

A fairy tale to read aloud about

Little Jill

*The girl who could save
her country with her
gold colored voice.*



J.B. te Boekhorst

Little Jill



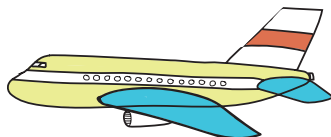
*A fairy tale to read aloud
about*

Little Jill

*The girl who could save her country
with her gold colored voice.*

J.B. te Boekhorst

 publishers



Once upon a time long long ago, there was a very small country tucked far away high up in the mountains. So high even mountaineers couldn't reach it. So small that planes couldn't see it from the sky. There, in the far distance, almost invisible, was Little Land. A country with thousands of small inhabitants, where once everybody lived a happy life.

Yes, lived, because for the last eight long years, nobody was happy anymore. For all that time there had been a large dark cloud hovering above the palace. And that dull grey cloud cast a sad shadow over Little Land.

There was just one small glimmer of hope, a glimmer that faded more and more every year. That last glimmer of hope was Little Jill. She was the only one in Little Land who dared to be just a little cheerful, who had the courage to talk a bit louder than a whisper like the other people did. She was the only one in the country who dared to put on a bright yellow dress in summer. Everyone else wore grey or black clothes. Some men wore dark brown or very dark green clothes



but nobody had the nerve to look as colourful or be as cheerful as Little Jill.

How had this all begun?

Well, every year there was a singing contest in Little Land to find the person with the most beautiful voice in the land. And every year the princess Little Princess won the contest.

Every year Little Ben, the biggest clock in Little Land, had the honour to appoint the winner with his large hand. As soon as Little Ben's hammer struck twice on his enormous bell and his large hand pointed to the winner, everybody in the whole country knew who had won the singing contest. And for the past eight years, it had always been Little Princess. She sang the most beautifully, the most in tune and the lyrics were

so touching that anyone who heard her became teary-eyed, and all the birds spontaneously burst into song.

To be allowed to enter the contest every participant had to write the lyrics and music themselves.





Yes, all that was until eight years ago. That year the bad witch Big Witch decided that her daughter Little Twitch was old enough to take part. Little Twitch did not sing beautifully or in tune, and her mother always wrote her songs for her. And yet she had won eight years in a row.

How was that possible?

How was that possible?

Big Witch had cast a spell on Little Ben so that the old clock couldn't chime twice when the princess stood in front of him, it would only chime when Little Twitch's song was sung. You could see Little Ben struggling. He did try to point his large hand towards Little Princess but he just wasn't able to do it. And as long as the large hand didn't point towards the winner, Little Ben couldn't let his bell chime twice. The guests in the grand palace room even thought they saw a bead of sweat run down Little Ben's clock face. But no matter how hard he tried, he couldn't point his hand to



make the princess the winner. The clock was silenced after just one strike of the bell.

Every year the inhabitants of Little Land grew a bit sadder. And more and more their voices became softer and their clothes darker. They feared the moment Little Twitch would stand in front of Little Ben and be made the winner once again. The previous year Little Ben struck his bell twice for Little Twitch, much to his shame. If he could, he would have turned away as everyone covered their mouths with their hands in shock.

Another year passed by, a year during which the inhabitants didn't dare to be cheerful or brave enough to wear colourful clothes. In their hearts they had given up all hope for there ever to be a cheerful change in their country. Little Twitch only had to win one more time, then she would be the winner of the singing contest forever. This year it



was Little Jill's last chance to let her voice be heard. Because after this year, the contest for the most beautiful singing voice in the country would be no more. All the ordinary girls in Little Land were only allowed to compete three times, otherwise there would be far too many girls participating and it wouldn't be possible to finish the contest with crowning the winner at the end of Sublime Day.



What was Sublime Day?

Every year on the 21st of June there was a big party in Little Land: The Sublime Party. This was also the longest day of the year - the day the sun reached its highest position at exactly 12 noon. On Sublime Day everybody was cheerful and happy. All the girls put on their nicest dresses, and all the boys wore their breeches for the first time of the year.

There was partying, dancing, and drinking, and enough pigs to roast on the spit for everybody. It was



the best day of the whole year. At exactly 12 midnight Little Ben chimed twelve times and the party was over. Full of joy, everybody went to work or school the next day. But as you already know it hadn't been the happiest day for eight years. It was the saddest day of the whole year. Nobody felt like partying but Big Witch wanted them all to put on their prettiest clothes and drink and dance and be merry. She wanted everyone to look festive on that day so that they knew what they were missing when they had to wear drab and dark clothes for the rest of the year. Apart from casting spells on people and things, Big Witch liked to stir things up. And so, for the past eight years, everybody acted as if they drank, and acted as if they danced, and acted as if they were merry. And everyone was glad when Little Ben chimed twelve times so they could go to bed tired but not happy and wake up the next morning with tears in their eyes because Little Princess hadn't won the previous day (and neither had Little Jill) and the grey clouds were still hovering over Little Land.