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Opening extract from

# The O' Clock Tales

Written by

## Enid Blyton

Published by

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# The O'Clock Tales





Enid Blyton®

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# The Red and White Cow

Peter was most excited because his father and mother had moved into the country from the town. How different it was! There were green lanes instead of busy streets, big trees instead of tall chimneys, and *such* a lot of animals and birds to see.

'There are thirty-two sheep in the fields and six little lambs!' said Peter to his mother. 'And there are eleven horses at the farm, and I saw two goats this morning and about twelve ducks. I couldn't count them properly because they wouldn't stay still. The hens won't stay still either.'

'What about the cows?' said his mother. 'Have you counted those?'

'I don't like the cows,' said Peter. 'They have big horns and they roar at me.'

'Oh, no,' said his mother. '*Lions* roar. Cows only moo.'

'Well, it sounds just like roaring to me,' said Peter. 'I don't like the cows at all. They are my enemies.'

'They are very good friends!' said Mother. 'They send you a lot of presents.'

'*I've* never seen a present from a cow!' said Peter.

'Well, here is one,' said Mother, and she took down a jug of milk. She poured it out into a mug and gave it to Peter. He drank it.

'So that came from the cow, did it?' he said. 'Well, it was simply lovely!'

At dinner-time Mother put down a dish of stewed apples for Peter. He looked round for the custard that Mother usually made for him. There wasn't any.

'The cow has sent you this present instead!' said Mother – and she gave him a dear little jug full of thick cream. How delicious it was! Peter poured it all over his apples. They tasted much nicer than usual.

'So that came from the cow, too!' said the little boy. 'Well, it must be a very kind animal!'

At tea-time Mother put the loaf of bread on the table. Peter was surprised. Usually there were slices of bread and butter.

Mother put down a blue dish on which there were little rolls of new-made yellow butter.

'A present from the cow again!' she said, and laughed, 'You can spread your present yourself on slices of bread for a treat!'

'Goodness me!' said Peter. 'What a nice friendly creature the cow is! I won't hate it any more or be frightened of it.'

'I should think not!' said Mother. 'Look, Peter – the cow has sent *me* a present too!'

Mother lifted up the lid of the cheese-dish, and underneath Peter saw a big lump of orange-coloured cheese. Mother cut herself a piece, and said it was delicious.

'I shall go and stand on the gate that leads to the cow field and say thank you to the cows!' said Peter. 'I didn't know they were so kind!'

And now he isn't a bit afraid of them, and he likes them very much. He says they are his friends, not his enemies. What do *you* say?

# The Clock in the Wood

Once upon a time three children went out to have a picnic. They were Bob, Mollie, and Eileen. They had a basket full of nice things to eat and a ball to play with. They waved goodbye to their mother and set off to Bluebell Wood.

'Please start back at five o'clock,' she called to them. 'Uncle Jim will be here then and he will want to see you.'

'Yes, Mother,' called back the children. 'We've got our watches!'

They soon came to Bluebell Wood. It was a lovely place. There were still some bluebells shining here and there like pools of blue water. The birds were singing in the trees, and the sunshine slanted through the green branches and made freckles of light on the grass below.

'Let's play hide-and-seek!' said Bob. 'We'll put the basket of tea things under this tree while we play. I'll hide my eyes first.'

When the others called 'Cuckoo', Bob ran to find them. He found Mollie – but as he ran after her he caught his foot in a tree-root and over he went! He didn't hurt himself, but, oh, dear, he broke the glass of his watch!

'Look!' he said. 'My watch is broken! Isn't it a pity! Is yours all right, Mollie? We must know the time to go home.'

'Yes, mine's all right,' said Mollie. 'Never mind, Bob – we'll soon get yours mended!'

'What's the time, Mollie?' asked Eileen. 'Is it time for tea yet?'

'It's four o'clock,' said Mollie. 'Yes – we'd better have tea.' So they fetched their basket and handed out the good things – tomato sandwiches, chocolate cake, and an apple each to eat. What a fine tea! There was nothing left at all except three paper bags and the milk bottle and cup when the children had finished!

'Let's have a game of catch now!' said Bob. So they began. It was great fun and they played for a long time. Then Bob wondered what the time was. He didn't want to miss seeing Uncle Jim! He looked at his watch. Oh, dear – it was broken! He had forgotten that. So he called to Mollie.

'Mollie, what's the time?' Mollie looked at her watch.

'Four o'clock!' she cried.

'But it can't be!' said Bob, surprised. 'You said it was four o'clock just before we had tea! Look again!'

Mollie looked – and then she held her watch up to her ear. 'Oh!' she cried in dismay. 'It's stopped. Now what shall we do? Eileen hasn't a watch! We can't tell the time!'

'I can!' said Eileen, suddenly. She ran to where a big dandelion plant grew and picked a big fluffy dandelion clock. She blew it hard. Puff! She blew again. Puff! Still there was some white fluff left. She blew again. Puff! That was 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock, 3 o'clock – puff, 4 o'clock, puff, 5 o'clock!

'It's five o'clock!' cried Eileen. 'I've puffed all the fluff off. The dandelion clock says it's five o'clock – time to go home!'

'Come on then!' cried the others, and off they all went. Mother was so pleased to see them in such good time, for Uncle Jim had just come.

'It wasn't our watches that told us the right time!' said Eileen. 'It was the little clock in the wood, Uncle Jim!'

# The Peppermint Rock

Mollie and John were very pleased because their Uncle Bob had given them a long stick of pink peppermint rock between them. He had been to the seaside for a day and had brought it back with him. It had 'Southsea' all through the middle of the rock in pink letters. Mollie did wonder how the name was put there.

'We'll break it in half,' she said to John. So she broke it – but one piece was bigger than the other.

'I want the big piece!' said John, and he snatched at it. But Mollie wouldn't let him have it. 'No,' she said, 'I'm the oldest of the family – *I* ought to have it.'

'Selfish thing!' said John and he smacked Mollie, which was stupid, because she at once smacked him back.

'Hello, hello, what's all this?' suddenly said a voice behind them. The two children turned

and saw the butcher's boy. They did not like him very much, for he was rough and rude. But John told him what they were quarrelling about.

'It isn't fair, Harry,' he said. 'Look, Mollie has broken the rock into two – and she won't give me the bigger piece. Say *I* ought to have it!'

'I'll settle your quarrel for you,' said Harry. 'Give me the rock and let me measure the pieces.'

Mollie gave him the rock. The butcher boy measured them side by side, saw that one was a whole inch bigger than the other and bit off a large piece of the longer one! But he bit off too much, because when he measured the two pieces again, the piece he had bitten was now smaller than the other.

'Huh! I'll soon put *that* right!' said Harry, and he bit a large piece off the longer stick. Mollie and John stared in dismay.

'Don't do that,' begged Mollie. 'Give us the two pieces back. We won't quarrel any more.'

'Wait!' said Harry. 'I haven't got them right yet. One is still longer than the other. If I give you the pieces back like this you will squabble again! Another bite may set things right.'

He took another large bite, measured the

sticks, and, of course, found one still longer than the other. So he bit again, crunching with enjoyment. And now, alas! there were only two very small pieces of rock left, and the children were almost in tears.

'Give us those little bits,' said Mollie. 'You have no right to eat all our rock like that.'

'Oh, indeed!' said Harry. 'And what about my trouble in trying to settle your stupid quarrel for you? What reward do I get for that? Aren't you going to give me anything for trying to put things right?'

'We've nothing to give you,' said John.

'Well, if you think a big boy like me, who earns his own living, is going to settle your quarrels for nothing, you're mistaken!' said Harry. 'I'll take my own payment – the rest of this peppermint rock. Goodbye!'

And with that he crammed the rest of the rock into his mouth and went off grinning. The two children watched him go, with tears in their eyes.

'It's our own fault, John,' said Mollie. 'If one of us had been unselfish enough to take the smaller piece, we wouldn't have lost the lot!'