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### **The Angel, the Clown, and the Chinese Dragon**

Once upon a summer's night,  
The moon was marshmallow-white,  
The sky was like a blanket rich  
with stars all sparkly-bright.

There was one thing wrong with this beautiful scene,  
and that was that me and my dad  
were lost in the forest of Killikazoo  
and were starting to get scared.

Things were sliding around in the grass  
and things hiding under the rocks.  
I hugged my daddy and held on tight  
and then I saw the fox.

He had a sparkle in his eye  
and a hat that didn't fit;  
his raggedy clothes were full of holes,  
but he didn't care one bit.

Grownups don't believe in fairies  
or animals dressed up in clothes;  
I would have to deal with the fox in the hat  
all by myself I supposed.

"Dear, Sir," I said, "We've lost our way;  
can you help us get out of the forest?"  
"How do you do?" said the fox in the hat,  
"I'm Elmer Fitzpatrick McMorris."

"You've come to the right place," said Elmer to me,  
as he poked a new hole in his clothes,  
"I'm the keenest and cunningest creature you'll find  
from my head to the tip of my toes."

"I'm the cleverest, canniest creature around,"  
said Elmer Fitzpatrick McMorris,  
"but of all the clevery things that I know,  
I don't know how to get out the forest."

Then he gave his tail a smart little flick;  
it swooshed 'round and settled like cotton;  
"Let's see. How does one get where one's going  
if one doesn't know where one's gotten?"

He pointed his nose up and sniffed in the air  
and said, "If I were you folks,  
I'd follow the path that runs right over there,  
right between those two oaks."

As soon as he said it he vanished in air,  
and I showed my daddy the way;  
Arm in arm we crept down the path  
under skies of silver-gray.

We sat on the ground for a rest and I heard  
a faint sort of whispery sound;  
I slowly turned 'round and what did I see?  
The bright, twinkly face of a clown.

Her dress was a patchwork of yellow and blue  
with buttons of purple and green,  
Her shoes were orange and shiny and big  
with shoestrings of aquamarine.

"I'm Poco," she said, and did a back flip,  
and giggled and then did a twirl,  
"I'm here to teach you how to be silly  
and have all the fun in the world."

She took my hand and started to skip  
and then I was skipping along,  
and then we did back flips and stood on our heads,  
and then I said, "Something is wrong.

"I'm having such fun with you, Poco," I said,  
"Being a clown is nice;  
But I need to find my way out of the woods,  
I need some good advice."

"Hmmm," said Poco, "out of the woods,"  
scratching her wild, fluffy hair,  
"Take one of my buttons, hold it tight,  
and try that road over there."

Then Poco was gone and I looked at the road  
through the branches of brown and gray,  
when I heard a voice say, "Come on in,  
over here by the daisies--let's play."

I crept to the daisies and what did I see?  
A girl with beautiful wings.  
I started to wonder how Killikazoo  
got so full of marvellous things.

Her wings were a paper-thin, feathery white,  
and slowly waved up and down.  
The light from the moon shone right through those wings  
and fell on her gossamer gown.

Her face glowed with kindness, her smile was so sweet  
that I couldn't help smiling too;  
She took my hand and said, "I'm Maria,  
an angel, how do you do?"

I told her the tale of how I was lost  
and she held my hand and listened,  
and all the while the silvery moon  
sent beams through her wings that glistened.

Then Maria said, "You know you could stay  
and learn our angel ways;  
I know you'd make a wonderful angel  
and grow wings one of these days."

"If I had to be something else," I said,  
"An angel sure would be nice.  
But I've got to find my way out of the woods,  
I need some good advice."

"As you please," said Maria, as she rustled her wings  
and rose off the ground 'bout an inch.  
"Take this bead from my slipper and go  
to the cave of the ivy and finch."

Then she was gone but the wind of her wings  
wafted in one direction.  
I wandered that way till I saw some caves  
by the light of the moon's reflection.

One of the caves was covered with moss  
and one with mistletoe,  
and then one was trimmed 'round with ivy of green  
where a finch flew to-and-fro.

I spoke to the finch but it didn't speak back  
and I thought I was going to cry,  
when a dragon flew out of that ivy-clad cave  
and circled 'round twice in the sky.

Well I couldn't cry then 'cause I had to see first  
if the dragon was friendly or mean,  
especially since he sat right next to me,  
his scales flashing golden and green.

But before I could say a word to my host,  
he said, "Hello, my dear girl,"  
"I'm Kiki the Chinese Dragon," he said,  
and his tail made a breathtaking swirl.

"My dragon-dad ruled the South China Sea  
from his palace beneath the waves;  
My mom was the queen of all of the dragons  
who lived on the land in the caves.

"They say that I'm fierce and brave and strong,  
and so I am I think,  
but mostly I'm just full of energy,"  
he said and he gave me a wink.

"So come with me and I'll teach you to dance  
when the energy surges right through you;  
we'll build castles and other great things;  
you don't want to leave me, do you?"

"It's not exactly that I want to leave,"  
I said as his scales squeaked like ice,  
"But I need to find my way out of the woods,  
I need some good advice."

"Take this golden ring from my treasure,"  
said Kiki and vanished away;  
then I suddenly saw the fox in the hat  
content as a popinjay.

He had a twig between his teeth  
and a tiny purple bag.  
"There you are," he said with a smile,  
and his tail began to wag.

"You'll need this little bag to hold  
your special little things,  
that is if you happen to have any buttons  
or any beads or rings."

"Why yes," I said, "I've one of each,  
but how did you know that?"  
"I'm the cleverest one in the forest," he said,  
and he winked and tipped his hat.

"Put your things into old Elmer's bag  
and draw the string up tight,  
and keep it safe so you'll never forget  
this silvery, moon-lit night.

"Whenever you're feeling all silly and bouncy  
and helping your friends have fun,  
remember that it's the clown in you  
entertaining everyone.

"And when you're being loving and sweet  
and kind to those in need  
remember that it's the angel in you  
helping you do a good deed.

"When you're feeling inventive at art or at dance  
and your talents are flowing so free,  
you'll know that the chinese dragon is rippling  
with creativity.

"Keep close the button and bead and the ring  
long after you leave the forest,  
and your three friends will stay right there in your heart,"  
said Elmer Fitzpatrick McMorris.

Then he pointed east and disappeared  
and my daddy was rubbing his eyes;  
I put away my purple bag  
and the sun began to rise.

Now grownups don't believe in fairies  
or animals acting like people,  
but thanks to Elmer I looked to the east  
and saw a distant steeple.

Dad hadn't seen all those magical things,  
and I felt a little sneaky,  
But I thought I'd just as soon not mention  
Poco, Maria and Kiki.

This advice to myself showed me something inside  
that Elmer didn't say,  
an angel, a clown and a dragon, that's true,  
but a little fox by the way.