

THE SANDMAN
His House Stories

The Sandman
HIS HOUSE STORIES

BY

William J. Hopkins

YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS
CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

Cover and arrangement © 2009 Yesterday's Classics, LLC.

This edition, first published in 2009 by Yesterday's Classics, an imprint of Yesterday's Classics, LLC, is an unabridged republication of the book originally published as *The Doers* by Houghton Mifflin Company in 1914. For the complete listing of the books that are published by Yesterday's Classics, please visit www.yesterdaysclassics.com. Yesterday's Classics is the publishing arm of the Baldwin Online Children's Literature Project which presents the complete text of hundreds of classic books for children at www.mainlesson.com.

ISBN-10: 1-59915-304-1

ISBN-13: 978-1-59915-304-9

Yesterday's Classics, LLC
PO Box 3418
Chapel Hill, NC 27515

CONTENTS

THE DIGGING-MEN STORY	1
THE MASON STORY.....	8
THE DINNER-TIME AND JONAH STORY	17
THE CARPENTER STORY.....	26
THE WATER-MEN STORY.....	35
THE SHINGLE AND CLAPBOARD STORY.....	43
THE PLUMBER STORY.....	53
THE PAINTER STORY.....	63
THE TREE-MEN STORY.....	74
THE CLEARING-UP STORY.....	83
THE SETTING-OUT STORY.....	91
THE POLE-MEN STORY.....	99
THE MOVING-MEN STORY.....	112



THE DIGGING-MEN STORY

ONCE upon a time there was a little boy who was almost five years old. And his mother used to let him wander about the garden and in the road near the house, for there weren't many horses going by, and the men who drove the horses that did go by knew the little boy and they were careful.

So this boy wandered about and played happily by himself.

He had his cat and his cart and his shovel and his hoe, and he always wore his overalls. And wherever he went his cat went too.

THE SANDMAN: HIS HOUSE STORIES

One morning he saw some men come with a big cart and two horses, and they stopped in a field near his house where there were some queer boards nailed on sticks that were stuck in the ground; and the boards turned corners, and there were strings across from one board to another.

And the men got out of the big cart and unhitched the horses from the cart, and the little boy thought he had better go there and see what they were going to do.

So he went, dragging his cart behind him, with his shovel and his hoe rattling in the bottom of it.

And his cat saw him going, and she ran on ahead with her bushy tail sticking straight up in the air.

And the little boy came to the men and the horses and he stopped and stood still.

And his cat stopped too, but she didn't stand still; she rolled over on her back on the ground and wanted to play, but nobody would pay any attention to her.

Pretty soon one of the men looked down and saw the little boy.

"Hello!" he said.

"Hello," said the little boy. "What are you going to do?"

"Why," said the man, "we're going to dig dirt."

"Are you going to dig a hole?" the little boy asked.

"Yes," said the man; "a great big hole."

THE DIGGING-MEN STORY

“And what is the hole for?” the little boy asked. “Is it to plant something in?”

“No,” said the man, “it’s going to be the cellar of a house.”

“Oh,” said the little boy, “is it? And do you think I could help you dig? I’ve got my shovel and my cart.”

“I’m afraid,” said the man, “that it wouldn’t do. You see that great scoop?”

He pointed to a big iron scoop that was in the cart.

The little boy looked and nodded.

“Is that a scoop? What is it for?”

“The horses drag it, and a man takes hold of those two handles like plough-handles, and it scoops the dirt right up.”

The little boy nodded again.

“You can watch us if you want to,” the man said then. “But you must be careful not to get in the way of the horses.”

“And can my kitty watch too?”

The man laughed and said his kitty could watch if she wanted to.

And the other men took pickaxes out of the cart, the handles of the pickaxes and their iron heads, and each man slipped the head of his pickaxe over the handle and gave it a tap on the ground to drive the head on.

THE SANDMAN: HIS HOUSE STORIES

And they walked slowly in under the strings between the boards and they got in a line.

And the little boy sat down on a stone that was just the right size and watched them. His cat came and got right between his feet.

Then the man at the end of the line raised his pickaxe high above his head, and the next man did the same, and then the third man, and so on to the other end of the line.

And the first man struck his pickaxe down hard into the ground, and it made the ground grunt, *Mnh!*

And the second man did the same, and the ground gave another grunt, *Mnh!*

And then the third man did the same thing, and so on to the other end of the line.

Then the first man was ready again, so that the sound of the pickaxes was as regular as the ticking of the tall clock.

When the pickaxe was in the ground, each man gave a kind of a pry that loosened the dirt.

And when they had picked, the men went ahead a little short step and picked a new place and left the loosened dirt behind, so that, pretty soon, they were walking on the dirt that they had loosened.

The cat had got tired of lying between the little boy's feet and having no attention paid to her, so she got up and ran off a little way, and stopped and looked back, but the little boy wouldn't look.

THE DIGGING-MEN STORY

So she walked back, with her bushy tail straight up in the air, and rubbed against the little boy's legs.

Still the little boy didn't notice her. And the reason why he didn't notice her was that the horses were being hitched to the big iron scoop.

As soon as the horses were hitched to the scoop, they started walking along; and the scoop turned right over on its face, upside down, because the man didn't have hold of the handles.

And the horses dragged the scoop, upside down, and it bumped over the stones and made a ringing kind of noise, and they dragged it in between the boards and over the dirt that had been loosened by the pickaxes, and when they got to the end of the loosened dirt, they stopped.

Then the man turned the horses around, and he took hold of the handles of the scoop and turned it over; and he kept hold of the handles, and the horses started, and the scoop dug into the loose dirt and scooped it right up and carried it along.

Now the field, where they were digging the cellar, sloped down behind where the cellar was to be, so that, when the horses came to that part, they were walking down-hill.

And the man let go of the handles of the scoop, and it turned over and dumped its load of dirt.

And when the horses heard the scoop bumping and banging on the ground, they turned around of their own accord and walked back to get a new load.

THE SANDMAN: HIS HOUSE STORIES



THE DIRT-SCOOP

And so they did until they had scooped out all the dirt that had been loosened.

Then the pickaxe men went back and began again on the part that had been scooped, but the horses had to wait for the dirt to be loosened, and they stood outside of the cellar.

It was beginning to look a little bit like a cellar now, but a very shallow one.

And the little boy was getting tired of watching the pickaxes rise and fall and of listening to the noise the ground made. So he got up.

And his cat saw him getting up, and she ran to him, and she saw that he was going to the man with the horses, so she ran ahead, with her bushy tail sticking straight up in the air.

THE DIGGING-MEN STORY

The man saw them coming, and he looked at the little boy and smiled.

“I’ve got to go now,” the little boy said, when he had come to the man.

“So soon?” asked the man. “I hope you aren’t tired.”

“I think I’d better go home,” the little boy said. “P’r’aps my mother would like to see me.”

“I shouldn’t wonder if she’d like to see you pretty often,” the man said. “You tell her that you’ll be safe here. I’ll keep my eye on you.”

“How will you get your eye on me?” the little boy asked.

The man laughed. “Will you come again?”

“I’ll come to-morrow,” the little boy said. “P’r’aps I’ll come this afternoon. Good-bye.”

“Good-bye,” said the man.

And he watched the little boy as he trudged away, dragging his cart, with his hoe and his shovel rattling in the bottom of it, and with his cat walking beside him and looking up into his face.

And that’s all of this story.

THE MASON STORY

ONCE upon a time there was a little boy and he was almost five years old. And there weren't any other children near for him to play with, so he used to play happily all by himself.

He had his cat and his cart and his shovel and his hoe, and he always wore his overalls.

One morning he was sitting right down in the gravel of his front walk, the walk that led to the front door of the house that he lived in, and he had been digging in the gravel. The hole that he was digging was square.

And he had picked the dirt all over with a big nail, and pried it loose, and then he had pretended that his shovel was a big iron scoop that could scoop the dirt out just the way the big scoop did when it was dragged by the horses.

For he had been watching the men dig a cellar in the field next to his house.

And his cat was there, rolling in the gravel and playing with the air.

Pretty soon his mother looked out of a window, and then she came running out.

THE MASON STORY

“My dear little boy,” she said, “what are you digging?”

The little boy got up, and the cat scampered away a few feet, with her bushy tail straight up in the air.

“I’m digging a cellar for a house,” said the little boy.

“Oh,” said his mother. “Well, don’t you think you’d better build the house over near the sand-pile? People coming in might not see this house, and they might kick it over and walk on it. But the masons have come to work on the real cellar.”

“The masons?” the little boy asked.

“The men to build the cellar wall. You may go and watch them if you like.”

The little boy nodded again. Then he put his shovel into his cart, and took hold of the handle of the cart. Then he looked back.

“Good-bye,” he said.

“Good-bye, my dear little son,” his mother said.

And she watched him trudging away, dragging his cart, with his shovel and his hoe rattling in the bottom of it.

And his cat ran on ahead, with her bushy tail sticking straight up in the air.

The little boy saw a man hoeing slowly at something in a big shallow wooden box.

And the something that he was hoeing at was all

THE SANDMAN: HIS HOUSE STORIES

white and it slopped here and there; and the hoe was all white, and the outside of the box was all covered with slops of the same white stuff, and the man's shoes were white, too, and the bottoms of his overalls.

And there was a pile of new sand that looked all moist and just right to play in.

There was another man standing at the edge of the cellar and looking down into it.

The cellar itself was so deep now that the little boy could just see the tops of the hats of the men who were working in it.

The man who had been looking down into the cellar heard the shovel and the hoe rattling in the cart and looked up.

“Hello!” he called.

“Hello,” said the little boy. “What are you doing?”

“I'm just looking to see if the men do their work right. Come over here and I'll show you.”

So the little boy left his cart beside the pile of sand and walked over to where the man was.

And the man met him and took hold of his hand; and they walked together to the edge of the cellar and looked down into it, and the man stooped down and kneeled on one knee, with his arm half around the little boy so that he wouldn't fall in.

In the cellar the little boy saw a great many big stones that lay all about the middle, where they had

THE MASON STORY

been dumped; and there were six men working around the edge of the cellar building the wall.

In part of the cellar the wall had been begun and was about two feet high; but in another part there was nothing but the smooth dirt at the bottom, and the smooth sides of the cellar that went straight up.

And two of the men were digging a trench in the smooth bottom of the cellar where the wall would be.

When they had the shallow trench dug for a few feet, one of the men put down his shovel and went to the pile of stones.

And he found some stones that were the size he wanted, each of them just about as big as he could carry in one hand. And he took two of these and went to the trench and put them in.

Then he went to the pile and got two more, and he put them in the trench, too. And so he did until the bottom of the trench was all covered.

Then he got smaller stones and threw them in on top of the bigger ones; and, on top of those, still smaller stones that were flattish.

The flat stones filled the trench up nearly to the top, and he didn't put in any more, but took up his shovel again and helped the other man dig.

Then two of the other men came, and they looked at the trench to see if it was all right.

Then they went to the pile of big stones and they picked out one of the biggest, and they took their big

THE SANDMAN: HIS HOUSE STORIES

iron crowbars and put the points of the bars under the stone, to move it.

The little boy wondered.

“What are they going to do?” he asked. “Are they going to move it? Can they move it?”

The man nodded.

“Easy enough,” he said. “You watch.”

And the men pried with their crowbars, and the big stone started from its place and rolled down from the pile. And the men got it over to the trench, sometimes prying it with their crowbars and sometimes rolling it with their hands, and they set it in its place on top of the small flat stones.

Then one of the men shut one of his eyes and squinted along the wall that was done to see if the stone was just in the right place; and the other man moved the stone with his crowbar just a little until it was in exactly the right place.

Then they went to the pile again and got another big stone in the same way, and they got it over to the trench and set it in its place beside the first.

Then the men went to the pile again, and they picked out a stone that was nearly as big as the bottom stones, and they hammered it with great hammers and split off some thin, flat pieces.

That was to make it fit better in the place where it was to go. The ground all about the wall was covered

THE MASON STORY

with thin, flat pieces that had been hammered off other stones.

And they got a great thick board, and they put one end of the board on top of the bottom stones which they had just put in the trench, and they put the other end of the board on the ground in front of the stone which they had been hammering, and they rolled the stone slowly up the board until it came to the end.

And they rolled it off the end upon the bottom stones, and got it into its place with their crowbars.

And where it did not fit well enough, they put in thin, flat pieces that they picked up from the ground.

The man who knelt on one knee at the edge of the cellar told the little boy about it as the men worked.

And, when the men had put in the little flat pieces of stone, one of them looked up and smiled at the little boy and said that they called the thin, flat pieces “chocks.”

“Not woodchucks,” he said, “but just chocks.”

The little boy smiled and nodded. He had never seen a woodchuck, but there was a picture of one in his animal-book. It wasn't a very good picture.

“I guess,” he said, “that they are stone-chucks.”

All the men who heard him laughed. And they went to work again, and the little boy turned to the man who was holding him.

“I've got to go now,” he said, “and play in that pile of sand.”

THE SANDMAN: HIS HOUSE STORIES

“All right,” said the man. “You play there just as long as you want to.”

So the little boy went over to the man who was hoeing the white stuff. It wasn't so white as it had been and it was thicker, just about like nice mud.

And his cat came up from somewhere. The little boy didn't know where she had been, but he didn't pay any attention to her. He just stood and watched the man.



MAKING MORTAR

“What are you making?” he asked at last.

“I'm making mortar,” the man said. “They put it in the cracks of the wall, to hold it together.”

“Oh,” said the little boy. “Well, would you like to have me help you?”

“You might bring me a load of sand,” said the man, “if you want to. I shall have to put in more sand.”

So the little boy went to his cart, and he threw out his hoe. He wasn't careful where he threw it, and the handle of the hoe hit the cat.

And the cat ran home as fast as she could go. But the little boy didn't know it, he was so busy.

And he backed the cart up to the sand-pile, and he

THE MASON STORY

took his shovel and shoveled sand into the cart until the man said that was enough.

Then he took hold of the handle and pulled. It was heavier than he thought it would be, but he pulled it over to the box of mortar. It was only a few steps.

Then the man told him to shovel it in, a little at a time.

And the little boy shoveled it in slowly, and he felt very proud, for he was helping to make real mortar.

And he kept on shoveling until the man said that was enough.

The man hoed the mortar for a few minutes, and then he took up a queer-looking thing that he said was his hod.

It was made of two boards that were put together like a V with the point down and another board was nailed across one end, but the other end was left open.

It was a kind of a trough and a stick like a broom-handle stuck down from the middle of it.

And the man filled this hod with mortar, and he turned around and put the hod across one shoulder with the bottom of the trough resting on his shoulder.

And he took hold of the stick, and he walked off, down a ladder into the cellar.

And he dumped the mortar out of the hod on to a board near the men who were building the wall. Then he came up again.

THE SANDMAN: HIS HOUSE STORIES

The little boy watched him until he had come up out of the cellar. And he asked the man whether he would want any more sand, but the man said that he wouldn't for some time.

So the little boy went and played in the sand-pile for a long time, and, while he was playing, his cat came and rubbed against him. Then the little boy got up.

"I've got to go now," he said to the mortar man. "Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said the man. "Come again."

"Yes," said the little boy, "I will."

And he put his shovel and his hoe into his cart, and he took hold of the handle of the cart, and he walked off, with his shovel and his hoe rattling behind him.

And, his cat ran on ahead, with her bushy tail sticking straight up in the air.

And that's all of this story.