

# Summer Stories

## When Alice Blew Bubbles



**By Enid Blyton**

‘Go into the garden and take your blow-bubble set with you,’ said Mummy to Alice. ‘It’s a lovely, sunny, breezy day, and the wind will love to play catch with your bubbles!’



‘Oh, yes! I’ll blow bubbles for the wind,’ said Alice, and she went to fetch her bubble set. Soon she was out in the garden with a bowl of soapy water and a long bubble wand.



She blew the loveliest bubbles. They formed on the bowl of her wand, very small and quivery at first and then, as she blew, the bubbles swelled up and became tighter and bigger — great round things full of glorious colours.



When they were very big, Alice gave the wand a little shake — and off sailed each bubble into the wind. Some of them flew very high indeed — right over the wall into the next garden!

After about ten minutes, Alice heard a little sound in the tree above her. She thought it was a bird flying into the leaves. But it wasn't. A tiny, high voice called softly down to her.



‘Little girl! What are you doing? What are those things you are making?’

Alice looked up into the tree. She saw a tiny elf there, a fairy-like creature sitting astride a twig, looking down at her.

‘Good gracious!’ said Alice, startled. ‘Fancy seeing someone as little as you! Don’t you know what I am making? I’m blowing bubbles. Aren’t they lovely?’

‘Yes, of course they are,’ said the elf. ‘But what do you want them for?’

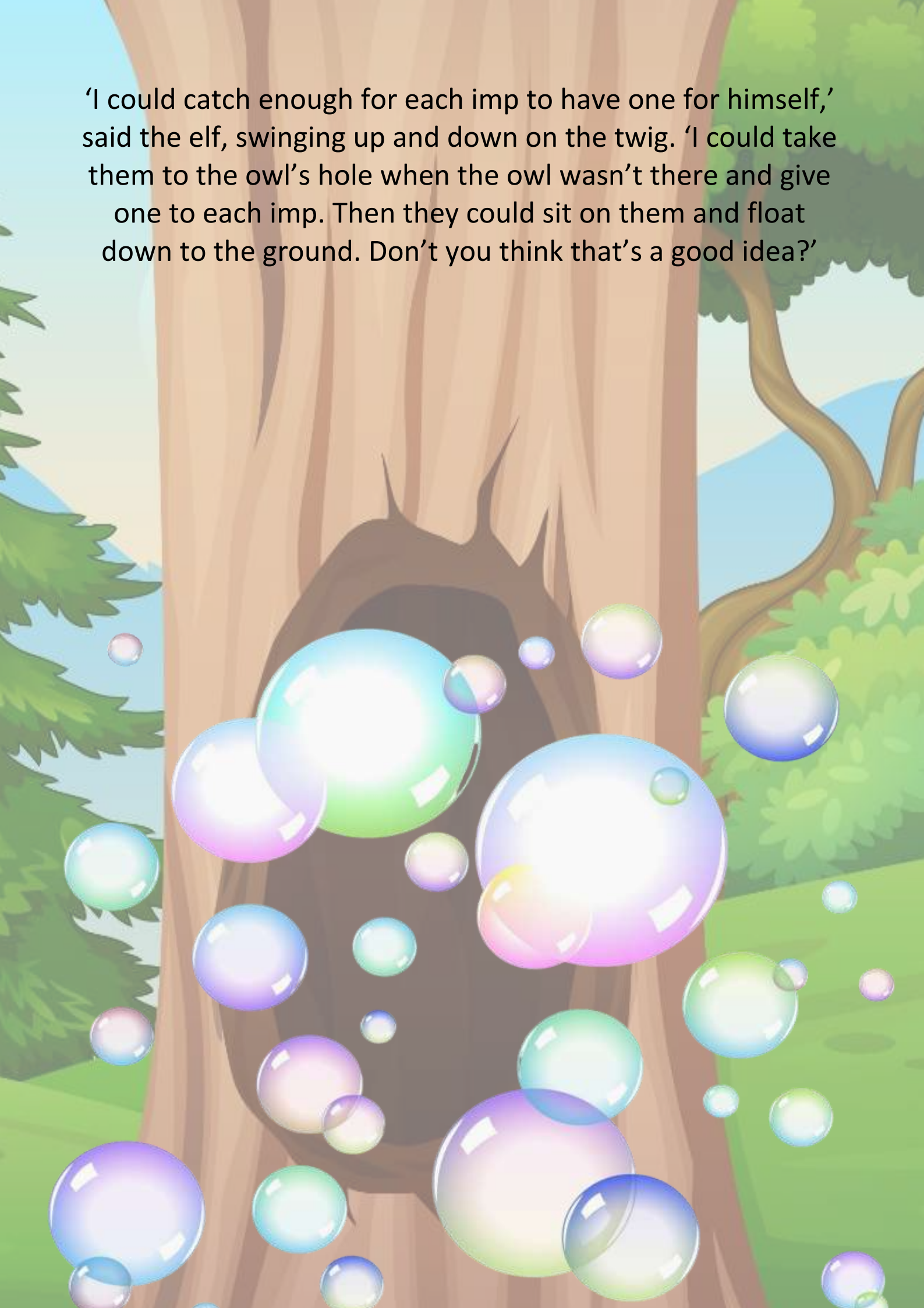


‘It’s a secret,’ said the elf. ‘But I’ll tell you, because you’re lending me your bubbles. The brown owl has caught some of my cousins — the little green imps — and has put them into his nesting-hole high up in the oak tree. They can’t fly down because they haven’t wings, and they’re too afraid to climb down such a long way.’

‘But what use would the bubbles be to them?’ asked Alice, surprised.



‘I could catch enough for each imp to have one for himself,’ said the elf, swinging up and down on the twig. ‘I could take them to the owl’s hole when the owl wasn’t there and give one to each imp. Then they could sit on them and float down to the ground. Don’t you think that’s a good idea?’



‘It’s lovely,’ said Alice, beginning to feel excited. ‘But you can’t catch bubbles, elf. They burst if you touch them.’

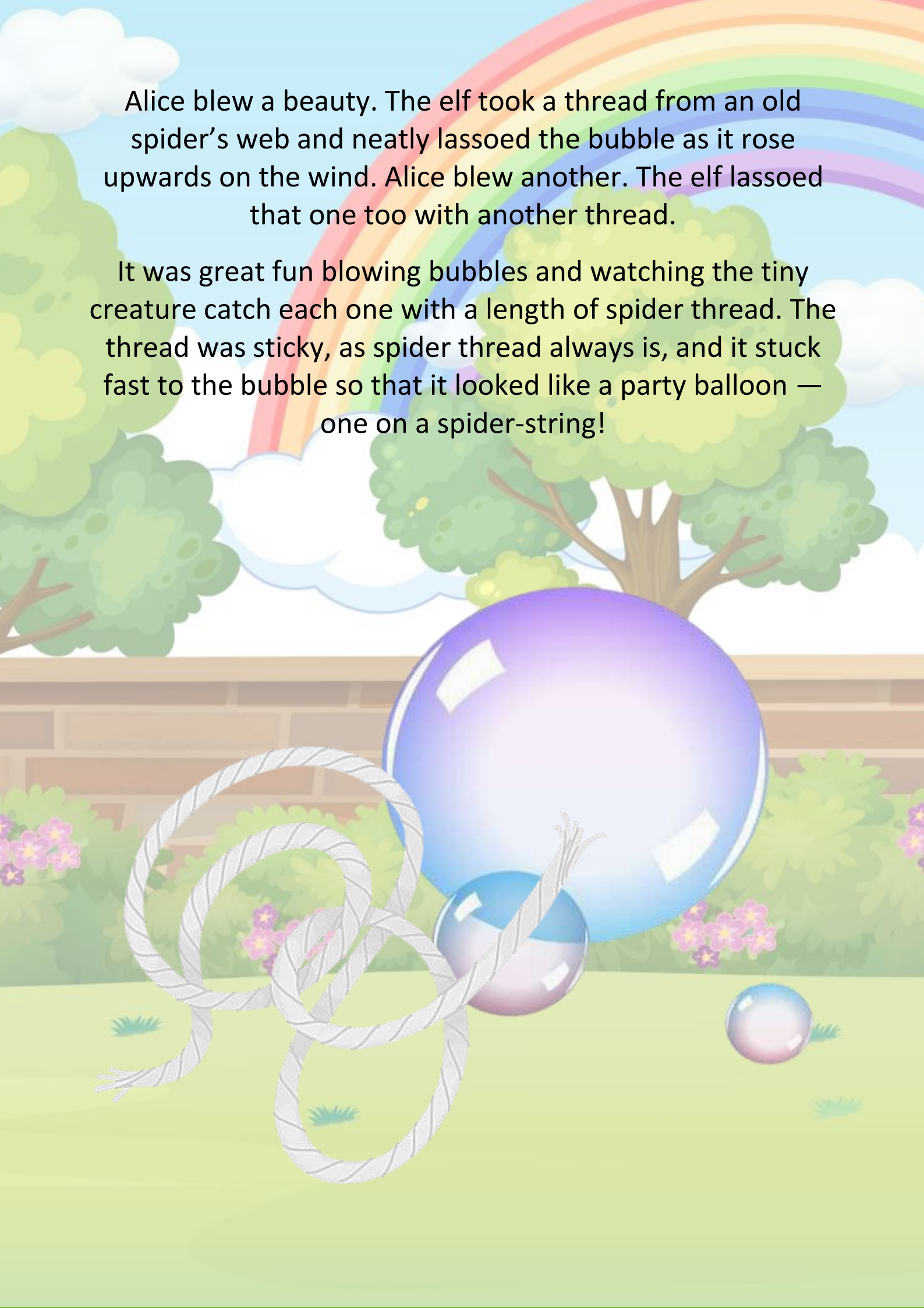
‘Do they? Well then, I’ll have to spray a tiny spell on each one so that it will never burst,’ said the elf.

‘That’s easy. Alice, let me catch the next one you blow.’



Alice blew a beauty. The elf took a thread from an old spider's web and neatly lassoed the bubble as it rose upwards on the wind. Alice blew another. The elf lassoed that one too with another thread.

It was great fun blowing bubbles and watching the tiny creature catch each one with a length of spider thread. The thread was sticky, as spider thread always is, and it stuck fast to the bubble so that it looked like a party balloon — one on a spider-string!



‘I want eight,’ said the elf. ‘Can you count to eight?’

‘Oh, yes. Two more and you’ll have eight,’ said Alice, and blew another one. Each time the elf caught one he emptied a tiny spell on it from a bottle. Alice was sure that the bubble wouldn’t burst. How truly wonderful!

Soon the elf had eight bubbles on eight strings, and he held the ends in his tiny hand.



‘I’m going now,’ he said. ‘Are you coming to watch?’

‘Oh, yes,’ said Alice, and she followed the elf down the garden, through the hedge and into the wood. He flew on ahead with the string of bubbles, his tiny wings fluttering like moth wings. Soon he came to a big oak tree.

‘They’re all up here,’ he said, and flew into the tree. He disappeared into a hole. Almost at once a crowd of tiny green imps came out and sat in a row on a bough. The elf gave them each a string to hold.



‘Now shorten your string and pull the balloon to you,’ he said. ‘Jump astride it when it comes near enough and let the wind float you off the bough. Don’t be afraid — it won’t burst. You’ll land quite safely on the ground!’

Each imp pulled his bubble towards him and cleverly jumped on top of it as it came near. Then off they floated on the breeze — some lying face downwards on the balloon, some sitting astride, and one little fellow swinging underneath! Alice could hardly breathe for excitement.



She was glad when they all reached the ground safely. They handed their strings to the elf and scampered off down a rabbit hole like a lot of green mice!

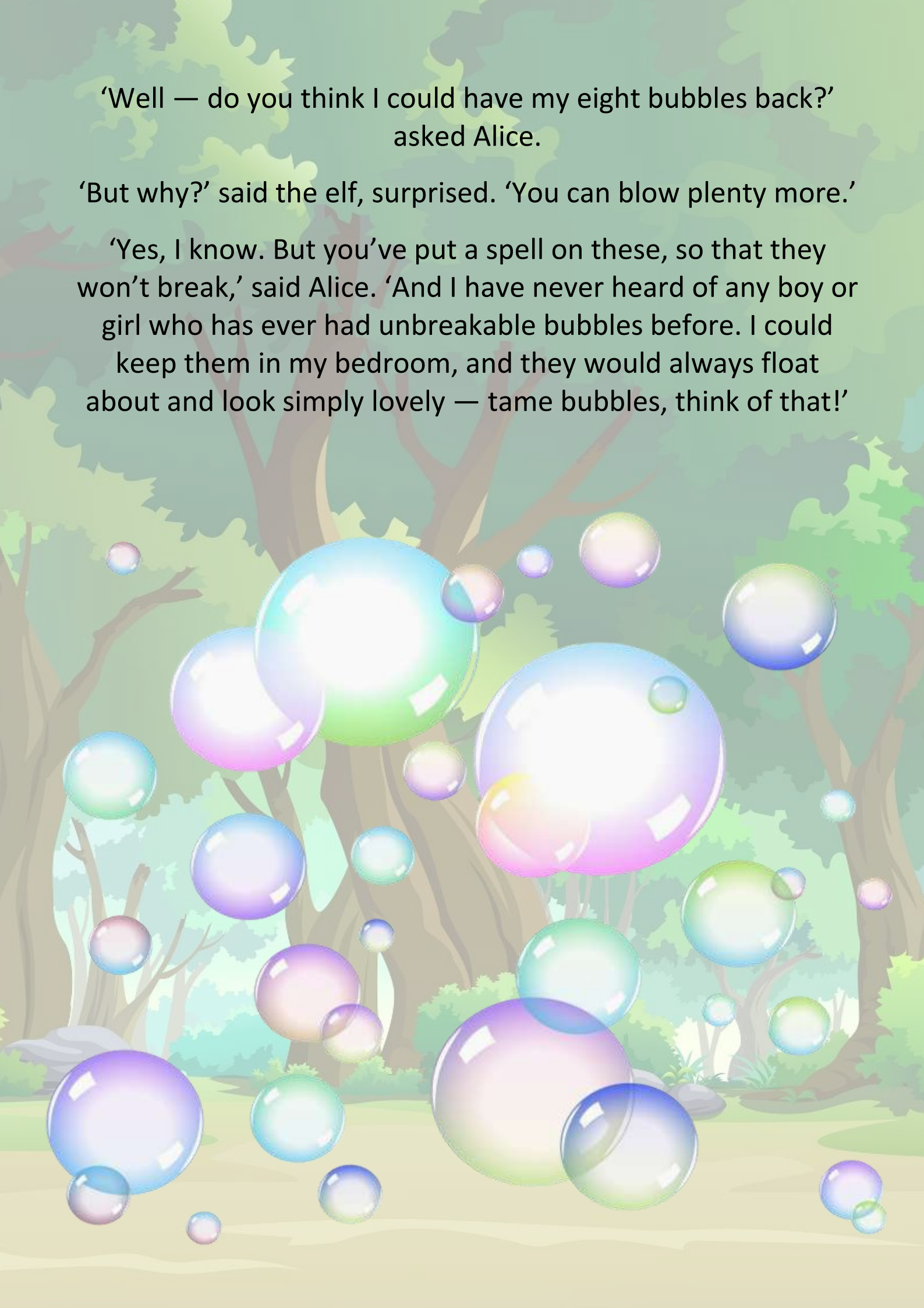
‘It’s very kind of you to help like this,’ said the elf. ‘Do let me give you something. Is there anything you would like?’



‘Well — do you think I could have my eight bubbles back?’  
asked Alice.

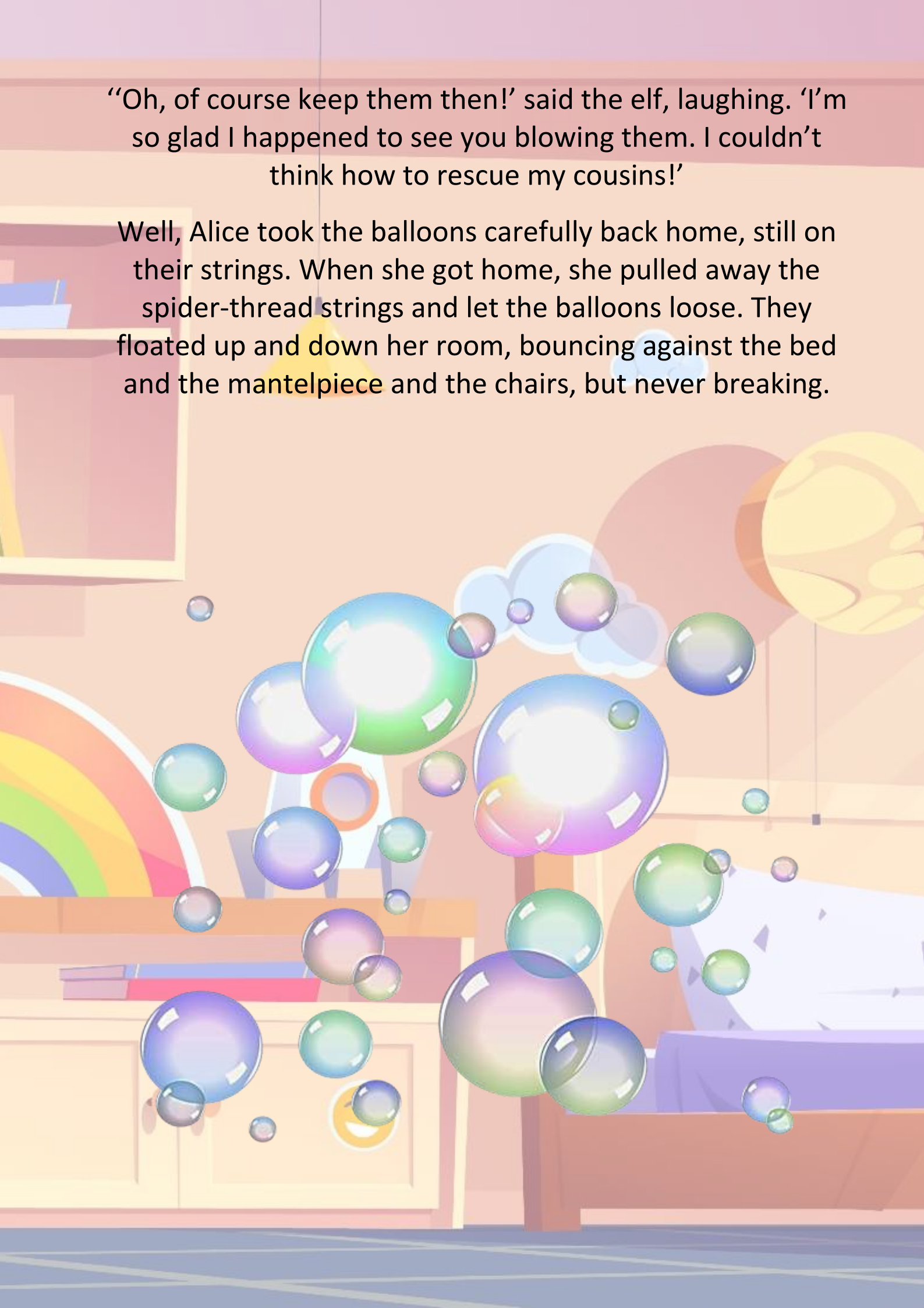
‘But why?’ said the elf, surprised. ‘You can blow plenty more.’

‘Yes, I know. But you’ve put a spell on these, so that they won’t break,’ said Alice. ‘And I have never heard of any boy or girl who has ever had unbreakable bubbles before. I could keep them in my bedroom, and they would always float about and look simply lovely — tame bubbles, think of that!’



“Oh, of course keep them then!” said the elf, laughing. ‘I’m so glad I happened to see you blowing them. I couldn’t think how to rescue my cousins!’

Well, Alice took the balloons carefully back home, still on their strings. When she got home, she pulled away the spider-thread strings and let the balloons loose. They floated up and down her room, bouncing against the bed and the mantelpiece and the chairs, but never breaking.



And you will hardly believe it, but Alice still has five of them left. They float about her bedroom all day and night like little fairy balloons. The other three flew out of the window one day when it was wide open. I do wonder how long she will keep the ones that are left!



