

The Toymaker by Peter Gardner

(With a little help from C.S. Lewis)

Long, long ago before even time itself existed, the Toymaker made some special helper toys and he called them heralds. The Toymaker gave the heralds special powers to enable them to help him with all his mighty works. The heralds were very beautiful toys and lived with the Toymaker in his workshop. Their paint did not chip and their metal buttons did not tarnish and they made the Toymaker very happy. They did not need strings to make them do his bidding for the Toymaker had given each one a living soul within them. The heralds loved the Toymaker and did all that they could to help him with his work.

After a while, the Toymaker decided to make a special place called Toyland. In this place he would put all the toys that he made. Toyland would be a wonderful place, full of colours, sweet smells, music and fun. Hanging above Toyland would be a curtain of shining lights, to give light to the toys and sweep the darkness away. The Toymaker first moulded the surface of the ground with his hands. Some of the ground he banked up high to form mountains, hills and ridges. Other parts of the ground he scooped out and filled with water to form lakes and seas. Everything was beautiful and the Toymaker was pleased with everything that he had made.

When the Toymaker had finished making Toyland, he decided to make a very special toy that was like himself, to live in Toyland and enjoy all the wonderful things that he the Toymaker had made. This special toy he named Hughe and he put Hughe in a special palace that he had built for him right in the heart of Toyland.

Hughe was very happy with everything that the Toymaker had made for him and spent many weeks roaming around Toyland, giving names to everything that the Toymaker had made. Each evening the Toymaker would come to talk with Hughe and find out what he had been getting up to during the day. They would spend many happy hours walking together in the palace garden and talking about the days adventures.

One day the Toymaker noticed that there was a slight change in Hughe. He didn't seem to be quite as happy as he had been in days past. This continued to get worse as the days went by, each day he seemed to be a little more unhappy. Finally the Toymaker decided that it was because he had no friends, nobody that he could cuddle and love.

I shall make Hughe a special friend thought the Toymaker. To make her I shall put Hughe into a deep sleep and while he is asleep, so as not to cause him any hurt I will take a small part of him away, just a small part near to his heart.

With this small part I shall create a special friend and partner for him.

The Toymaker put Hughe into a deep dreamless sleep. While Hughe slept the Toymaker painlessly opened his chest and removed a very small piece of material very near to his heart. Then he closed the gap, re-glued everything together and applied a fresh coat of paint and varnish. Hughe slept on unaware of what was happening. While he slept the Toymaker made the small piece that he had taken from Hughe's body into a beautiful Wife for Hughe.

When Hughe woke up, the Toymaker introduced him to the special friend that he had made for him. Hughe was very happy with his new friend and he called her Evensong, because she had been given to him by the Toymaker at the end of the day. Evensong smiled and held Hughe's hand. They were both very happy. The Toymaker was pleased that Hughe and Evensong liked each other so much.

When the Toymaker made his heralds in the beginning of time, he made one of them more beautiful than all the other toys. This herald he named Daystar because of his great beauty. Daystar was the Toymaker's chief herald and helped the Toymaker with his work. As time went on though, Daystar became proud and boastful. I am better than the Toymaker he said to himself, forgetting that the Toymaker had made him with loving care and given him free will, and he plotted with some of the other heralds against the Toymaker.

The Toymaker was pleased with Hughe and Evensong and each evening he walked with them in the palace garden in Toyland. He had given them both free will and they had no strings like puppets. They could make their own choices. The Toymaker loved them both very much and wanted Hughe and Evensong to trust him for everything. He decided to set a simple test for them, to find out if they truly loved him and so he placed a box in the branches of one of the trees in the palace garden. When he had done this, the Toymaker called them to him and said 'Hughe and Evensong. I have made everything in Toyland for you to do with as you will. I have made the land, the sea and the sky and all the colours, tastes and sweet smells. There is just one thing that I ask you not to do though, to show that you love and trust me. Do not climb into the tree in the centre of the garden and look inside the red box that is hanging there. If you do this terrible thing, you will start to wear out and grow old and you will show that you do not love me.' They both promised that they would do as the Toymaker asked and everything was well for many weeks.

Daystar had also been in the garden when the Toymaker had spoken to Hughe and Evensong. He hated the fact that Hughe and Evensong were beings with free will like himself. He wanted to change their lives, to turn them into puppets on strings who would jump to his command. He waited and watched for many weeks looking

for an opportunity to trap them. One day he saw Evensong walking on her own, past the tree in the garden with the red box in its branches.

'Evensong' he whispered, 'wouldn't you like to know what is in the box?' Evensong replied that the Toymaker had said that they must not look inside the box or terrible things would happen to them and to the whole of Toyland. Daystar was very cunning though and he told Evensong that the Toymaker did not really mean that. If she looked inside the box, then she would find out about herself. She tried to put the box out of her mind but each time Daystar saw her he tempted her with the box. Finally she decided that it wouldn't hurt just to take a little peek inside the box, just a little peek.

She climbed into the tree, took hold of the box and carried it with her to the ground. A tiny voice in her mind seemed to be saying 'You'll be sorry' but she just ignored it as silly imaginings. Very gently she lifted the lid of the box and looked inside. There looking out at her she saw a face, but what a face, so pure and beautiful. Inside the box was a small mirror, and the face that she saw was her own face reflected in the glass. She had never seen herself before, and she now realised that she had no clothes on. Feeling a bit afraid, she took the box containing the mirror to Hughe and told him to look inside it. Hughe realised that it was the forbidden box from the tree but Evensong told him that he would learn all about himself if he looked into the box.

Hughe took the box from Evensong and looked inside. He saw himself for the first time and he too realised that he had no clothes on. As soon as he had looked into the mirror it shattered into a thousand tiny pieces inside the box. This was a special mirror, that could only be looked into twice by different people. They both knew that they had done wrong and they put the red box back into the branches of the tree. The Toymaker would know that they had looked inside though as the mirror was shattered and there was no way to repair it. It had been the Toymaker's intention, that people should be mirrors for each other and love each others beauty rather than their own. By having mirrors to look into they would tend to love themselves rather than other people and become hard and cold.

That evening the Toymaker walked in the palace garden to talk with Hughe and Evensong but he could not find them. They were afraid of what he would say to them, and were hiding from him. He called out their names, and they finally emerged from behind some bushes. As soon as the Toymaker saw them he knew that something was wrong. It wasn't just that they were wearing clothes, that they had made from some of the colourful plants and flowers, there was also a different look on their faces and in their eyes.

'My children' he said, ' have you done what I asked you not to do, and looked in the red box?' They told him that they had and that they were very sorry.

The Toymaker was very sad. He had intended to give his creations everything but they had gone against him, and shown that they did not truly love him. Because the Toymaker had said that things would start to go wrong if his creations disobeyed him that is what happened. The Toymaker could not tell a lie and so he could not unmake the words that he had said or that would have made his words a lie. He sent Hughe and Evensong away from the palace and its beautiful garden and they began to grow old after many years and their paint began to get chipped and cracked. He was very angry with Daystar, and banished him from the Workshop for the wicked thing that he had done.

The Toymaker still loved his creations, even though they had turned against him. He wanted Hughe and Evensong and their children and all their descendants, to come back to him, and then he would give them new bodies, with paint that would never chip or crack and joints that would never go loose and wear out. How was he to do it though, that was the problem. He had said that if they disobeyed then they would start to wear out. Hughe and Evensong had been perfect, and so it would need a perfect toy to pay the price for that original error of looking in the box. Unfortunately there was now no such toy, as all the descendants of Hughe and Evensong now had that imperfection that made them chip and wear out. One day the Toymaker's Son came into the workshop and said 'Father let me become a toy and pay the price for that original error'

The Toymaker allowed his Son to become a toy, but it made him very lonely in the workshop, without his Son. Because the Toymaker's Son was not a descendant of Hughe and Evensong but was the Son of the Toymaker, he could be a perfect toy as Hughe was before he looked in the box.

The Toymaker's Son spent many years in Toyland, telling all the toys that the Toymaker loved them all and wanted them to turn back to him. Some of the toys loved the Toymaker's Son but some of them hated him because there was something different about him. He had a different look in his eyes and his paint didn't chip or crack. Those that hated him plotted against him, and one day they trapped him and did cruel things to him which caused his paint to chip and crack. By doing this, they unwittingly did the Toymaker's will, and enabled the Toymaker's Son to pay the price for that original error that Hughe and Evensong had made. The wicked toys killed the Toymaker's Son and his followers were sad. The Toymaker's Son was no ordinary toy though, for he was the Son of the Toymaker and the Toymaker loved him. The Toymaker brought him back to life and gave him a new body that would never wear out. The Toymaker's Son knew

that his followers were sad as they had watched him die, and so he went to them and showed them that he was alive.

He told his followers that he was going back to the workshop to be with his Father the Toymaker, and that he was leaving them to tell the rest of Toyland the good news. After doing this, he left his Toyland followers and went back to the workshop to his Father the Toymaker. Before he left though, he told his followers that one day he would be coming back to Toyland, and would bring all the toys that loved him and the Toymaker back with him to the Toymaker's workshop forever.