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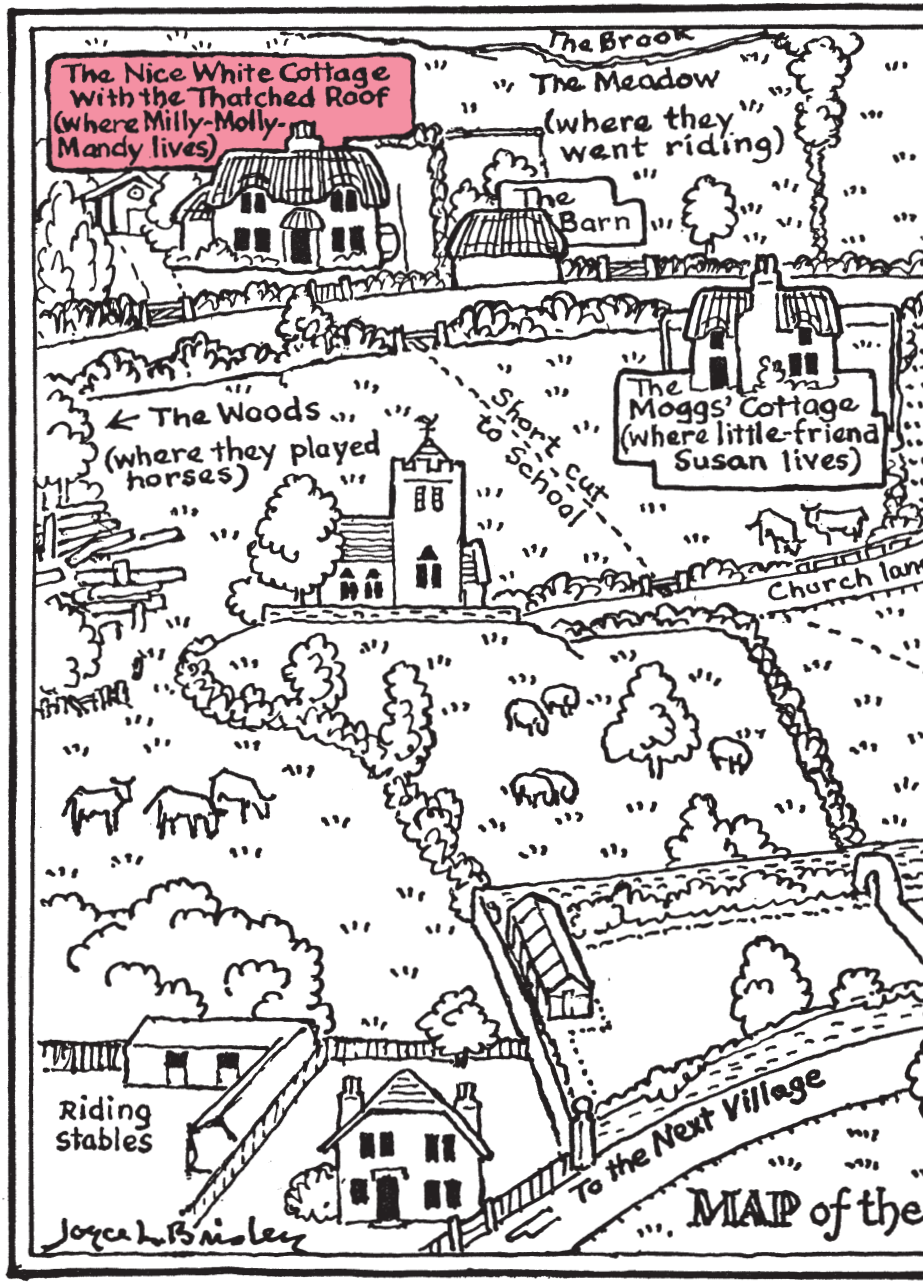
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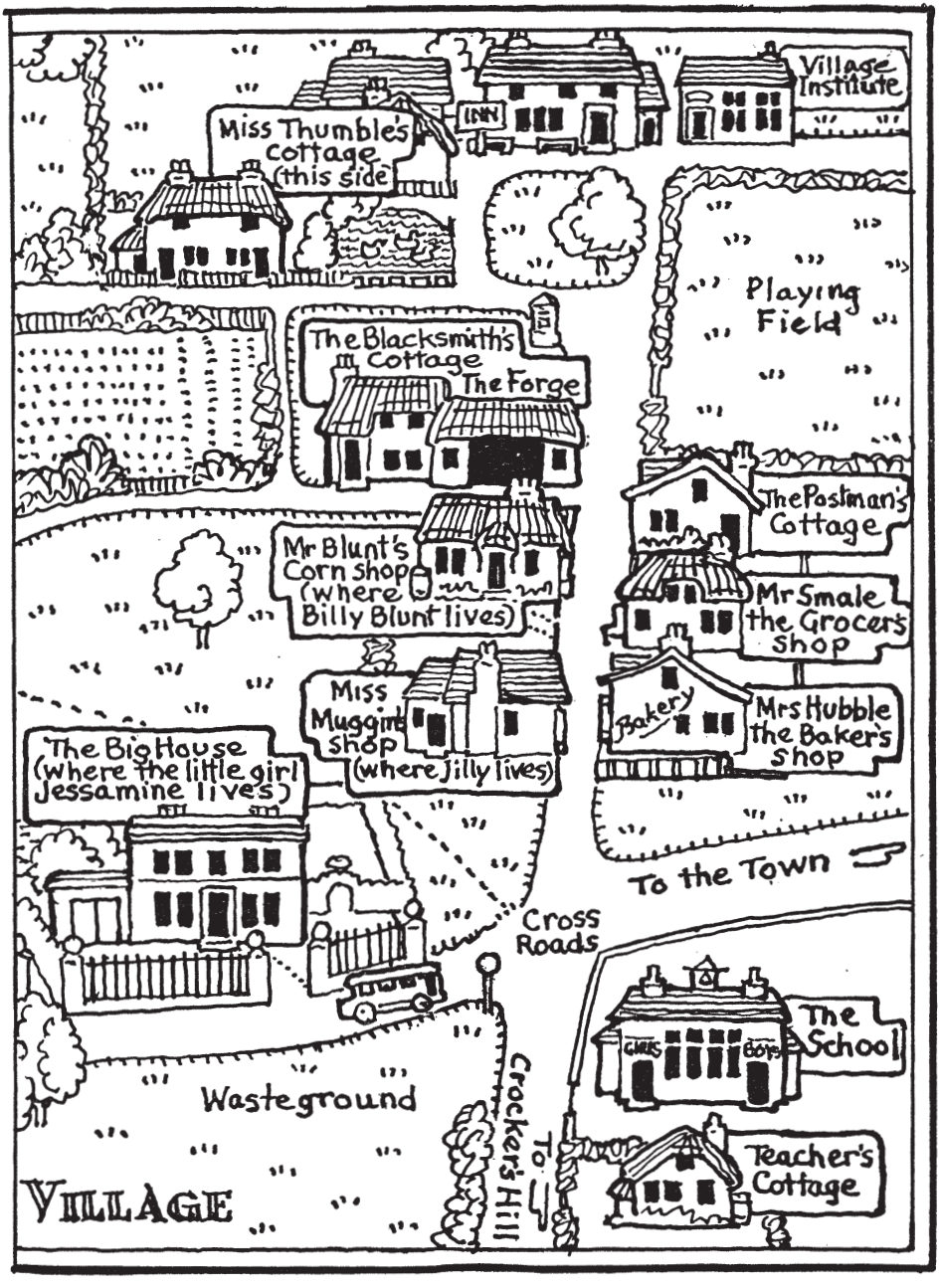
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The Nice White Cottage with the Thatched Roof (where Milly-Molly-Mandy lives)
The Brook
The Meadow (where they went riding)
The Barn
The Woods (where they played horses)
Short cut to School
The Moggs' Cottage (where little-friend Susan lives)
Church lane
Riding stables
To the Next Village
MAP of the
Joyce L. Brisley


Miss Thumble's cottage (this side)
INN
Village Institute
Playing Field
The Blacksmith's Cottage
The Forge
The Postman's Cottage
Mr Blunt's Corn Shop (where Billy Blunt lives)
Mr Smale the Grocer's Shop
Miss Muggins Shop (where Jilly lives)
Bakery
Mrs Hubble the Baker's Shop
The Big House (where the little girl Jessamine lives)
To the Town
Cross Roads
The School
GIRLS
BOYS
Wasteground
To Crocker's Hill
Teacher's Cottage
VILLAGE

1

Milly-Molly-Mandy Rides a Horse

Once upon a time Milly-Molly-Mandy was out playing at horses with little-friend-Susan and Billy Blunt.

There was a clearing in the woods near the nice white cottage with the thatched roof, where Milly-Molly-Mandy lived, and they had found some fallen branches and were galloping astride them along a mossy track.

Then Billy Blunt saw a low-growing branch of a tree which he climbed on, and sat bouncing up and down exactly like real horse-riding. Milly-Molly-Mandy and little-friend-Susan had to stop and watch him, till he let them each have a go.

Then he said firmly, "Now it's my turn." And he got on again and bounced solemnly up and down, while Milly-Molly-Mandy and little-friend-Susan pranced around on their sticks.

(Horse-riding is very good exercise!)

Presently what did they hear but a thud-thudding sound, like real horses' hoofs. And what did they see but five or six real horse-riders come riding along down the mossy track.



"Oh, look!" cried Milly-Molly-Mandy.

"Live horses!" cried little-friend-Susan.

"Mind yourselves!" called Billy Blunt, from his tree.

So they stood well to one side as the horses passed in single file, hoofs thudding, harnesses creaking, breaths snorting.

Milly-Molly-Mandy and little-friend-Susan and Billy Blunt hardly looked at the riders, till one small



"Oh, look!" cried Milly-Molly-Mandy

one in fawn knee-breeches turned her head and said, "Hullo!" to them.

It was the little girl Jessamine, who lived at the Big House with the iron railings near the cross-roads.

"Well!" said Milly-Molly-Mandy, as the party cantered out into the road towards the village; "fancy Jessamine having a real horse!"

"Isn't she lucky!" said little-friend-Susan.

"It's the riding school," said Billy Blunt. "She's learning riding."

Somehow, their pretend-horses didn't seem quite such fun now. Billy Blunt stopped bouncing and climbed down.

"I wish we'd got real horses to ride on," said Milly-Molly-Mandy.

"So do I," said little-friend-Susan.

Billy Blunt said, "Well, what about your old Twinkletoes?"

"He's Grandpa's pony," said Milly-Molly-Mandy. "He isn't meant for riding."

"He pulls their market-cart," said little-friend-Susan.

"But he is a horse," said Billy Blunt.

Milly-Molly-Mandy stood and thought.

"I don't believe they'd let us ride him," she said; "but we could *ask*, couldn't we?"

"Oh, *do*!" said little-friend-Susan.

"No harm asking," said Billy Blunt.

So they all ran down the road to the nice white cottage with the thatched roof, into the kitchen, where Mother was busy ironing shirts.

"Oh, Mother!" asked Milly-Molly-Mandy. "Please may we go horse-riding on Twinkletoes?"

"Well, now!" said Mother; "you'd better see what Father has to say!"

So they ran outside to the barn, where Father was busy sorting potatoes.

"Father!" asked Milly-Molly-Mandy. "Please may we go horse-riding on Twinkletoes?"

"Why, where do you want to go?" asked Father. "Land's End or John o'Groats?"

"Oh, no," said Milly-Molly-Mandy (she wasn't sure where either of those places were), "only just in the meadow, perhaps—"

"Well, now," said Father, "perhaps you'd better

see what Grandpa has to say!"

So they ran around to the stable, where Grandpa was busy mending a broken strap.

"Grandpa!" asked Milly-Molly-Mandy; "please may we go horse-riding on Twinkletoes?"

Grandpa didn't answer at once. Then he said slowly:

"Well, you know, he's not exactly used to folks sitting on him, is old Twinkletoes. But we might try!"

So Grandpa tried putting a bridle on Twinkletoes and strapping an old blanket across his back for a saddle. Then he stooped to lift Milly-Molly-Mandy up.

But Milly-Molly-Mandy said quickly, "Billy Blunt ought to have first go!" (Maybe she wanted to see if Twinkletoes would mind being ridden!)

So Grandpa held the bridle while Billy Blunt got on. And after a moment Twinkletoes clip-clopped slowly across the yard, with Billy Blunt sitting joggling on his back.

They all went into the meadow, and Grandpa stood by the gate, watching. It was very exciting!

"Does it feel nice?" Milly-Molly-Mandy called up to Billy Blunt.

"It looks lovely!" called little-friend-Susan.

"Not bad," returned Billy Blunt. (He was really enjoying it like anything!) "Look out you don't get under his feet!"

They went right across the meadow, and Twinkletoes didn't seem to mind a bit. When they got back to the gate again Billy Blunt slid down, and then Grandpa helped little-friend-Susan up. (Milly-Molly-Mandy had to keep jumping because it was so exciting and so hard to wait her turn! – but of course visitors should have first go.)

Little-friend-Susan only wished that old Twinkletoes wouldn't keep stopping to nibble the grass!

At last Milly-Molly-Mandy's turn came.

She was lifted on to the pony's broad back (it felt awfully high!) and off he went, with Milly-Molly-Mandy holding tight to his mane.

It was terribly thrilling! But soon she was able to sit up and look about a bit. It felt rather like being on a rocking-chair, as Twinkletoes ambled slowly



along with his head drooping, while little-friend-Susan picked daisies and Billy Blunt romped with Toby the dog.

Suddenly – what *do* you think? – Twinkletoes seemed to stumble on a rough bit of ground. And next moment Milly-Molly-Mandy slid sprawling over his head down into the long grass!

The others all came running to help her up, Toby the dog barking at poor Twinkletoes, who stood

shaking his head in a puzzled sort of way.

"You let his head hang down, didn't you?" said Grandpa; "and he kind of went to sleep! You want to let him feel the reins, only don't pull on them. You'll learn. Up with you, now!"

But Milly-Molly-Mandy wasn't sure she wanted any more riding just at present. "It's Billy's turn again," she said.

But Billy Blunt said, "No! You should always get on at once if you fall off a horse. Go on, get on."

So then Milly-Molly-Mandy got on. And Twinkletoes trotted with her so nicely round the meadow that they all forgot about the tumble.

"Can we have some more rides soon?" asked Milly-Molly-Mandy, as she got down and they all stood patting Twinkletoes.

Grandpa said, Yes, another day, when he had had time to see about some stirrups.

Milly-Molly-Mandy and Billy Blunt and little-friend-Susan were glad to think they had a real horse to ride on now, like the little girl Jessamine!