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Michael Morpurgo & Quentin Blake

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Humpty Dumpty

From *Through the Looking-Glass*

Written by LEWIS CARROLL
Illustrated by NICOLA BAYLEY

In this sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice finds herself in a world where her favourite nursery rhymes are come to life – Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the Walrus and the Carpenter, and of course good old Humpty Dumpty! Alice discovers she is a pawn in a gigantic game of chess. Everything in the story is about games and mirrors and tricks of the light. Nothing is what it seems.

Through the Looking-Glass was written more than a hundred years ago but is just as brilliant today as ever it was. Best of all is Humpty Dumpty's invention of the un-birthday present, to celebrate all those days in the year that are not our birthday! When I was little, my mother did this on extra-special occasions. After I grew up and had children of my own, I did the same . . . So, thank you, Humpty Dumpty, and thank you, Alice!

Kate Mosse

Humpty Dumpty



'This conversation is going on a little too fast: let's go back to the last remark but one.'

'I'm afraid I can't quite remember it,' Alice said very politely.

'In that case we may start fresh,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'and it's my turn to choose a subject—' ('He talks about it just as if it was a game!' thought Alice.) 'So here's a question for you. How old did you say you were?'

Alice made a short calculation, and said 'Seven years and six months.'

'Wrong!' Humpty Dumpty exclaimed triumphantly. 'You never said a word like it.'

'I thought you meant "How old *are* you?"' Alice explained.

'If I'd meant that, I'd have said it,' said Humpty Dumpty.

Alice didn't want to begin another argument, so she said nothing.

'Seven years and six months!' Humpty Dumpty repeated thoughtfully. 'An uncomfortable sort of age. Now if you'd asked *my* advice, I'd have said "Leave off at seven" – but it's too late now.'

'I never ask advice about growing,' Alice said indignantly.

'Too proud?' the other enquired.

Alice felt even more indignant at this suggestion. 'I mean,' she said, 'that one ca'n't help growing older.'

'*One* ca'n't, perhaps,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'but *two* can. With proper assistance, you might have left off at seven.'

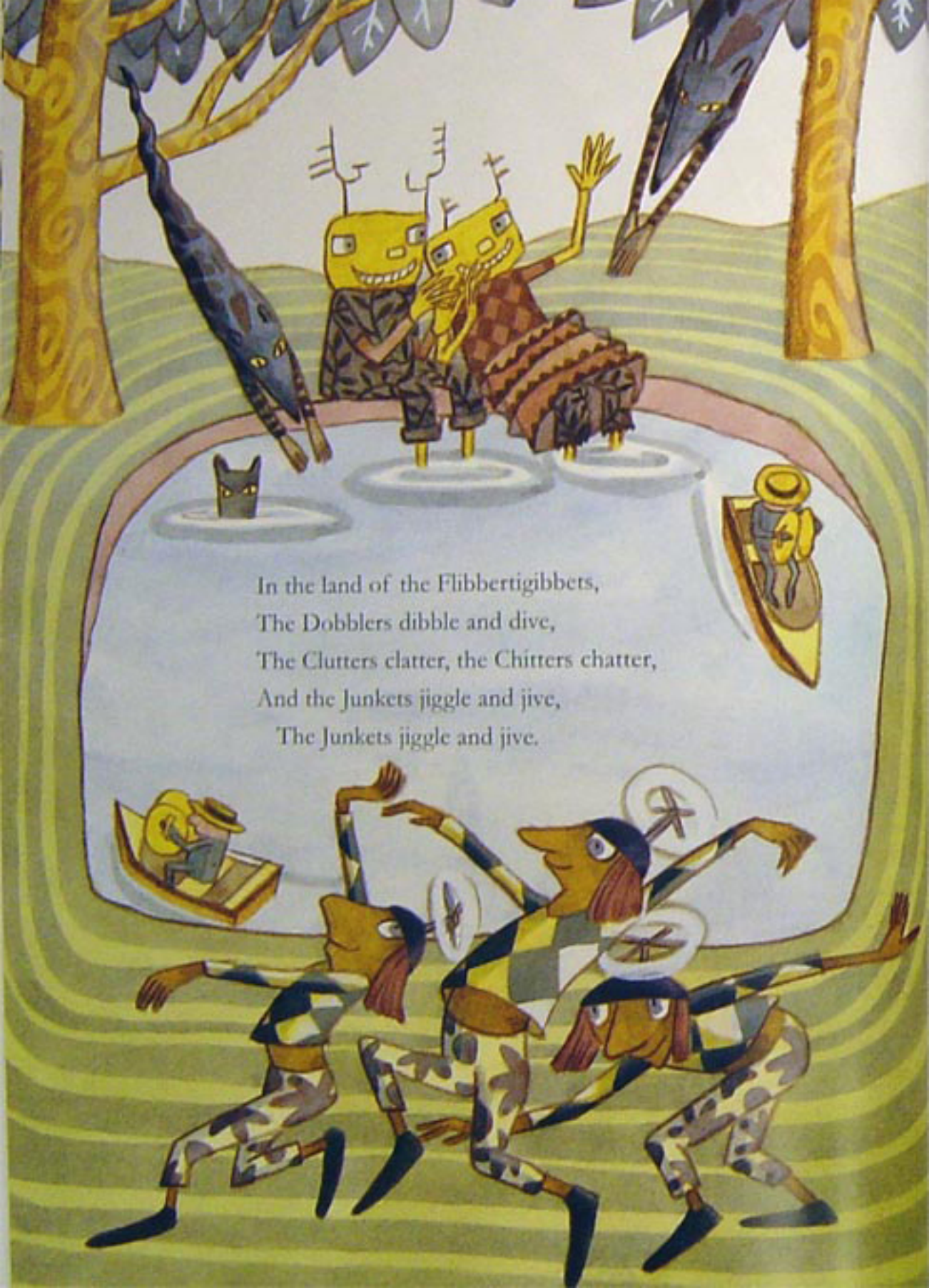
'What a beautiful belt you've got on!' Alice suddenly remarked. (They had had quite enough of the subject of age, she thought: and if they were really to take turns in choosing subjects, it was her turn



In the Land of the Flibbertigibbets

In the land of the Flibbertigibbets,
The Curlybirds whirl and whiz,
The Googlies giggle, the Rampoons wriggle
And the Furzles flitter and fizz,
The Furzles flitter and fizz.

In the land of the Flibbertigibbets,
The Humdrums simper and sing,
The Bamboozles bump, the Jamborees jump
And the Plimpets zip and ping,
The Plimpets zip and ping.



In the land of the Flibbertigibbets,
The Dobblers dibble and dive,
The Clutters clatter, the Chitters chatter,
And the Junkets jiggle and jive,
The Junkets jiggle and jive.

Young Again

From *Peter Pan in Scarlet*

Written by GERALDINE MCCAUGHREAN
Illustrated by MICHAEL FOREMAN

I have chosen this extract from *Peter Pan in Scarlet* (the sequel to J. M. Barrie's famous adventures of the boy-who-never-grows-up) to point out that birthdays are not *everybody's* idea of a good thing. Mr Barrie hated them. He believed that each passing year brought closer the dreadful fate of becoming a Grown-Up. That is why there are no birthdays allowed in Neverland.

Peter Pan has no intention of ever growing up – that is why he ran away from home in the first place. If they are to visit him, the Darlings and the Lost Boys (who have grown up into highly respectable adults) must shed twenty birthdays and become young again – as young as their own children.

Geraldine McCaughrean



Young Again

They watched the days go by like trains. Then suddenly the sixth of June arrived, and it was time to climb aboard it and set off for Neverland. Fireflyer had told them how it could be done. A change of clothes was called for.

All over London and as far afield as Fotheringdene and Grimswater, Old Boys got down old suitcases from their attics and took out all the courage they owned. They went to their banks and withdrew all the daring they had saved up over the years. They checked in all the pockets of all their suits and felt down the back of the sofa to muster all the bravery they could.

And still it did not seem quite enough.

They bought flowers for their wives, toys for their children, and washed the windows for their neighbours. They applied for leave from work. They wrote letters to their nearest and dearest but tore them up again, because GOODBYE is much the hardest word to spell.

Bath-time came at First Twin's house and while his twin sons were

splashing, he slyly picked up some of their clothes from the bathroom floor and stole out into the night.

Time for prayers came in the house next door, and Second Twin told his identical twin sons, 'Hands together; eyes closed' – then pinched a school uniform and sneaked away on tiptoe.

At the Doctor's house in Fotheringdene, Curly reached out to steal his child's rugby kit . . . but the new puppy beat him to it, grabbing the collar and hanging on grimly. The animal growled and whined, and its claws scraped loudly on the polished floor. The child roused up – '*Who's there?*' – so there was nothing Curly could do but pick up both shirt and puppy and run.

Storytime came in Mr John's house, and Mr John read his little ones to sleep, took one last look, then crept to the door holding a stolen sailor suit. On the landing, he gave a guilty start, for there stood Mrs John. She knew, of course. Mr John had not breathed a word about the Journey, but she knew anyway. Wives do. Now she presented him with a packed lunch, a clean pair of socks, and a toothbrush. She even ironed the sailor suit before he put it on. 'Take care, my love,' she said, kissed him fondly, and led him to the front door. 'Do give my warmest regards to Peter Pan.'

Judge Tootles realized, rather late in the day, that he only had daughters. The thought quite unmanned him. His fingers strayed to his large moustache and he stroked it like some dear pet that he must leave behind because of moving house.

Nibs . . . well, Mr Nibs simply could not do it. Standing beside the bunks in the back bedroom, watching the sleeping faces of his little ones, he simply could not imagine going anywhere without them –