

The need for Drama

The Child and the Toad

There was once a small child. Every day at noon the mother gave the child a little bowl of bread and milk. The child sat down with it out on the doorstep in the yard. And when it began to eat a toad jumped out of a crack in the wall and dipped its little head in the milk and ate with it. This made the child laugh with joy. Some days if the child sat down with its little bowl and the toad did not come straightaway the child called to it:

Toad, toad hurry quick
Come here you little thing
You must have your bread and milk
A feast that's fit for a king

Then the toad would come leaping and join in the meal with relish. To show her thanks the toad brought the child all sorts of beautiful things from her secret treasure: shining stones, pearls and golden playthings. But the toad only drank the milk and did not touch the sops of bread. Then one day the child gently tapped it on the head and said: "Little thing eat the bread too." The mother was standing in the kitchen and heard the child speak to someone. She looked out and saw the child hit a toad on the head with its little spoon. She ran into the yard with a log of wood and killed the poor creature.

From then on the child changed. While the toad had shared its meal the child had grown big and strong. Now its beautiful red cheeks faded and its limbs shrank and grew thin. Soon the screech owl was heard in the night and the robin gathered twigs and leaves for a wreath. And before long the child was lowered into its grave.

Translated from its original German by Elisabeth Bond as a gift for Big Brum on the Company's 25th birthday.