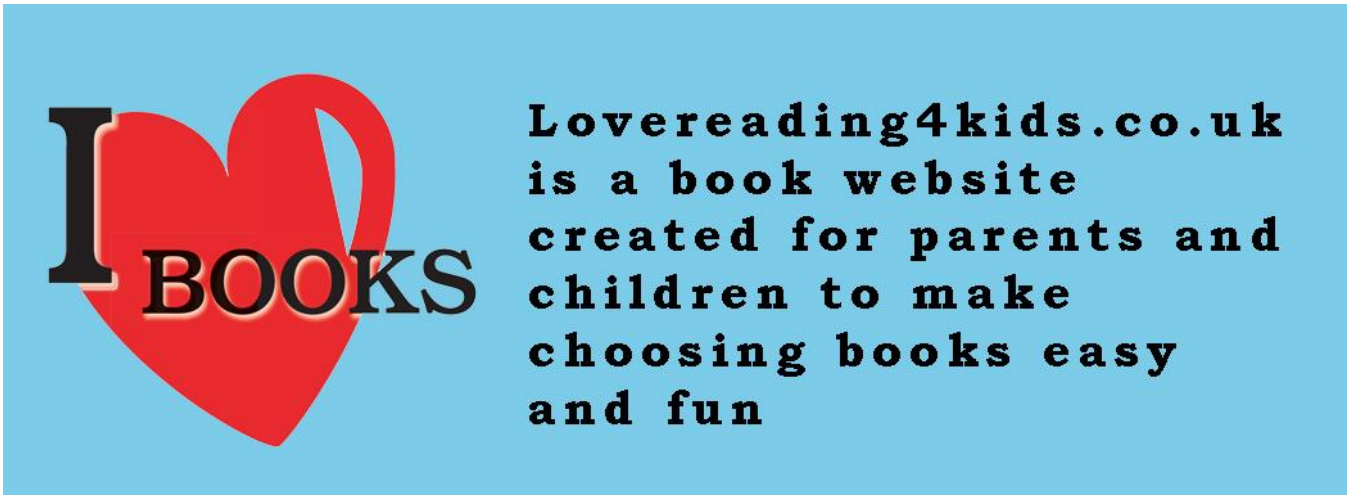


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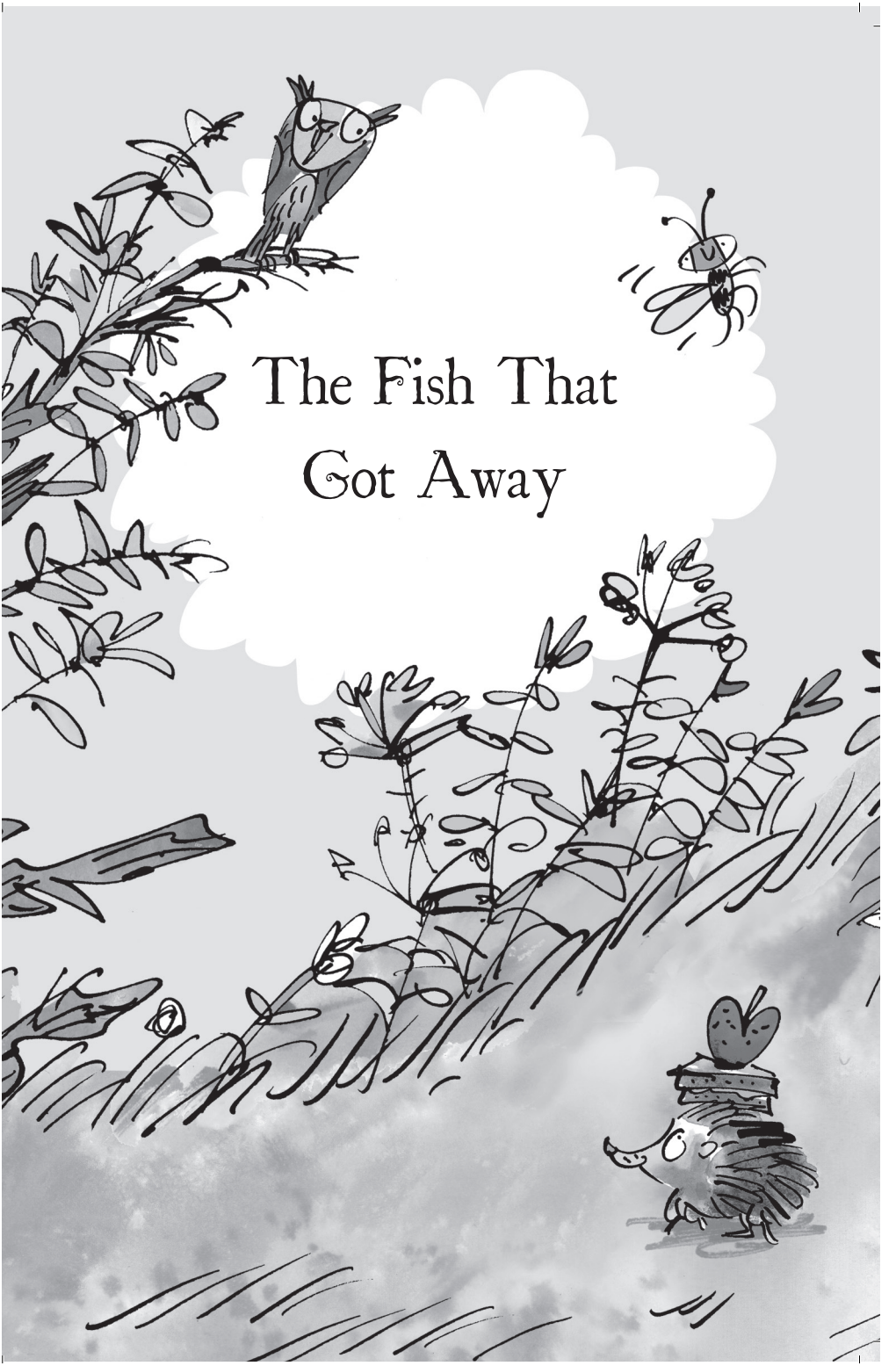
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Introduction

Enid Blyton (1897–1968) is one of the world's best-loved storytellers, writing over six hundred books in her lifetime. From the *Famous Five* to the *Magic Faraway Tree*, her characters and their adventures continue to delight children today. Step into a world full of picnics, trips to the seaside and endless summer days.

Here is a selection of some of her best summertime stories.

Enjoy the stories – and your summer holidays!


The Fish That
Got Away

The Fish That Got Away

'Look!' said Stella, suddenly, sitting up straight. 'Look – there's a boy throwing stones at those seagulls!'

The others uncurled themselves from the warm sand on the beach and sat up to look. Sure enough, they saw a big boy throwing stones at a group of seagulls at the edge of the sea.

'He'll have to be stopped,' said Peter, but he didn't do anything about it.

'He nearly hit one of them,' said Jean. 'The beast. Peter, go and stop him.'

But the boy throwing stones was much bigger than

Peter. Peter didn't move. It was John that got up in a hurry and ran yelling down the beach.

John was smaller than Peter, but he had a very loud voice. You should have heard him shouting at the boy.

'Hey you! Stop that! Throwing stones at birds is NOT allowed! STOP THAT!'

And would you believe it, the boy stopped throwing stones at once, and ran off. He saw everyone on the beach sitting up and staring, and he was ashamed and afraid.

'One of those gulls is hurt, I think,' said Jean, and she got up. 'Good old John – he's the smallest of us all, and yet he was the bravest. You're a coward, Peter.'

'Same to you,' said Peter, at once. 'You're my twin, aren't you? Why couldn't you have gone and shouted?'

'Well, I'm a girl,' said Jean. 'It's boys who should do things like that.'

'That's right – make excuses for yourself,' Peter

said sulkily. He didn't get up to join Jean as she went down the beach to John. Nor did Stella. But Stella was the most ashamed! Oh, dear – why had she let John go shouting at that boy all by himself? She ought to have gone with him.

John had gone to the seagull. The others had flown off, but this one stood looking rather dazed. It moved away a little as John got up to it, but didn't fly.

'It's just stunned by a stone, I think,' said John, going carefully up to it. 'Look, Jean, its wing is hurt. I wonder if we could take it home and look after it for a day or two till it recovers. It doesn't seem very badly hurt.'

The gull let John pick it up. Jean was afraid of the big bird and wouldn't touch it, but Stella came running down to help.

'You were brave, John,' she said. 'I should have come with you and shouted, too.'

'You needn't worry! I can manage things like that by myself,' said John. 'Anyway, bullies like that boy

are always cowards – they run away at once! Help me with this gull, Stella.'

The gull stayed quietly under John's arm till he reached home. Its eyes were half-shut. It seemed quite dazed.

Mother was very sorry to hear all about it. She bathed its wing, and then told John to take the gull into the garden and put it into the shed, so that it could keep quiet till it felt better.

'Leave the door open,' she said. 'Then it will not feel it is a prisoner. It can go out when it wants to.'

Well, just as the children were sitting down to their tea, they heard the sound of a loud seagull cry: 'EE-ew, EE-ew!' Then they heard the flap of wings. They looked up. Standing on the window-ledge was the gull, its eyes wide open now, looking at them.

'Ee-ew,' said the gull, more quietly, and then it spread its great grey wings and flew off into the sky.

'Well! It came to say thank you!' said Stella. 'It's better now. I'm so glad.'

Everyone was glad. When they went out after tea they went down to the rocks to see if they could make out the gull they had helped. But they couldn't.

'They all look so alike when they are in a bunch together,' said Jean. 'First I think it's this one, then I think it's that one – I just can't be sure.'

No gull came flying down to them, as John half hoped. He thought it would be very nice to have a friendly gull walking round them. But all the birds kept together, and not one gull even looked at the four children.

They walked home by the pier. Peter saw a big notice up. He went over to look at it. Then he called the others.

'I say – look! There's a fishing competition on the pier tomorrow – a prize for the biggest and best fish caught – children under twelve. Well, we're all under twelve. Let's go in for it. You just never know, we might be lucky and catch a big fish.'

'Yes – let's,' said Jean, who liked fishing with a line

off the pier. 'I'm sure Mummy will let us.'

Their mother was only too glad to say she would pack up sandwiches and cake, and let them join the competitors in the fishing on the pier. 'Dear me – how wonderful to get rid of you all for a whole day!' she said, with a twinkle in her eye. 'Now I can go and see Granny.'

About twenty children crowded on to the pier the next day, armed with fishing-rods or lines, and plenty of bait. They all went to look at the prizes – first, second, and third.

The first prize was a big book on ships. 'Hope none of us wins that,' said Stella. 'We've got that book already.'

'The second prize is that shrimping net,' said Peter. 'I'd like that. It's a very fine one.'

The third prize was a beach ball, a nice one. But the four children didn't particularly want that, either, because they already had a very nice one themselves.

'We'll have to hope to win the second prize,' said Peter. 'Bags I do!'

'Bags you don't!' said a boy near him, and Peter grinned.

'Hello, Ken – you in for the competition too? I hope we all get some good fish.'

'My dad says we won't,' said Ken, who was a fisherman's son. 'He says the wind's not right today for fishing off the pier. He says we'll be lucky if we even get a good-sized mackerel! We'll only get tiddly little dabs.'

Well, it was great fun going in for the competition. Peter, John, Jean and Stella all chose good positions and let down their baited lines. They had no fishing-rods, but they considered lines were just as good.

The competition began at twelve. Not one of the twenty children had caught a fish by the time it was one o'clock. It was very disappointing.

They called a halt to their fishing while they gathered together and ate sandwiches and cake and

talked. Most of the children knew one another, and it was fun.

At two o'clock they all began fishing again. Ken got the first bite. He hauled up his line in glee. Then he gave a shout of disgust. 'A crab! Look at that! Back you go, crab, I don't want you.'

Back went the crab just as Peter gave a shout. He had felt something pulling at his bait. He hauled up the line but it was only a tiny little dab wriggling on the hook. That wouldn't win any prize at all.

It was rather a slow afternoon, because, as Ken's father had said, the wind was not right for fishing off the pier. One or two more dabs were caught, and a peculiar fish that nobody knew the name of. Two more crabs were caught and thrown back.

Then John caught a fish. He felt the sudden big tug at his line and sat up at once. 'I've got one!' he called in excitement. 'And a big one, too. My word, he's pulling!'

He hauled up his line. Everyone waited breathlessly

to see what fish would come swinging and wriggling out of the water.

'It's a cod! My word, quite a big one!' yelled John in delight.

'You'll win the prize!' called the children.

'It's a beauty!' said Ken. 'You are lucky!'

'Isn't he struggling hard?' said Jean. 'I hope the line doesn't break, John.'

It didn't – but just as John was carefully pulling the fish up to the pierside, something happened. The fish gave a sudden strong flap, and somehow or other got off the hook. It fell downwards to the sea with a splash, gave a flick of its tail, and disappeared.

Loud groans came from everyone. The pier-master, hearing all the excitement, came up.

'Hello – anyone caught a real fish at last?' he said.

'It got away,' said John, dolefully. 'It was very big, indeed, Mr Wills. As big as this!' And he stretched out his arms.

'My word, was it?' said Mr Wills. 'Well, well – it's

always the biggest ones that get away, you know. Better luck next time.'

'Bad luck, John,' said Ken. 'You really deserved the prize for that fish. In fact, I think you ought to get it, even though it got away. Nobody will catch a fish half that size!'

They all went on fishing. Ken caught a plaice, the biggest fish yet, though not half as big as the one that had got away. He put it proudly into his basket.

Then somebody caught a small cod, a codling, but it wasn't as big as Ken's plaice.

Ken suddenly gave a groan. 'Look at those gulls – they've settled on the water round the pier, and now they'll get the fish, not us. Blow them!'

The gulls bobbed up and down, and two or three of them dived in for fish. It really was annoying for the children, but, still, it was almost teatime now, and the competition was nearly over.

The pier-master came up again. 'Time!' he said. 'Put your fish into your baskets, please, and come

to the scales to weigh them. Anyone with tiny fish needn't bother – I can see one or two good plaice and a codling, anyway.'

'Oh, I do wish I'd caught that fish that got away,' said John, pulling in his line. 'Ah, look – here comes the steamer!'

The gulls all rose up into the air as the steamer approached, sounding its siren. One of the gulls flew over the pier. As it flew over, something fell from its beak right at John's feet, making him jump.

It was a large mackerel! John stared in amazement and then looked up at the gull, which had now flown off. What a lovely big fish! But could he put it in for the competition? He hadn't caught it.

The others crowded round. 'Yes, you put it in,' they said. 'You caught a much bigger one that got away. And anyway, the mackerel has been caught, and given to you by the gull. It's yours!'

'Yes – we'll let you give it in!' said Ken. They all liked John. 'You had a piece of bad luck – now you've

got some good luck!'

'No, I shan't put it in,' said John. 'It wouldn't be fair. But thanks all the same.' He went with the others to see the fish weighed. Ken's plaice was the heaviest. Then came the codling, and a large dab. The pier-master suddenly caught sight of John's mackerel.

'Here – wait a minute! There's another big fish here,' he said, and took it out of John's basket. He swung it on to the scales. 'Why, it's second best,' he said. 'You've won second prize, John!'

'No, I haven't really,' said John, and he told the pier-master the story of the gull and how it had dropped the mackerel at his feet.

Stella suddenly interrupted. 'John! John! Do you know, I believe it must have been that gull you saved yesterday – when you made that boy run – the one who was throwing stones! It must have been the very same gull!'

Well, everyone thought the same. 'How extraordinary,' said Ken. 'Well, you'll have to have

second prize, John – you deserve it.'

'No, thanks,' said John. 'I didn't catch the fish, as you all know very well.'

'Now, I'm the judge of this competition,' said the pier-master, 'and what I say goes. There shall be two second prizes, exactly the same – one for the mackerel, and one for the codling. I'll get another shrimping net. Is that all right, everyone?'

'YES!' yelled everybody, and John grinned in delight. The pier-master went to his store cupboard and brought out another net. 'Here you are, John,' he said. 'Share it with the gull, if you like – but we all think it's fair to give you a prize!'

Everyone cheered. John went off with Stella, Jean and Peter, glowing with pleasure. Overhead a gull soared, and the four children heard its laughing cry:

'EE-ew, EE-ew, EE-ew!'

'I bet that's our gull,' said Jean. 'He's glad you got the prize. And so am I.'

The children's mother said it couldn't have been

the same gull, it was just a bit of luck that one had let its fish fall near John. I don't know what to think. What do you think? Whatever anyone says, it seems right that the fish should have gone to John, doesn't it?

