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Raggedy Ann And The Painter

Johnny Gruelle

When housecleaning time came around, Mistress' mamma decided that she would have the nursery repainted and new paper put upon the walls. That was why all the dolls happened to be laid helter-skelter upon one of the high shelves.

Mistress had been in to look at them and wished to put them to bed, but as the painters were coming again in the early morning, Mamma thought it best that their beds be piled in the closet.



So the dolls' beds were piled into the closet, one on top of another and the dolls were placed upon the high shelf.

When all was quiet that night, Raggedy Ann who was on the bottom of the pile of dolls spoke softly and asked the others if they would mind moving along the shelf.

"The cotton in my body is getting mashed as flat as a pancake!" said Raggedy Ann. And although the tin soldier was piled so that his foot was pressed into Raggedy's face, she still wore her customary smile.

So the dolls began moving off to one side until Raggedy Ann was free to sit up.

"Ah, that's a great deal better!" she said, stretching her arms and legs to get the kinks out of them, and patting her dress into shape.



"Well, I'll be glad when morning comes!" she said finally, "for I know Mistress will take us out in the yard and play with us under the trees."

So the dolls sat and talked until daylight, when the painters came to work.

One of the painters, a young fellow, seeing the dolls, reached up and took Raggedy Ann down from the shelf.

"Look at this rag doll, Jim," he said to one of the other painters, "She's a daisy," and he took Raggedy Ann by the hands and danced with her while he whistled a lively tune. Raggedy Ann's heels hit the floor thumpity-thump and she enjoyed it

immensely.

The other dolls sat upon the shelf and looked straight before them, for it would never do to let grown-up men know that dolls were really alive.

"Better put her back upon the shelf," said one of the other men. "You'll have the little girl after you! The chances are that she likes that old rag doll better than any of the others!"

But the young painter twisted Raggedy Ann into funny attitudes and laughed and laughed as she looped about. Finally he got to tossing her up in the air and catching her. This was great fun for Raggedy and as she sailed up by the shelf the dolls all smiled at her, for it pleased them whenever Raggedy Ann was happy.

But the young fellow threw Raggedy Ann up into the air once too often and when she came down he failed to catch her and she came down splash, head first into a bucket of oily paint.

"I told you!" said the older painter, "and now you are in for it!"

"My goodness! I didn't mean to do it!" said the young fellow, "What had I better do with her?"

"Better put her back on the shelf!" replied the other.



So Raggedy was placed back upon the shelf and the paint ran from her head and trickled down upon her dress.

After breakfast, Mistress came into the nursery and saw Raggedy all covered with paint and she began crying. The young painter felt sorry and told her how it had happened.

"If you will let me," he said, "I will take her home with me and will clean her up tonight and will bring her back day after tomorrow."

So Raggedy was wrapped in a newspaper that evening and carried away. All the dolls felt sad that night without Raggedy Ann near them.

"Poor Raggedy! I could have cried when I saw her all covered with paint!" said the French doll.

"She didn't look like our dear old Raggedy Ann at all!" said the tin soldier, who wiped the tears from his eyes so that they would not run down on his arms and rust them.

"The paint covered her lovely smile and nose and you could not see the laughter in her shoe-button eyes!" said the Indian doll.

And so the dolls talked that night and the next. But in the daytime when the painters were there, they kept very quiet.

The second day Raggedy was brought home and the dolls were all anxious for night to come so that they could see and talk with Raggedy Ann. At last the painters left and the house was quiet, for Mistress had been in and placed Raggedy on the shelf with the other dolls.

"Tell us all about it, Raggedy dear!" the dolls cried.



"Oh I am so glad I fell in the paint!" cried Raggedy, after she had hugged all the dolls, "For I have had the happiest time. The painter took me home and told his Mamma how I happened to be covered with paint and she was very sorry. She took a rag and wiped off my shoe-button eyes and then I saw that she was a very pretty, sweet-faced lady and she got some cleaner and wiped off most of the paint on my face.

"But you know," Raggedy continued, "the paint had soaked through my rag head and had made the cotton inside all sticky and soggy and I could not think clearly. And my yarn hair was all matted with paint.

"So the kind lady took off my yarn hair and cut the stitches out of my head, and took out all the painty cotton.



"It was a great relief, although it felt queer at first and my thoughts seemed scattered.

"She left me in her work-basket that night and hung me out upon the clothes-line the next morning when she had washed the last of the paint off.

"And while I hung out on the clothes-line, what do you think?"

"We could never guess!" all the dolls cried.

"Why a dear little Jenny Wren came and picked enough cotton out of me to make a cute little cuddly nest in the grape arbor!"

"Wasn't that sweet!" cried all the dolls.

"Yes indeed it was!" replied Raggedy Ann, "It made me very happy. Then when the lady took me in the house again she stuffed me with lovely nice new cotton, all the way from my knees up and sewed me up and put new yarn on my head for hair and—and—and it's a secret!" said Raggedy Ann.

"Oh tell us the secret!" cried all the dolls, as they pressed closer to Raggedy. "Well, I know you will not tell anyone who would not be glad to know about it, so I will tell you the secret and why I am wearing my smile a trifle broader!" said Raggedy Ann.

The dolls all said that Raggedy Ann's smile was indeed a quarter of an inch wider on each side.

"When the dear lady put the new white cotton in my body," said Raggedy Ann "she went to the cupboard and came back with a paper bag. And she took from the bag ten or fifteen little candy hearts with mottos on them and she hunted through the candy hearts until she found a beautiful red one which she sewed up in me with the cotton! So that is the secret, and that is why I am so happy! Feel here," said Raggedy Ann. All the dolls could feel Raggedy Ann's beautiful new candy heart and they were very happy for her.

After all had hugged each other good night and had cuddled up for the night, the tin soldier asked, "Did you have a chance to see what the motto on your new candy heart was, Raggedy Ann?"

"Oh yes," replied Raggedy Ann, "I was so happy I forgot to tell you. It had printed upon it in nice blue letters, 'I LOVE YOU.'"



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