

The Second Miracle

Matilda did not join the rush to get out of the classroom. After the other children had all disappeared, she remained at her desk, quiet and thoughtful. She knew she had to tell somebody about what had happened with the glass. She couldn't possibly keep a gigantic secret like that bottled up inside her. What she needed was just one person, one wise and sympathetic grown-up who could help her to understand the meaning of this extraordinary happening.

Neither her mother nor her father would be of any use at all. If they believed her story, and it was doubtful they would, they almost certainly would fail to realise what an astounding event it was that had taken place in the classroom that afternoon. On the spur of the moment, Matilda decided that the one person she would like to confide in was Miss Honey.

Matilda and Miss Honey were now the only two left in the class-room. Miss Honey had seated herself at her table and was riffling through some papers. She looked up and said, "Well, Matilda, aren't you going outside with the others?"

Matilda said, "Please may I talk to you for a moment?"

"Of course you may. What's troubling you?"

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"Something very peculiar has happened to me, Miss Honey."

Miss Honey became instantly alert. Ever since the two disastrous meetings she had had recently about Matilda, the first with the Headmistress and the second with the dreadful Mr and Mrs Wormwood, Miss Honey had been thinking a great deal about this child and wondering how she could help her. And now, here was Matilda sitting in the classroom with a curiously exalted look on her face and asking if she could have a private talk. Miss Honey had never seen her looking so wide-eyed and peculiar before.

"Yes, Matilda," she said. "Tell me what has happened to you that is so peculiar."

"Miss Trunchbull isn't going to expel me, is she?" Matilda asked. "Because it wasn't me who put that creature in her jug of water. I promise you it wasn't."

"I know it wasn't," Miss Honey said.

"Am I going to be expelled?"

"I think not," Miss Honey said. "The Headmistress simply got a little over-excited, that's all."

"Good," Matilda said. "But that isn't what I want to talk to you about."

"What do you want to talk to me about, Matilda?"

"I want to talk to you about the glass of water with the creature in it," Matilda said. "You saw it spilling all over Miss Trunchbull, didn't you?"

"I did indeed."

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"Well, Miss Honey, I didn't touch it. I never went near it."

"I know you didn't," Miss Honey said. "You heard me telling the Headmistress that it couldn't possibly have been you."

"Ah, but it was me, Miss Honey," Matilda said. "That's exactly what I want to talk to you about."

Miss Honey paused and looked carefully at the child. "I don't think I quite follow you," she said.

"I got so angry at being accused of something I hadn't done that I made it happen."

"You made what happen, Matilda?"

"I made the glass tip over."

"I still don't quite understand what you mean," Miss Honey said gently.

"I did it with my eyes," Matilda said. "I was staring at it and wishing it to tip and then my eyes went all hot and funny and some sort of power came out of them and the glass just toppled over."

Miss Honey continued to look steadily at Matilda through her steel-rimmed spectacles and Matilda looked back at her just as steadily.

"I am still not following you," Miss Honey said. "Do you mean you actually willed the glass to tip over?"

"Yes," Matilda said. "With my eyes."

Miss Honey was silent for a moment. She did not think Matilda was meaning to tell a lie. It was more likely that she was simply allowing her vivid imagination to run away with her. "You mean you were sitting where you are now and you told the glass to topple over and it did?"



"Something like that, Miss Honey, yes."

"If you did that, then it is just about the greatest miracle a person has ever performed since the time of Jesus."

"I did it, Miss Honey."

It is extraordinary, thought Miss Honey, how often small children have flights of fancy like this. She decided to put an end to it as gently as possible.

"Could you do it again?" she asked, not unkindly. "I don't know," Matilda said, "but I think I might be able to."

Miss Honey moved the now empty glass to the middle of the table. "Should I put water in it?" she asked, smiling a little.

"I don't think it matters," Matilda said.

"Very well, then. Go ahead and tip it over."

"It may take some time."

"Take all the time you want," Miss Honey said.

"I'm in no hurry."



Matilda, sitting in the second row about ten feet away from Miss Honey, put her elbows on the desk and cupped her face in her hands, and this time she gave the order right at the beginning. "Tip glass, tip!" she ordered, but her lips didn't move and she made no sound. She simply shouted the words inside her head. And now she concentrated the whole of her mind and her brain and her will up into her eyes and once again but much more quickly than before she felt the electricity gathering and the power was beginning to surge and the hotness was coming into the eyeballs, and then the millions of tiny invisible arms with hands on them were shooting out towards the glass, and without making any sound at all she kept on shouting inside her head for the glass to go over. She saw it wobble, then it tilted, then it toppled right over and fell with a tinkle on to the table-top not twelve inches from Miss Honey's folded arms.

Miss Honey's mouth dropped open and her eyes stretched so wide you could see the whites all round. She didn't say a word. She couldn't. The shock of seeing the miracle performed had struck her dumb. She gaped at the glass, leaning well away from it now as though it might be a dangerous thing. Then slowly she lifted her head and looked at Matilda. She saw the child white in the face, as white as paper, trembling all over, the eyes glazed, staring straight ahead and seeing nothing. The whole face was transfigured, the eyes round and bright and she was sitting there speechless, quite beautiful in a blaze of silence.

Miss Honey waited, trembling a little herself and watching the child as she slowly stirred herself back into consciousness. And then suddenly, *click* went her face into a look of almost seraphic calm. "I'm all right," she said and smiled. "I'm quite all right, Miss Honey, so don't be alarmed."

