchen and sit down on a chair.



How delighted the king and queen were to see their magic stick safely back again!

'Surely you are the two cleverest imps in the kingdom!' said the king. 'Well, you shall have your sack of gold and your palace, and you may be sure you will receive a free invitation to every party and dance that the queen gives. Thank you very much for all you have done.'



Then in delight the two imps took the gold and went to the palace that the king gave them. They bought themselves splendid new suits, took two wives and lived happily in their glittering palace for ever after.



They still go to every party in Fairyland, and though they must have been to thousands now, they haven't got tired of them yet!



As for Groo the goblin, he was so ashamed at being tricked by two imps that he packed up his things and he and Mrs Groo disappeared, nobody knew where and nobody minded either!

# *The End*





# THINK

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