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Opening extract from

Rupert - A Collection of Favourite Stories

Written by

Alfred Bestall

Published by

Egmont Books Ltd

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Sketchbook

These previously unpublished sketches by Alfred Bestall have rarely been seen by anyone outside the Bestall family. Egmont would like to thank John Beck, Secretary of the Followers of Rupert, for his assistance in trying to date these early illustrations.



Rupert Flying a Kite
Illustrated circa 1950.



Rupert Swinging on a Tree
A possible sketch for the 1953 annual that featured the Green Buzzer and Miranda. The back cover sketch bears a striking resemblance to the published version.



Rupert and the Cooking Pot
A possible cover sketch for the 1950 annual that featured the Gooseberry Fool. The character never reappeared in future annuals.

RUPERT

IN MORE ADVENTURES

RUPERT and the TINY FLUTE

How Rupert's discovery of the Flute stopped the Imps doing their work.



As Rupert gathers flowers one day,
He is surprised to see them sway.

Spring has arrived and the meadows are ablaze with flowers. At one point Rupert notices some tall plants waving. At first he takes no notice. Then all at once he stares intently. "That's very odd," he murmurs. "There's not a breath of wind. What can be making those plants move?"

He pushes through the grass to see what was making the plant wave about. He sees a hole in the ground nearby. "I suppose it was only a rabbit," he mutters. As he moves away he sees a slender stick lying at his feet which he examines closely in growing astonishment.



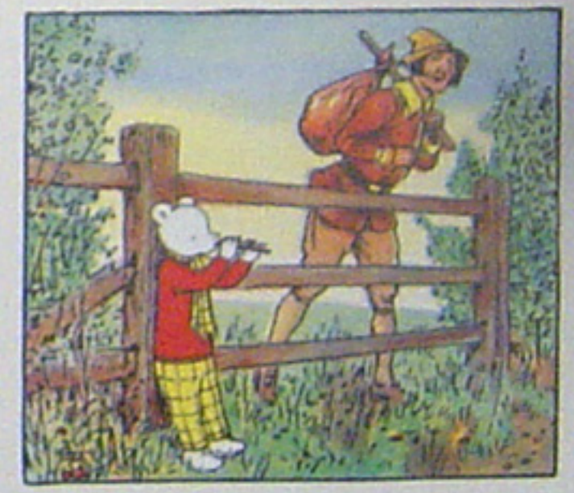
He finds a hole and then, nearby
A tiny stick catches his eye.



He shows the hedgehog his new prize.
"I wouldn't touch that!" Horace cries.

The little stick is hollow and has several neat holes in it. Wandering away, he comes across his friend Horace, the hedgehog, and shows him the whistle. Horace only gives a queer chuckle. "Never mind who it belongs to," he says. "You take my advice and leave the thing alone."

Rupert can get no further explanation out of Horace, and in another moment the hedgehog has disappeared. Leaning back against a post, he tries to play the thing, but he can't produce a sound. As he pauses he hears a laugh close behind him.



Though Rupert blows, he gets no sound;
A laugh behind makes him look round.