

## Little Petsy.

BY LADY BELL

CHARACTERS.

MRS. SIMONDS.

MRS. ROBERTS.

PETSY.

MRS. ROBERTS *discovered, in walking things.*

MRS. R.--I wish Mrs. Simonds would appear! It is so rude to keep people waiting in this way when they come to see you. (*Looks at books, etc.*) Well, I wonder how much longer she's going to be. I would not have come if I had not wanted to explain to her about that bazaar we are getting up.

*Enter PETSY with toys.*

Ah, how do you do, darling? How are you? Will you shake hands? (*PETSY turns away.*) You don't know my name, do you?

P.--I do, then.

MRS. R.--You do? Who am I?

P.--You're Mrs. Roberts. I know it, because the maid came and told Mamma so, and then Mamma said, "Mrs. Roberts, bother!" and she told me to come and say she would be here in a minute.

MRS. R.--(*Aside.*) Delightful child, this. (*Aloud.*) Then as you know my name, won't you shake hands?

P.--Shan't.

*(Makes a face at MRS. R., and turns her back to her.)*

*Enter* MRS. SIMONDS.

MRS. S.--Ah, my dear Mrs. Roberts, I am so glad to see you.

MRS. R.--*(Aside.)* So I understand!

*(They shake hands.)*

MRS. S.--I am so sorry to have kept you waiting. I was just taking off my things.

*(Draws forward chair for MRS. R., they sit.)*

MRS. R.--Oh, not at all. I've not been here very long.

MRS. S.--I sent down my little Petsy to amuse you.

MRS. R.--Oh, thank you, yes, she came.

MRS. S.--It is impossible to feel dull where she is. Such an original child, so full of life!

MRS. R.--Oh, indeed! I came to see you, Mrs. Simonds, about the charity bazaar at Wandsworth.

MRS. S.--The bazaar, yes.

P.--*(Loud.)* Ma! Ma! How long is she going to stay?

MRS. S.--*(Smiling.)* Oh, dear, dear, Petsy, Mrs. Roberts will be quite shocked at you! She will really, won't you, Mrs. Roberts?

MRS. R.--*(Tries to smile.)* Oh, dear no! Sweet child!

*(PETSY goes on making a noise with drum, while MRS. ROBERTS tries to speak.)*

MRS. R.--(*Obliged to shout.*) It seems--there has been some difficulty--about the hall.

MRS. S.--About the hall--yes. (*Looking round at PETSY.*) She is such a merry child, it makes one quite happy to see her!

MRS. R.--(*Aside.*) I am glad it has that effect upon some one!

MRS. S.--You were saying about the hall--

P.--Ma! Mamma!

MRS. S.--Yes, darling, yes. About the hall--

P.--Ma! Ma! Ma!

MRS. S.--I don't know why there should be any difficulty--

P.--Ma! Ma!

MRS. S.--What is it, my dear one? What do you want?

P.--May I play with the silver inkstand?

MRS. S.--If you'll take great care of it, yes. (*To MRS. R.*) Did you ever hear such ideas as the child has? Such an active mind, never quiet!

MRS. R.--(*Aside.*) Well, perhaps now she's got the inkstand she'll be quiet.

MRS. S.--You have no idea what quaint things she says sometimes. You must get me to tell you some of them next time we meet.

MRS. R.--Oh, thank you! Then you think we shall be able to get the hall?

P.--(*Goes up to MRS. ROBERTS and pulls her cloak.*) Why do you wear this ugly cloak?

MRS. S.--Oh, really, Petsy! I don't know what Mrs. Roberts will think! Such a pretty cloak, too.

P.--No, it isn't. It's hideous, and so is her bonnet. It's like Miss Jane's cloak in the poem.

MRS. R.--In the poem?

MRS. S.--Yes, that's a little poem she has learnt. You can't think what a memory she has for that kind of thing. I should like you to hear her recite it. You can't think how prettily she does it.

MRS. R.--Does she, indeed.

MRS. S.--Petsy, will you say your poetry to Mrs. Roberts?

P.--No, I shan't.

MRS. S.--Oh, now do! Mrs. Roberts would like it so much, wouldn't you?

MRS. R.--Oh, of all things.

MRS. S.--She stands on a chair and says it. You can't think how pretty it looks. Come now, Petsy, won't you?

*(MRS. S. puts her on a chair, PETSY jumps down and kicks away the chair.)*

MRS. R.--Well, never mind--don't worry her about it now.

MRS. S.--Oh, but I should so like you to hear her. Come, Petsy, you needn't stand on a chair--stand there with your hands behind you. Now begin: "Pretty Miss Jane----"

P.--I won't, then! *(Gives her mother a thump.)* There!

MRS. S.--She's so unexpected, isn't she? *(To PETSY.)* If you won't say the poem to Mrs. Roberts, you will play the violin to her, won't you?

MRS. R.--(*Horried.*) The violin!

MRS. S.--Yes, she does show such talent! You'll be quite surprised.

MRS. R.--(*Aside.*) Yes, I shall be quite surprised if she does.

MRS. S.--Of course, it's a little squeaky at times--but, after all, she's such a child, it's a wonder she plays at all.

MRS. R.--It is indeed. (*Aside.*) Especially to visitors who don't want to hear her. (*Aloud.*) I am sorry I can't stay to-day, I just came to see about that hall.

MRS. S.--Ah, to be sure, the hall, yes--we've settled nothing. Do stay and have tea with us.

MRS. R.--Tea.... I am afraid it is rather late.

MRS. S.--Oh, do stay, we shall be so snug, just we three--for Petsy always comes in. There she sits in her high chair, and keeps me alive with her prattle.

MRS. R.--(*Aside.*) Ah, that quite decides me. (*Aloud.*) I am afraid I can hardly do that to-day. I have an appointment at five. (*Looking at watch.*)

P.--Ma! (*Twitching MRS. S.'s gown.*) May I have butter as well as jam on my toast?

MRS. S.--Oh, oh! my dear child! Really! (she knows her own mind, I assure you!)

MRS. R.--(*Aside.*) So it appears. (*Aloud.*) I am afraid I can't stay longer to-day. Good-bye.

MRS. S.--Good-bye. I'm so sorry you can't stay to tea.

P.--I'm *so* glad!

MRS. S.--Oh! Oh! really, dear Petsy. She likes being alone with her mother, that is the fact.

MRS. R.--No doubt. Then you will let me know about the bazaar, won't you?

MRS. S.--Oh, of course, I will, and then you must come here that we may have a good talk and settle everything--and we will persuade Petsy to sing her song, and dance her dance! she dances like a fairy, I assure you.

MRS. R.--I have no doubt of it. Good-bye.

MRS. S.--Good-bye.

P.--Good-bye, old Mother Roberts, good-bye!

MRS. S.--(*Playfully.*) Oh, Petsy, little Petsy!

(*Exit MRS. S. showing MRS. R. out. PETSY pulling MRS. S.'s skirts to hold her back.*)

CURTAIN.