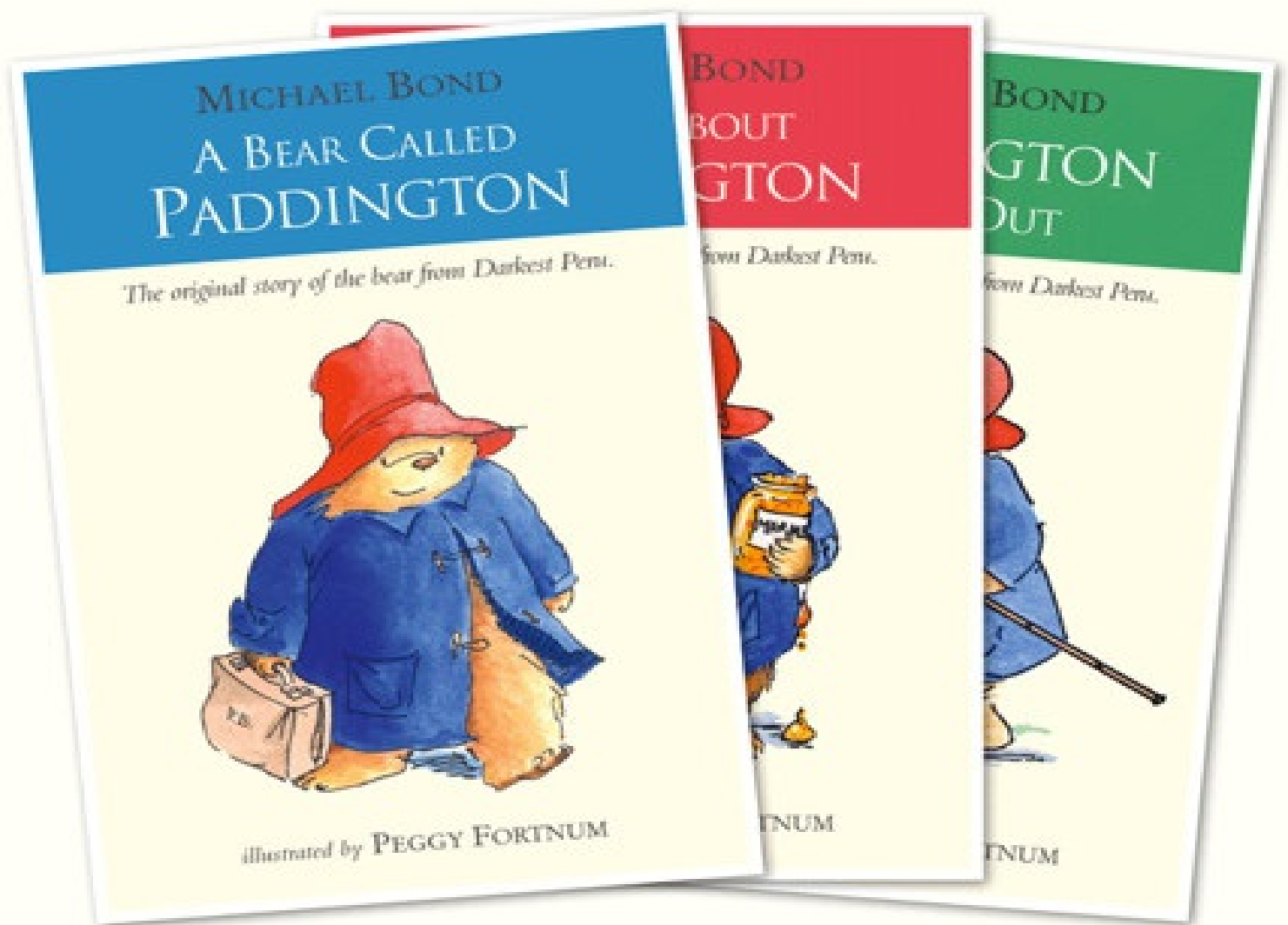


PADDINGTON



3 BOOK COLLECTION

Paddington Novels 1–3

A Bear Called Paddington

More About Paddington

Paddington Helps Out

Michael Bond

Illustrated by Peggy Fortnum



HarperCollins Children's Books

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MICHAEL BOND
A BEAR CALLED
PADDINGTON

The original story of the bear from Darkest Peru.



illustrated by PEGGY FORTNUM

A BEAR CALLED PADDINGTON

by MICHAEL BOND



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HarperCollins *Children's Books*

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Chapter One

Please Look After This Bear

MR AND MRS BROWN first met Paddington on a railway platform. In fact, that was how he came to have such an unusual name for a bear, for Paddington was the name of the station.

The Browns were there to meet their daughter Judy, who was coming home from school for the holidays. It was a warm summer day and the station was crowded with people on their way to the seaside. Trains were humming, loudspeakers blaring, porters rushing about shouting at one another, and altogether there was so much noise that Mr Brown, who saw him first, had to tell his wife several times before she understood.

“A *bear*? On Paddington station?” Mrs Brown looked at her husband in amazement. “Don’t be silly, Henry. There can’t be!”

Mr Brown adjusted his glasses. “But there is,” he insisted. “I distinctly saw it. Over there – near the bicycle rack. It was wearing a funny kind of hat.”

Without waiting for a reply he caught hold of his wife’s arm and pushed her through the crowd, round a trolley laden with chocolate and cups of tea, past a bookstall, and through a gap in a pile of suitcases towards the Lost Property Office.

“There you are,” he announced triumphantly, pointing towards a dark corner, “I told you so!”

Mrs Brown followed the direction of his arm and dimly made out a small, furry object in the shadows. It seemed to be sitting on some kind of suitcase and around its neck there was a label with some writing on it. The suitcase was old and battered and on the side, in large letters, were the words WANTED ON VOYAGE.

Mrs Brown clutched at her husband. “Why, Henry,” she exclaimed. “I believe you were right after all. It *is* a bear!”

She peered at it more closely. It seemed a very unusual kind of bear. It was brown in colour, a rather dirty brown, and it was wearing a most odd-looking hat, with a wide brim, just as Mr Brown had said. From beneath the brim two large, round eyes stared back at her.

Seeing that something was expected of it the bear stood up and politely raised its hat, revealing two black ears. “Good afternoon,” it said, in a small, clear voice.

“Er... good afternoon,” replied Mr Brown, doubtfully. There was a moment of silence.

The bear looked at them inquiringly. "Can I help you?"

Mr Brown looked rather embarrassed. "Well... no. Er... as a matter of fact, we were wondering if we could help you."

Mrs Brown bent down. "You're a very small bear," she said.

The bear puffed out its chest. "I'm a very rare sort of bear," he replied importantly. "There aren't many of us left where I come from."

"And where is that?" asked Mrs Brown.

The bear looked round carefully before replying. "Darkest Peru. I'm not really supposed to be here at all. I'm a stowaway!"

"A stowaway?" Mr Brown lowered his voice and looked anxiously over his shoulder. He almost expected to see a policeman standing behind him with a notebook and pencil, taking everything down.

"Yes," said the bear. "I emigrated, you know." A sad expression came into its eyes. "I used to live with my Aunt Lucy in Peru, but she had to go into a home for retired bears."

"You don't mean to say you've come all the way from South America by yourself?" exclaimed Mrs Brown.

The bear nodded. "Aunt Lucy always said she wanted me to emigrate when I was old enough. That's why she taught me to speak English."

"But whatever did you do for food?" asked Mr Brown. "You must be starving."

Bending down, the bear unlocked the suitcase with a small key, which it also had round its neck, and brought out an almost empty glass jar. "I ate marmalade," he said, rather proudly. "Bears like marmalade. And I lived in a lifeboat."

"But what are you going to do now?" said Mr Brown. "You can't just sit on Paddington station waiting for something to happen."

"Oh, I shall be all right... I expect." The bear bent down to do up its case again. As he did so Mrs Brown caught a glimpse of the writing on the label. It said, simply, PLEASE LOOK AFTER THIS BEAR. THANK YOU.

She turned appealingly to her husband. "Oh, Henry, what *shall* we do? We can't just leave him here. There's no knowing what might happen to him. London's such a big place when you've nowhere to go. Can't he come and stay with us for a few days?"

Mr Brown hesitated. "But Mary, dear, we can't take him... not just like that. After all..."

"After all, *what*?" Mrs Brown's voice had a firm note to it. She looked down at the bear. "He *is* rather sweet. And he'd be such company for Jonathan and Judy. Even if it's only for a little while. They'd never forgive us if they knew you'd left him here."

"It all seems highly irregular," said Mr Brown, doubtfully. "I'm sure there's a law about it." He bent down. "Would you like to come and stay with us?" he asked. "That is," he added, hastily, not wishing to offend the bear, "if you've nothing else planned."

The bear jumped and his hat nearly fell off with excitement. "Oooh, yes, please. I should like that very much. I've nowhere to go and everyone seems in such a hurry."

"Well, that's settled then," said Mrs Brown, before her husband could change his mind. "And you can have marmalade for breakfast every morning, and —" she tried hard to think of something else that bears might like.

"*Every* morning?" The bear looked as if it could hardly believe its ears. "I only had it on special occasions at home. Marmalade's very expensive in Darkest Peru."

“Then you shall have it every morning starting tomorrow,” continued Mrs Brown. “And honey on Sunday.”

A worried expression came over the bear’s face. “Will it cost very much?” he asked. “You see, I haven’t very much money.”

“Of course not. We wouldn’t dream of charging you anything. We shall expect you to be one of the family, shan’t we, Henry?” Mrs Brown looked at her husband for support.

“Of course,” said Mr Brown. “By the way,” he added, “if you *are* coming home with us you’d better know our names. This is Mrs Brown and I’m Mr Brown.”

The bear raised its hat politely – twice. “I haven’t really got a name,” he said. “Only a Peruvian one which no one can understand.”

“Then we’d better give you an English one,” said Mrs Brown. “It’ll make things much easier.” She looked round the station for inspiration. “It ought to be something special,” she said thoughtfully. As she spoke an engine standing in one of the platforms gave a loud wail and a train began to move. “I know what!” she exclaimed. “We found you on Paddington station so we’ll call you Paddington!”

“Paddington!” The bear repeated it several times to make sure. “It seems a very long name.”

“Quite distinguished,” said Mr Brown. “Yes, I like Paddington as a name. Paddington it shall be.”

Mrs Brown stood up. “Good. Now, Paddington, I have to meet our little daughter, Judy, off the train. She’s coming home from school. I’m sure you must be thirsty after your long journey, so you go along to the buffet with Mr Brown and he’ll buy you a nice cup of tea.”

Paddington licked his lips. “I’m *very* thirsty,” he said. “Sea water makes you thirsty.” He picked up his suitcase, pulled his hat down firmly over his head, and waved a paw politely in the direction of the buffet. “After you, Mr Brown.”

“Er... thank you, Paddington,” said Mr Brown.

“Now, Henry, look after him,” Mrs Brown called after them. “And for goodness’ sake, when you get a moment, take that label off his neck. It makes him look like a parcel. I’m sure he’ll get put in a luggage van or something if a porter sees him.”

The buffet was crowded when they entered but Mr Brown managed to find a table for two in a corner. By standing on a chair Paddington could just rest his paws comfortably on the glass top. He looked around with interest while Mr Brown went to fetch the tea. The sight of everyone eating reminded him of how hungry he felt. There was a half-eaten bun on the table but just as he reached out his paw a waitress came up and swept it into a pan.

“You don’t want that, dearie,” she said, giving him a friendly pat. “You don’t know where it’s been.”

Paddington felt so empty he didn’t really mind where it had been but he was much too polite to say anything.

“Well, Paddington,” said Mr Brown, as he placed two steaming cups of tea on the table and a plate piled high with cakes. “How’s that to be going on with?”

Paddington’s eyes glistened. “It’s very nice, thank you,” he exclaimed, eyeing the tea doubtfully. “But it’s rather hard drinking out of a cup. I usually get my head stuck, or else my hat falls in and makes it taste nasty.”

Mr Brown hesitated. “Then you’d better give your hat to me. I’ll pour the tea into a saucer for you. It’s not really done in the best circles, but I’m sure no one will mind just this once.”

Paddington removed his hat and laid it carefully on the table while Mr Brown poured out the tea.

He looked hungrily at the cakes, in particular at a large cream-and-jam one which Mr Brown placed on a plate in front of him.

“There you are, Paddington,” he said. “I’m sorry they haven’t any marmalade ones, but they were the best I could get.”

“I’m glad I emigrated,” said Paddington, as he reached out a paw and pulled the plate nearer. “Do you think anyone would mind if I stood on the table to eat?”

Before Mr Brown could answer he had climbed up and placed his right paw firmly on the bun. It was a very large bun, the biggest and stickiest Mr Brown had been able to find, and in a matter of moments most of the inside found its way on to Paddington’s whiskers. People started to nudge each other and began staring in their direction. Mr Brown wished he had chosen a plain, ordinary bun, but he wasn’t very experienced in the ways of bears. He stirred his tea and looked out of the window, pretending he had tea with a bear on Paddington station every day of his life.



“Henry!” The sound of his wife’s voice brought him back to earth with a start. “Henry, whatever are you doing to that poor bear? Look at him! He’s covered all over with cream and jam.”

Mr Brown jumped up in confusion. “He seemed rather hungry,” he answered, lamely.

Mrs Brown turned to her daughter. “This is what happens when I leave your father alone for five minutes.”

Judy clapped her hands excitedly. “Oh, Daddy, is he really going to stay with us?”

“If he does,” said Mrs Brown, “I can see someone other than your father will have to look after him. Just look at the mess he’s in!”

Paddington, who all this time had been too interested in his bun to worry about what was going on, suddenly became aware that people were talking about him. He looked up to see that Mrs Brown had been joined by a little girl, with laughing blue eyes and long, fair hair. He jumped up, meaning to raise his hat, and in his haste slipped on a patch of strawberry jam which somehow or other had found its way on to the glass table-top. For a brief moment he had a dizzy impression of everything and everyone being upside down. He waved his paws wildly in the air and then, before anyone could catch him, he somersaulted backwards and landed with a splash in his saucer of tea. He jumped up even quicker than he had sat down, because the tea was still very hot, and promptly stepped into Mr Brown’s cup.



Judy threw back her head and laughed until the tears rolled down her face. “Oh, Mummy, isn’t he funny!” she cried.

Paddington, who didn’t think it at all funny, stood for a moment with one foot on the table and the other in Mr Brown’s tea. There were large patches of white cream all over his face, and on his left ear there was a lump of strawberry jam.

“You wouldn’t think,” said Mrs Brown, “that anyone could get in such a state with just one bun.”

Mr Brown coughed. He had just caught the stern eye of a waitress on the other side of the counter. “Perhaps,” he said, “we’d better go. I’ll see if I can find a taxi.” He picked up Judy’s belongings and hurried outside.

Paddington stepped gingerly off the table and, with a last look at the sticky remains of his bun, climbed down on to the floor.

Judy took one of his paws. “Come along, Paddington. We’ll take you home and you can have a nice hot bath. Then you can tell me all about South America. I’m sure you must have had lots of wonderful adventures.”

“I have,” said Paddington earnestly. “Lots. Things are always happening to me. I’m that sort of bear.”

When they came out of the buffet Mr Brown had already found a taxi and he waved them across. The driver looked hard at Paddington and then at the inside of his nice, clean taxi.

“Bears is extra,” he said gruffly. “Sticky bears is twice as much again.”

“He can’t help being sticky, driver,” said Mr Brown. “He’s just had a nasty accident.”

The driver hesitated. “All right, ’op in. But mind none of it comes off on me interior. I only cleaned it out this morning.”

The Browns trooped obediently into the back of the taxi. Mr and Mrs Brown and Judy sat in the back, while Paddington stood on a tip-up seat behind the driver so that he could see out of the window.

The sun was shining as they drove out of the station and after the gloom and the noise everything seemed bright and cheerful. They swept past a group of people at a bus stop and Paddington waved. Several people stared and one man raised his hat in return. It was all very friendly. After weeks of sitting alone in a lifeboat there was so much to see. There were people and cars and big, red buses everywhere – it wasn’t a bit like Darkest Peru.

Paddington kept one eye out of the window in case he missed anything. With his other eye he carefully examined Mr and Mrs Brown and Judy. Mr Brown was fat and jolly, with a big moustache and glasses, while Mrs Brown, who was also rather plump, looked like a larger edition of Judy.

Paddington had just decided he was going to like staying with the Browns when the glass window behind the driver shot back and a gruff voice said, "Where did you say you wanted to go?"

Mr Brown leaned forward. "Number thirty-two, Windsor Gardens."

The driver cupped his ear with one hand. "Can't 'ear you," he shouted.

Paddington tapped him on the shoulder. "Number thirty-two, Windsor Gardens," he repeated.

The taxi driver jumped at the sound of Paddington's voice and narrowly missed hitting a bus. He looked down at his shoulder and glared. "Cream!" he said, bitterly. "All over me new coat!"

Judy giggled and Mr and Mrs Brown exchanged glances. Mr Brown peered at the meter. He half expected to see a sign go up saying they had to pay another fifty pence.

"I beg your pardon," said Paddington. He bent forward and tried to rub the stain off with his other paw. Several bun crumbs and a smear of jam added themselves mysteriously to the taxi driver's coat. The driver gave Paddington a long, hard look.

Paddington raised his hat and the driver slammed the window shut again.

"Oh dear," said Mrs Brown. "We really shall have to give him a bath as soon as we get indoors. It's getting everywhere."

Paddington looked thoughtful. It wasn't so much that he didn't like baths; he really didn't mind being covered with jam and cream. It seemed a pity to wash it all off quite so soon. But before he had time to consider the matter the taxi stopped and the Browns began to climb out. Paddington picked up his suitcase and followed Judy up a flight of white steps to a big green door.



"Now you're going to meet Mrs Bird," said Judy. "She looks after us. She's a bit fierce sometimes and she grumbles a lot but she doesn't really mean it. I'm sure you'll like her."

Paddington felt his knees begin to tremble. He looked round for Mr and Mrs Brown, but they appeared to be having some sort of argument with the taxi driver. Behind the door he could hear footsteps approaching.

"I'm sure I shall like her, if you say so," he said, catching sight of his reflection on the brightly polished letterbox. "But will she like me?"



Chapter Two

A Bear in Hot Water

PADDINGTON WASN'T QUITE sure what to expect when Mrs Bird opened the door. He was pleasantly surprised when they were greeted by a stout, motherly lady with grey hair and a kindly twinkle in her eyes. When she saw Judy she raised her hands above her head. "Goodness gracious, you've arrived already," she said, in horror. "And me hardly finished the washing up. I suppose you'll be wanting tea?"

"Hallo, Mrs Bird," said Judy. "It's nice to see you again. How's the rheumatism?"

"Worse than it's ever been," began Mrs Bird – then she stopped speaking and stared at Paddington. "Whatever have you got there?" she asked. "What is it?"

"It's not a *what*," said Judy. "It's a bear. His name's Paddington."

Paddington raised his hat.

"A *bear*," said Mrs Bird, doubtfully. "Well, he has good manners, I'll say that for him."

"He's going to stay with us," announced Judy. "He's emigrated from South America and he's all alone with nowhere to go."

"Going to *stay* with us?" Mrs Bird raised her arms again. "How long for?"

Judy looked round mysteriously before replying. "I don't know," she said. "It depends on *things*."

"Mercy me," exclaimed Mrs Bird. "I wish you'd told me. I haven't put clean sheets in the spare room or anything." She looked down at Paddington. "Though judging by the state he's in perhaps that's as well."

"It's all right, Mrs Bird," said Paddington. "I think I'm going to have a bath. I had an accident with a bun."

"Oh!" Mrs Bird held the door open. "Oh, well in that case you'd best come on in. Only mind the carpet. It's just been done."

Judy took hold of Paddington's paw and squeezed. "She doesn't mind really," she whispered. "I think she rather likes you."

Paddington watched the retreating figure of Mrs Bird. "She seems a bit fierce," he said.

Mrs Bird turned. "What was that you said?"

Paddington jumped. "I... I..." he began.

“Where was it you said you’d come from? Peru?”

“That’s right,” said Paddington. “Darkest Peru.”

“Humph!” Mrs Bird looked thoughtful for a moment. “Then I expect you like marmalade. I’d better get some more from the grocer.”

“There you are! What did I tell you?” cried Judy, as the door shut behind Mrs Bird. “She *does* like you.”

“Fancy her knowing I like marmalade,” said Paddington.

“Mrs Bird knows everything about everything,” said Judy. “Now, you’d better come upstairs with me and I’ll show you your room. It used to be mine when I was small and it has lots of pictures of bears round the wall so I expect you’ll feel at home.” She led the way up a long flight of stairs, chattering all the time. Paddington followed closely behind, keeping carefully to the side so that he didn’t have to tread on the carpet.

“That’s the bathroom,” said Judy. “And that’s my room. And that’s Jonathan’s – he’s my brother, and you’ll meet him soon. And that’s Mummy and Daddy’s.” She opened a door. “And this is going to be yours!”

Paddington nearly fell over with surprise when he followed her into the room. He’d never seen such a big one. There was a large bed with white sheets against one wall and several big boxes, one with a mirror on it. Judy pulled open a drawer in one of the boxes. “This is called a chest of drawers,” she said. “You’ll be able to keep all your things in here.”

Paddington looked at the drawer and then at his suitcase. “I don’t seem to have very much. That’s the trouble with being small – no one ever expects you to want things.”

“Then we shall have to see what we can do,” said Judy, mysteriously. “I’ll try and get Mummy to take you on one of her shopping expeditions.” She knelt down beside him. “Let me help you to unpack.”

“It’s very kind of you.” Paddington fumbled with the lock. “But I don’t think there’s much to help me with. There’s a jar of marmalade – only there’s hardly any left now and what there is tastes of seaweed. And my scrapbook. And some centavos – they’re a sort of South American penny.”

“Gosh!” said Judy. “I’ve never seen any of those before. Aren’t they bright!”

“Oh, I keep them polished,” said Paddington. “I don’t *spend* them.” He pulled out a tattered photograph. “And that’s a picture of my Aunt Lucy. She had it taken just before she went into the home for retired bears in Lima.”

“She looks very nice,” said Judy. “And very wise.” Seeing that Paddington had a sad, far-away look in his eyes, she added hastily, “Well, I’m going to leave you now, so that you can have your bath and come down nice and clean. You’ll find two taps, one marked hot and one marked cold. There’s plenty of soap and a clean towel. Oh, and a brush so that you can scrub your back.”

“It sounds very complicated,” said Paddington. “Can’t I just sit in a puddle or something?”

Judy laughed. “Somehow I don’t think Mrs Bird would approve of that! And don’t forget to wash your ears. They look awfully black.”

“They’re meant to be black,” Paddington called indignantly, as Judy shut the door.

He climbed up on to a stool by the window and looked out. There was a large, interesting garden below, with a small pond and several trees which looked good for climbing. Beyond the trees he could see some more houses stretching away into the distance. He decided it must be wonderful living in a house like this all the time. He stayed where he was, thinking about it, until the window

became steamed up and he couldn't see out any more. Then he tried writing his name on the cloudy part with his paws. He began to wish it wasn't quite so long, as he soon ran out of cloud and it was rather difficult to spell.

"All the same" – he climbed on to the dressing-table and looked at himself in the mirror – "it's a very important name. And I don't expect there are many bears in the world called Paddington!"

If he'd only known, Judy was saying exactly the same thing to Mr Brown at that very moment. The Browns were holding a council of war in the dining-room, and Mr Brown was fighting a losing battle. It had been Judy's idea in the first place to keep Paddington. In this she not only had Jonathan on her side but also her mother. Jonathan had yet to meet Paddington but the idea of having a bear in the family appealed to him. It sounded very important.

"After all, Henry," argued Mrs Brown, "you can't turn him out now. It wouldn't be right."

Mr Brown sighed. He knew when he was beaten. It wasn't that he didn't like the idea of keeping Paddington. Secretly he was just as keen as anyone. But as head of the Brown household he felt he ought to consider the matter from every angle.

"I'm sure we ought to report the matter to someone first," he said.

"I don't see why, Dad," cried Jonathan. "Besides, he might get arrested for being a stowaway if we do that."

Mrs Brown put down her knitting. "Jonathan's right, Henry. We can't let that happen. It's not as if he's done anything wrong. I'm sure he didn't harm anyone travelling in a lifeboat like that."

"Then there's the question of pocket money," said Mr Brown, weakening. "I'm not sure how much pocket money to give a bear."

"He can have a pound a week, the same as the other children," replied Mrs Brown.

Mr Brown lit his pipe carefully before replying.

"Well," he said, "we'll have to see what Mrs Bird has to say about it first, of course."

There was a triumphant chorus from the rest of the family.

"You'd better ask her then," said Mrs Brown, when the noise had died down. "It was your idea."

Mr Brown coughed. He was a little bit afraid of Mrs Bird and he wasn't at all sure how she would take it. He was about to suggest they left it for a little while when the door opened and Mrs Bird herself came in with the tea things. She paused for a moment and looked round at the sea of expectant faces.

"I suppose," she said, "you want to tell me you've decided to keep that young Paddington."

"May we, Mrs Bird?" pleaded Judy. "Please! I'm sure he'll be very good."

"Humph!" Mrs Bird put the tray down on the table. "That remains to be seen. Different people have different ideas about being good. All the same," she hesitated at the door, "he looks the sort of bear that means well."

"Then you don't mind, Mrs Bird?" Mr Brown asked her.

Mrs Bird thought for a moment. "No. No, I don't mind at all. I've always had a soft spot for bears myself. It'll be nice to have one about the house."

"Well," gasped Mrs Brown, as the door closed. "Whoever would have thought it!"

"I expect it was because he raised his hat," said Judy. "It made a good impression. Mrs Bird likes polite people."

Mrs Brown picked up her knitting again. "I suppose someone ought to write and tell his Aunt Lucy. I'm sure she'd like to know he's safe." She turned to Judy. "Perhaps it would be a nice thought if you

and Jonathan wrote.”

“By the way,” said Mr Brown, “come to think of it, where is Paddington? He’s not still up in his room, is he?”

Judy looked up from the writing-desk, where she was searching for some notepaper. “Oh, he’s all right. He’s just having a bath.”

“A *bath*!” Mrs Brown’s face took on a worried expression. “He’s rather small to be having a bath all by himself.”

“Don’t fuss so, Mary,” grumbled Mr Brown, settling himself down in the armchair with a newspaper. “He’s probably having the time of his life.”

Mr Brown was fairly near the truth when he said Paddington was probably having the time of his life. Unfortunately it wasn’t in quite the way he meant it. Blissfully unaware that his fate was being decided, Paddington was sitting in the middle of the bathroom floor drawing a map of South America with a tube of Mr Brown’s shaving cream.

Paddington liked geography. At least, he liked *his* sort of geography, which meant seeing strange places and new people. Before he left South America on his long journey to England, his Aunt Lucy, who was a very wise old bear, had done her best to teach him all she knew. She had told him all about the places he would see on the way and she had spent many long hours reading to him about the people he would meet.

It had been a long journey, half-way round the world, and so Paddington’s map occupied most of the bathroom floor and also used up most of Mr Brown’s shaving cream. With the little that was left he tried writing his new name again. He had several attempts and finally decided on PADINGTUN. It looked most important.



It wasn’t until a trickle of warm water landed on his nose that he realised the bath was full and was beginning to run over the side. With a sigh he climbed up on to the side of the bath, closed his eyes, held his nose with one paw, and jumped. The water was hot and soapy and much deeper than he had expected. In fact, he had to stand on tiptoe even to keep his nose above the surface.

It was then that he had a nasty shock. It’s one thing getting into a bath. It’s quite another getting out, especially when the water comes up to your nose and the sides are slippery and your eyes are full of soap. He couldn’t even see to turn the taps off.

He tried calling out “Help”, first in quite a quiet voice, then very loudly: “HELP! HELP!”

He waited for a few moments but no one came. Suddenly he had an idea. What a good thing he was

still wearing his hat! He took it off and began baling out the water.

There were several holes in the hat because it was a very old one that had once belonged to his uncle, but if the water didn't get much less, at least it didn't get any more.



"That's funny," said Mr Brown, jumping up from his armchair and rubbing his forehead. "I could have sworn I felt a spot of water!"

"Don't be silly, dear. How could you?" Mrs Brown, busy with her knitting, didn't even bother to look up.

Mr Brown grunted and returned to his newspaper. He knew he had felt something, but there was no point in arguing. He looked suspiciously at the children, but both Judy and Jonathan were busy writing their letter.

"How much does it cost to send a letter to Lima?" asked Jonathan.

Judy was about to reply when another drop of water fell down from the ceiling, this time right on to the table.

"Oh, gosh!" She jumped to her feet, pulling Jonathan after her. There was an ominous wet patch right over their heads *and* right underneath the bathroom!

"Where are you going now, dear?" asked Mrs Brown.

"Oh, just upstairs to see how Paddington's getting on." Judy pushed Jonathan through the door and shut it quickly behind them.

"Crikey," said Jonathan. "What's up?"

"It's Paddington," cried Judy over her shoulder as she rushed up the stairs. "I think he's in trouble!"

She ran along the landing and banged loudly on the bathroom door. "Are you all right, Paddington?" she shouted. "May we come in?"

"HELP! HELP!" shouted Paddington. "Please come in. I think I'm going to drown!"

"Oh, Paddington." Judy leant over the side of the bath and helped Jonathan lift a dripping and very frightened Paddington on to the floor. "Oh, Paddington! Thank goodness you're all right!"

Paddington lay on his back in a pool of water. "What a good job I had my hat," he panted. "Aunt Lucy told me never to be without it."

"But why on earth didn't you pull the plug out, you silly?" said Judy.



“Oh!” Paddington looked crestfallen. “I... I never thought of that.”

Jonathan looked admiringly at Paddington. “Crikey,” he said. “Fancy you making all this mess. Even I’ve never made as much mess as this!”

Paddington sat up and looked around. The whole of the bathroom floor was covered in a sort of white foam where the hot water had landed on his map of South America. “It is a bit untidy,” he admitted. “I don’t really know how it got like that.”

“Untidy!” Judy lifted him to his feet and wrapped a towel around him. “Paddington, we’ve all got a lot of work to do before we go downstairs again. If Mrs Bird sees this I don’t know what she’ll say.”

“I do,” exclaimed Jonathan. “She says it to me sometimes.”

Judy began wiping the floor with a cloth. “Now just you dry yourself quickly in case you catch cold.”

Paddington began rubbing himself meekly with the towel. “I must say,” he remarked, looking at himself in the mirror. “*I am* a lot cleaner than I was. It doesn’t look like me at all!”

Paddington *did* look much cleaner than when he had first arrived at the Browns. His fur, which was really quite light in colour and not dark brown as it had been, was standing out like a new brush, except that it was soft and silky. His nose gleamed and his ears had lost all traces of the jam and cream. He was so much cleaner that when he arrived downstairs and entered the dining-room some time later, everyone pretended not to recognise him.

“The tradesmen’s entrance is at the side,” said Mr Brown, from behind the paper.

Mrs Brown put down her knitting and stared at him. “I think you must have come to the wrong house,” she said. “This is number thirty-two not thirty-four!”

Even Jonathan and Judy agreed there must be some mistake. Paddington began to get quite worried until they all burst out laughing and said how nice he looked now that he was brushed and combed and respectable.



They made room for him in a small armchair by the fire and Mrs Bird came in with another pot of tea and a plate of hot, buttered toast.

“Now, Paddington,” said Mr Brown, when they were all settled. “Suppose you tell us all about yourself and how you came to Britain.”

Paddington settled back in his armchair, wiped a smear of butter carefully from his whiskers, put his paws behind his head and stretched out his toes towards the fire. He liked an audience, especially when he was warm and the world seemed such a nice place.

“I was brought up in Darkest Peru,” he began. “By my Aunt Lucy. She’s the one that lives in a home for retired bears in Lima.” He closed his eyes thoughtfully.

A hush fell over the room and everyone waited expectantly. After a while, when nothing happened, they began to get restless. Mr Brown coughed loudly. “It doesn’t seem a very exciting story,” he said, impatiently.

He reached across and poked Paddington with his pipe. “Well I never,” he said. “I do believe he’s fallen asleep!”



Chapter Three

Paddington Goes Underground

PADDINGTON WAS VERY surprised when he woke up the next morning and found himself in bed. He decided it was a nice feeling as he stretched himself and pulled the sheets up round his head with a paw. He reached out with his feet and found a cool spot for his toes. One advantage of being a very small bear in a large bed was that there was so much room.

After a few minutes he poked his head out cautiously and sniffed. There was a lovely smell of something coming under the door. It seemed to be getting nearer and nearer. There were footsteps too, coming up the stairs. As they stopped by his door there was a knock and Mrs Bird's voice called out, "Are you awake, young Paddington?"

"Only just," called out Paddington, rubbing his eyes.

The door opened. "You've had a good sleep," said Mrs Bird as she placed a tray on the bed and drew the curtains. "And you're a very privileged person to have breakfast in bed on a *weekday*!"

Paddington eyed the tray hungrily. There was half a grapefruit in a bowl, a plate of bacon and eggs, some toast, and a whole pot of marmalade, not to mention a large cup of tea. "Is all that for me?" he exclaimed.

"If you don't want it I can soon take it away again," said Mrs Bird.

"Oh, I do," said Paddington, hurriedly. "It's just that I've never seen so much breakfast before."

"Well, you'd better hurry up with it." Mrs Bird turned in the doorway and looked back. "Because you're going on a shopping expedition this morning with Mrs Brown and Judy. And all I can say is, thank goodness I'm not going too!" She closed the door.

"Now I wonder what she means by that?" said Paddington. But he didn't worry about it for very long. There was far too much to do. It was the first time he had ever had breakfast in bed and he soon found it wasn't quite so easy as it looked. First of all he had trouble with the grapefruit. Every time he pressed it with his spoon a long stream of juice shot up and hit him in the eye, which was very painful. And all the time he was worried because the bacon and eggs were getting cold. Then there was the question of the marmalade. He wanted to leave room for the marmalade.



In the end he decided it would be much nicer if he mixed everything up on the one plate and sat on the tray to eat it.

“Oh, Paddington,” said Judy when she entered the room a few minutes later and found him perched on the tray, “whatever are you doing now? Do hurry up. We’re waiting for you downstairs.”

Paddington looked up, an expression of bliss on his face; that part of his face which could be seen behind egg whiskers and toast crumbs. He tried to say something but all he could manage was a muffled grunting noise which sounded like IMJUSTCOMING all rolled into one.

“Really!” Judy took out her handkerchief and wiped his face. “You’re the stickiest bear imaginable. And if you don’t hurry up all the nice things will be gone. Mummy’s going to buy you a complete new outfit from Barkridges – I heard her say so. Now, comb your fur quickly and come on down.”

As she closed the door Paddington looked at the remains of his breakfast. Most of it was gone but there was a large piece of bacon left which it seemed a pity to waste. He decided to put it into his suitcase in case he got hungry later on.

He hurried into the bathroom and rubbed his face over with some warm water. Then he combed his whiskers carefully and a few moments later, not looking perhaps as clean as he had done the evening before, but quite smart, he arrived downstairs.

“I hope you’re not wearing that hat,” said Mrs Brown, as she looked down at him.

“Oh, do let him, Mummy,” cried Judy. “It’s so... so unusual.”

“It’s unusual all right,” said Mrs Brown. “I don’t know that I’ve ever seen anything quite like it before. It’s such a funny shape. I don’t know what you’d call it.”

“It’s a bush hat,” said Paddington, proudly. “And it saved my life.”

“Saved your life?” repeated Mrs Brown. “Don’t be silly. How could a hat save your life?”

Paddington was about to tell her of his adventure in the bath the evening before when he received a nudge from Judy. She shook her head. “Er... it’s a long story,” he said, lamely.

“Then you’d better save it for another time,” said Mrs Brown. “Now come along, both of you.”

Paddington picked up his suitcase and followed Mrs Brown and Judy to the front door. By the door Mrs Brown paused and sniffed.

“That’s very strange,” she said. “There seems to be a smell of bacon everywhere this morning. Can you smell it, Paddington?”

Paddington started. He put the suitcase guiltily behind himself and sniffed. He had several expressions which he kept for emergencies. There was his thoughtful expression, when he stared into space and rested his chin on a paw. Then there was his innocent one which wasn’t really an expression at all. He decided to use this one.

“It’s very strong,” he said, truthfully, for he was a truthful bear. And then he added, perhaps not

quite so truthfully, "I wonder where it's coming from?"

"If I were you," whispered Judy, as they walked along the road towards the tube station, "I should be more careful in future when you pack your suitcase!"

Paddington looked down. A large piece of bacon stuck out of the side of his case and was trailing on the pavement.

"Shoo!" cried Mrs Brown as a grubby-looking dog came bounding across the road. Paddington waved his suitcase. "Go away, dog," he said sternly. The dog licked its lips and Paddington glanced anxiously over his shoulder as he hurried on, keeping close behind Mrs Brown and Judy.

"Oh dear," said Mrs Brown. "I have a funny feeling about today. As if *things* are going to happen. Do you ever have that feeling, Paddington?"

Paddington considered for a moment. "Sometimes," he said vaguely as they entered the station.

At first Paddington was a little bit disappointed in the Underground. He liked the noise and the bustle and the smell of warm air which greeted him as they went inside. But he didn't think much of the ticket.

He examined carefully the piece of green cardboard which he held in his paw. "It doesn't seem much to get for eighty pence," he said. After all the lovely whirring and clanking noises the ticket machine had made it did seem disappointing. He'd expected much more for his money.

"But Paddington," Mrs Brown sighed, "you only have a ticket so that you can ride on the train. They won't let you on otherwise." She looked and sounded rather flustered. Secretly she was beginning to wish they had waited until later in the day, when it wasn't quite so crowded. There was also the peculiar business of the dogs. Not one, but six dogs of various shapes and sizes had followed them right inside. She had a funny feeling it had something to do with Paddington, but the only time she caught his eye it had such an innocent expression she felt quite upset with herself for having such thoughts.

"I suppose," she said to Paddington, as they stepped on the escalator, "we ought really to carry you. It says you're supposed to carry dogs but it doesn't say anything about bears."

Paddington didn't answer. He was following behind in a dream. Being a very short bear he couldn't easily see over the side, but when he did his eyes nearly popped out with excitement. There were people everywhere. He'd never seen so many. There were people rushing down one side and there were more people rushing up the other. Everyone seemed in a terrible hurry. As he stepped off the escalator he found himself carried away between a man with an umbrella and a lady with a large shopping bag. By the time he managed to push his way free both Mrs Brown and Judy had completely disappeared.

It was then that he saw a most surprising notice. He blinked at it several times to make sure but each time he opened his eyes it said the same thing: FOLLOW THE AMBER LIGHT TO PADDINGTON.

Paddington decided the Underground was quite the most exciting thing that had ever happened to him. He turned and trotted down the corridor, following the amber lights, until he met another crowd of people who were queuing for the 'up' escalator.

"'Ere," said the man at the top, as he examined Paddington's ticket. "What's all this? You haven't been anywhere yet."

"I know," said Paddington, unhappily. "I think I must have made a mistake at the bottom."

The man sniffed suspiciously and called across to an inspector. "There's a young bear 'ere, smelling of bacon. Says he made a mistake at the bottom."

The inspector put his thumbs under his waistcoat. “Escalators is for the benefit and convenience of passengers,” he said sternly. “Not for the likes of young bears to play on. Especially in the rush hour.”

“Yes, sir,” said Paddington, raising his hat. “But we don’t have esca... esca...”

“... lators,” said the inspector, helpfully.

“... lators,” said Paddington, “in Darkest Peru. I’ve never been on one before, so it’s rather difficult.”

“Darkest Peru?” said the inspector, looking most impressed. “Oh, well in that case” – he lifted up the chain which divided the ‘up’ and ‘down’ escalators – “you’d better get back down. But don’t let me catch you up to any tricks again.”

“Thank you very much,” said Paddington gratefully, as he ducked under the chain. “It’s very kind of you, I’m sure.” He turned to wave goodbye, but before he could raise his hat he found himself being whisked into the depths of the Underground again.

Half-way down he was gazing with interest at the brightly coloured posters on the wall when the man standing behind poked him with his umbrella. “There’s someone calling you,” he said.

Paddington looked round and was just in time to see Mrs Brown and Judy pass by on their way up. They waved frantically at him and Mrs Brown called out “Stop!” several times.

Paddington turned and tried to run up the escalator, but it was going very fast, and with his short legs it was as much as he could do even to stand still. He had his head down and he didn’t notice a fat man with a briefcase who was running in the opposite direction until it was too late.

There was a roar of rage from the fat man and he toppled over and grabbed at several other people. Then Paddington felt himself falling. He went bump, bump, bump all the way down before he shot off the end and finally skidded to a stop by the wall.



When he looked round everything seemed very confused. A number of people were gathered round the fat man, who was sitting on the floor rubbing his head. Away in the distance he could see Mrs Brown and Judy trying to push their way down the ‘up’ escalator. It was while he was watching their efforts that he saw another notice. It was in a brass case at the bottom of the escalator and it said, in big red letters: TO STOP THE ESCALATOR IN CASES OF EMERGENCY PUSH THE BUTTON.

It also said in much smaller letters, ‘Penalty for Improper Use – £50’. But in his hurry Paddington did not notice this. In any case it seemed to him very much of an emergency. He swung his suitcase through the air and hit the button as hard as he could.

If there had been confusion while the escalator was moving, there was even more when it stopped.

Paddington watched with surprise as everyone started running about in different directions shouting at each other. One man even began calling out "Fire!" and somewhere in the distance a bell began to ring.

He was just thinking what a lot of excitement pressing one small button could cause when a heavy hand descended on his shoulder.

"That's him!" someone shouted, pointing an accusing finger. "Saw him do it with me own eyes. As large as life!"

"Hit it with his suitcase," shouted another voice. "Ought not to be allowed!" While from the back of the crowd someone else suggested sending for the police.

Paddington began to feel frightened. He turned and looked up at the owner of the hand.

"Oh," said a stern voice. "It's you again. I might have known." The inspector took out a notebook. "Name, please."

"Er... Paddington," said Paddington.

"I said what's your name, not where do you want to go," repeated the inspector.

"That's right," said Paddington. "That is my name."

"*Paddington!*" said the inspector, unbelievably. "It can't be. That's the name of a station. I've never heard of a bear called Paddington before."

"It's very unusual," said Paddington. "But it's Paddington Brown, and I live at number thirty-two Windsor Gardens. And I've lost Mrs Brown and Judy."

"Oh!" The inspector wrote something in his book. "Can I see your ticket?"

"Er... I had it," said Paddington. "But I don't seem to any more."

The inspector began writing again. "Playing on the escalator. Travelling without a ticket. *Stopping* the escalator. All serious offences they are." He looked up. "What have you got to say to that, young feller me lad?"

"Well... er..." Paddington shifted uneasily and looked down at his paws.

"Have you tried looking inside your hat?" asked the inspector, not unkindly. "People often put their tickets in there."

Paddington jumped with relief. "I knew I had it somewhere," he said, thankfully, as he handed it to the inspector.

The inspector handed it back again quickly. The inside of Paddington's hat was rather sticky.

"I've never known anyone take so long not to get anywhere," he said, looking hard at Paddington.

"Do you often travel on the Underground?"

"It's the first time," said Paddington.

"And the last if I have anything to do with it," said Mrs Brown as she pushed her way through the crowd.

"Is this your bear, Madam?" asked the inspector. "Because if it is, I have to inform you that he's in serious trouble." He began to read from his notebook. "As far as I can see he's broken two important regulations – probably more. I shall have to give him into custody."

"Oh dear." Mrs Brown clutched at Judy for support. "Do you *have* to? He's only small and it's his first time out in London. I'm sure he won't do it again."

"Ignorance of the law is no excuse," said the inspector, ominously. "Not in court! Persons are expected to abide by the regulations. It says so."

"In court!" Mrs Brown passed a hand nervously over her forehead. The word court always upset

her. She had visions of Paddington being taken away in handcuffs and being cross-examined and all sorts of awful things.

Judy took hold of Paddington's paw and squeezed it reassuringly. Paddington looked up gratefully. He wasn't at all sure what they were talking about, but none of it sounded very nice.

"Did you say *persons* are expected to abide by the regulations?" Judy asked, firmly.

"That's right," began the inspector. "And I have my duty to do the same as everyone else."

"But it doesn't say anything about bears?" asked Judy, innocently.

"Well." The inspector scratched his head. "Not in so many words." He looked down at Judy, then at Paddington, and then all around. The escalator had started up again and the crowd of sightseers had disappeared.

"It's all highly irregular," he said. "But..."

"Oh, thank you," said Judy. "I think you're the kindest man I've ever met! Don't *you* think so, Paddington?" Paddington nodded his head vigorously and the inspector blushed.

"I shall always travel on this Underground in future," said Paddington, politely. "I'm sure it's the nicest in all London."

The inspector opened his mouth and seemed about to say something, but he closed it again.

"Come along, children," said Mrs Brown, hastily. "If we don't hurry up we shall never get our shopping done."

From somewhere up above came the sound of dogs barking. The inspector sighed. "I can't understand it," he said. "This used to be such a well-run, respectable station. Now look at it!"

He stared after the retreating figures of Mrs Brown and Judy with Paddington bringing up the rear and then he rubbed his eyes. "That's funny," he said, more to himself. "I must be seeing things. I could have sworn that bear had some bacon sticking out of his case!" He shrugged his shoulders. There were more important things to worry about. Judging by the noise coming from the top of the escalator there was some sort of dog fight going on. It needed investigating.





Chapter Four

A Shopping Expedition

THE MAN IN the gentlemen's outfitting department at Barkridges held Paddington's hat at arm's length between thumb and forefinger. He looked at it distastefully.

"I take it the young... er, gentleman, will not be requiring this any more, Modom?" he said.

"Oh yes, I shall," said Paddington firmly. "I've always had that hat – ever since I was small."

"But wouldn't you like a nice new one, Paddington?" said Mrs Brown hastily, "for *best*?"

Paddington thought for a moment. "I'll have one for *worst* if you like," he said. "*That's* my best one!"

The salesman shuddered slightly and, averting his gaze, placed the offending article on the far end of the counter.

"Albert!" He beckoned to a youth who was hovering in the background. "See what we have in size $4\frac{7}{8}$." Albert began to rummage under the counter.

"And now, while we're about it," said Mrs Brown, "we'd like a nice warm coat for the winter. Something like a duffel coat with toggles so that he can do it up easily, I thought. And we'd also like a plastic raincoat for the summer."

The salesman looked at her haughtily. He wasn't very fond of bears and this one, especially, had been giving him queer looks ever since he'd mentioned his wretched hat. "Has Modom tried the bargain basement?" he began. "Something in Government Surplus..."

"No, I haven't," said Mrs Brown, hotly. "Government Surplus indeed! I've never heard of such a thing – have you, Paddington?"

"No," said Paddington, who had no idea what Government Surplus was. "*Never!*" He stared hard at the man, who looked away uneasily. Paddington had a very persistent stare when he cared to use it. It was a very powerful stare. One which his Aunt Lucy had taught him and which he kept for special occasions.

Mrs Brown pointed to a smart blue duffel coat with a red lining. "That looks the very thing," she said.

The assistant gulped. "Yes, Modom. Certainly, Modom." He beckoned to Paddington. "Come this way, sir."

Paddington followed the assistant, keeping about two feet behind him, and staring very hard. The back of the man's neck seemed to go a dull red and he fingered his collar nervously. As they passed the hat counter, Albert, who lived in constant fear of his superior, and who had been watching the events with an open mouth, gave Paddington the thumbs-up sign. Paddington waved a paw. He was beginning to enjoy himself.

He allowed the assistant to help him on with the coat and then stood admiring himself in the mirror. It was the first coat he had ever possessed. In Peru it had been very hot, and though his Aunt Lucy had made him wear a hat to prevent sunstroke, it had always been much too warm for a coat of any sort. He looked at himself in the mirror and was surprised to see not one, but a long line of bears stretching away as far as the eye could see. In fact, everywhere he looked there were bears, and they were all looking extremely smart.

"Isn't the hood a trifle large?" asked Mrs Brown, anxiously.

"Hoods are being worn large this year, Modom," said the assistant. "It's the latest fashion." He was about to add that Paddington seemed to have rather a large head anyway but he changed his mind. Bears were rather unpredictable. You never quite knew what they were thinking and this one in particular seemed to have a mind of his own.

"Do *you* like it, Paddington?" asked Mrs Brown.

Paddington gave up counting bears in the mirror and turned round to look at the back view. "I think it's the nicest coat I've ever seen," he said, after a moment's thought. Mrs Brown and the assistant heaved a sigh of relief.

"Good," said Mrs Brown. "That's settled, then. Now there's just the question of a hat and a plastic macintosh."

She walked over to the hat counter, where Albert, who could still hardly take his admiring eyes off Paddington, had arranged a huge pile of hats. There were bowler hats, sun hats, trilby hats, berets, and even a very small top hat. Mrs Brown eyed them doubtfully. "It's difficult," she said, looking at Paddington. "It's largely a question of his ears. They stick out rather."

"You could cut some holes for them," said Albert.

The assistant froze him with a glance. "Cut a hole in a Barkridge's hat!" he exclaimed. "I've never heard of such a thing."

Paddington turned and stared at him. "I... er..." The assistant's voice trailed off. "I'll go and fetch my scissors," he said, in a quiet voice.

"I don't think that will be necessary at all," said Mrs Brown, hurriedly. "It's not as if he had to go to work in the city, so he doesn't want anything too smart. I think this woollen beret is very nice. The one with the pom-pom on top. The green will go well with his new coat and it'll stretch so that he can pull it down over his ears when it gets cold."

Everyone agreed that Paddington looked very smart, and while Mrs Brown looked for a plastic macintosh, he trotted off to have another look at himself in the mirror. He found the beret was a little difficult to raise as his ears kept the bottom half firmly in place. But by pulling on the pom-pom he could make it stretch quite a long way, which was almost as good. It meant, too, that he could be polite without getting his ears cold.

The assistant wanted to wrap up the duffel coat for him but after a lot of fuss it was agreed that, even though it was a warm day, he should wear it. Paddington felt very proud of himself and he was anxious to see if other people noticed.

After shaking hands with Albert, Paddington gave the assistant one more long, hard stare and the unfortunate man collapsed into a chair and began mopping his brow as Mrs Brown led the way out through the door.

Barkridges was a large shop and it even had its own escalator as well as several lifts. Mrs Brown hesitated at the door and then took Paddington's paw firmly in her hand and led him towards the lift. She'd had enough of escalators for one day.



But to Paddington everything was new, or almost everything, and he liked trying strange things. After a few seconds he decided quite definitely that he preferred riding on an escalator. They were nice and smooth. But lifts! To start with, it was full of people carrying parcels and all so busy they had not time to notice a small bear – one woman even rested her shopping bag on his head and seemed quite surprised when Paddington pushed it off. Then suddenly half of him seemed to fall away while the other half stayed where it was. Just as he had got used to that feeling the second half of him caught up again and even overtook the first half before the doors opened. It did that four times on the way down and Paddington was glad when the man in charge said it was the ground floor and Mrs Brown led him out.

She looked at him closely. “Oh dear, Paddington, you look quite pale,” she said. “Are you all right?”

“I feel sick,” said Paddington. “I don't like lifts. And I wish I hadn't had such a big breakfast!”

“Oh dear!” Mrs Brown looked around. Judy, who had gone off to do some shopping on her own, was nowhere to be seen. “Will you be all right sitting here for a few minutes while I go off to find Judy?” she asked.

Paddington sank down on to his case looking very mournful. Even the pom-pom on his hat seemed limp.

“I don't know whether I shall be all right,” he said. “But I'll do my best.”

“I'll be as quick as I can,” said Mrs Brown. “Then we can take a taxi home for lunch.”

Paddington groaned. “Poor Paddington,” said Mrs Brown, “you must be feeling bad if you don't want any lunch.” At the word lunch again, Paddington closed his eyes and gave an even louder groan.

Mrs Brown tiptoed away.

Paddington kept his eyes closed for several minutes and then, as he began to feel better, he gradually became aware that every now and then a nice cool draught of air blew over his face. He opened one eye carefully to see where it was coming from and noticed for the first time that he was sitting near the main entrance to the shop. He opened his other eye and decided to investigate. If he stayed just outside the glass door he could still see Mrs Brown and Judy when they came.

And then, as he bent down to pick up his suitcase, everything suddenly went black. "Oh dear," thought Paddington, "now all the lights have gone out."

He began groping his way with outstretched paws towards the door. He gave a push where he thought it ought to be but nothing happened. He tried moving along the wall a little way and gave another push. This time it did move. The door seemed to have a strong spring on it and he had to push hard to make it open but eventually there was a gap big enough for him to squeeze through. It clanged shut behind him and Paddington was disappointed to find it was just as dark outside as it had been in the shop. He began to wish he'd stayed where he was. He turned round and tried to find the door but it seemed to have disappeared.

He decided it might be easier if he got down on his paws and crawled. He went a little way like this and then his head came up against something hard. He tried to push it to one side with his paw and it moved slightly so he pushed again.

Suddenly, there was a noise like thunder, and before he knew where he was a whole mountain of things began to fall on him. It felt as if the whole sky had fallen in. Everything went quiet and he lay where he was for a few minutes with his eyes tightly shut, hardly daring to breathe. From a long way away he could hear voices and once or twice it sounded as if someone was banging on a window. He opened one eye carefully and was surprised to find the light had come on again. At least... Sheepishly he pushed the hood of his duffel coat up over his head. They hadn't gone out at all! His hood must have fallen over his head when he bent down inside the shop to pick up his case.



Paddington sat up and looked around to see where he was. He felt much better now. Somewhat to his astonishment, he found he was sitting in a small room in the middle of which was a great pile of tins and basins and bowls. He rubbed his eyes and stared, round-eyed, at the sight.

Behind him there was a wall with a door in it, and in front of him there was a large window. On the other side of the window there was a large crowd of people pushing one another and pointing in his direction. Paddington decided with pleasure that they must be pointing at him. He stood up with difficulty, because it was hard standing up straight on top of a lot of tins, and pulled the pom-pom on his hat as high as it would go. A cheer went up from the crowd. Paddington gave a bow, waved

several times, and then started to examine the damage all around him.

For a moment he wasn't quite sure where he was, and then it came to him. Instead of going out into the street he must have opened a door leading to one of the shop windows!

Paddington was an observant bear, and since he had arrived in London he'd noticed lots of these shop windows. They were very interesting. They always had so many things inside them to look at. Once, he'd seen a man working in one, piling tin cans and boxes on top of each other to make a pyramid. He remembered deciding at the time what a nice job it must be.

He looked round thoughtfully. "Oh dear," he said to the world in general, "I'm in trouble again." If he'd knocked all these things down, as he supposed he must have done, someone was going to be cross. In fact, lots of people were going to be cross. People weren't very good at having things explained to them and it was going to be difficult explaining how his duffel coat hood had fallen over his head.

He bent down and began to pick up the things. There were some glass shelves lying on the floor where they had fallen. It was getting warm inside the window so he took off his duffel coat and hung it carefully on a nail. Then he picked up a glass shelf and tried balancing it on top of some tins. It seemed to work so he put some more tins and a washing-up bowl on top of that. It was rather wobbly but... he stood back and examined it... yes, it looked quite nice. There was an encouraging round of applause from outside. Paddington waved a paw at the crowd and picked up another shelf.

Inside the shop, Mrs Brown was having an earnest conversation with the store detective.

"You say you left him here, Madam?" the detective was saying.

"That's right," said Mrs Brown. "He was feeling ill and I *told* him not to go away. His name's Paddington."

"Paddington." The detective wrote it carefully in his notebook. "What sort of bear is he?"

"Oh, he's sort of golden," said Mrs Brown. "He was wearing a blue duffel coat and carrying a suitcase."

"And he has black ears," said Judy. "You can't mistake him."

"Black ears," the detective repeated, licking his pencil.

"I don't expect that'll help much," said Mrs Brown. "He was wearing his beret."

The detective cupped his hand over his ear. "His *what*?" he shouted. There really was a terrible noise coming from somewhere. It seemed to be getting worse every minute. Every now and then there was a round of applause and several times he distinctly heard the sound of people cheering.

"His *beret*," shouted Mrs Brown in return. "A green woollen one that came down over his ears. With a pom-pom."

The detective shut his notebook with a snap. The noise outside was definitely getting worse. "Pardon me," he said, sternly. "There's something strange going on that needs investigating."

Mrs Brown and Judy exchanged glances. The same thought was running through both their minds. They both said "Paddington!" and rushed after the detective. Mrs Brown clung to the detective's coat and Judy clung to Mrs Brown's as they forced their way through the crowd on the pavement. Just as they reached the window a tremendous cheer went up.

"I might have known," said Mrs Brown.

"Paddington!" exclaimed Judy.

Paddington had just reached the top of his pyramid. At least, it had started off to be a pyramid, but it wasn't really. It wasn't any particular shape at all and it was very rickety. Having placed the last tin

on the top Paddington was in trouble. He wanted to get down but he couldn't. He reached out a paw and the mountain began to wobble. Paddington clung helplessly to the tins, swaying to and fro, watched by a fascinated audience. And then, without any warning, the whole lot collapsed again, only this time Paddington was on top and not underneath. A groan of disappointment went up from the crowd.

"Best thing I've seen in years," said a man in the crowd to Mrs Brown. "Blessed if I know how they think these things up."

"Will he do it again, Mummy?" asked a small boy.

"I don't think so, dear," said his mother. "I think he's finished for the day." She pointed to the window where the detective was removing a sorry-looking Paddington. Mrs Brown hurried back to the entrance followed by Judy.

Inside the shop the detective looked at Paddington and then at his notebook. "Blue duffel coat," he said. "Green woollen beret!" He pulled the beret off. "Black ears! I know who you are," he said grimly; "you're Paddington!"

Paddington nearly fell backwards with astonishment.

"However did you know that?" he said.

"I'm a detective," said the man. "It's my job to know these things. We're always on the look-out for criminals."

"But I'm not a criminal," said Paddington hotly. "I'm a bear! Besides, I was only tidying up the window..."

"Tidying up the window," the detective spluttered. "I don't know what Mr Perkins will have to say. He only dressed it this morning."

Paddington looked round uneasily. He could see Mrs Brown and Judy hurrying towards him. In fact, there were several people coming his way, including an important-looking man in a black coat and striped trousers. They all reached him at the same time and all began talking together.

Paddington sat down on his case and watched them. There were times when it was much better to keep quiet, and this was one of them. In the end it was the important-looking man who won, because he had the loudest voice and kept on talking when everyone else had finished.

To Paddington's surprise he reached down, took hold of his paw, and started to shake it so hard he thought it was going to drop off.

"Delighted to know you, bear," he boomed. "Delighted to know you. And congratulations."

"That's all right," said Paddington, doubtfully. He didn't know why, but the man seemed very pleased.

The man turned to Mrs Brown. "You say his name's Paddington?"

"That's right," said Mrs Brown. "And I'm sure he didn't mean any harm."

"Harm?" The man looked at Mrs Brown in amazement. "Did you say harm? My dear lady, through the action of this bear we've had the biggest crowd in years. Our telephone hasn't stopped ringing." He waved towards the entrance to the store. "And still they come!"

He placed his hand on Paddington's head. "Barkridges," he said, "Barkridges is grateful!" He waved his other hand for silence. "We would like to show our gratitude. If there is anything... anything in the store you would like...?"

Paddington's eyes gleamed. He knew just what he wanted. He'd seen it on their way up to the outfitting department. It had been standing all by itself on a counter in the food store. The biggest one

he'd ever seen. Almost as big as himself.

"Please," he said. "I'd like one of those jars of marmalade. One of the big ones."

If the manager of Barkridges felt surprised he didn't show it. He stood respectfully to one side, by the entrance to the lift.

"Marmalade it shall be," he said, pressing the button.

"I think," said Paddington, "if you don't mind, I'd rather use the stairs."





Chapter Five

Paddington and the 'Old Master'

PADDINGTON SOON SETTLED down and became one of the family. In fact, in no time at all it was difficult to imagine what life had been like without him. He made himself useful about the house and the days passed quickly. The Browns lived near the Portobello Road where there was a big market and quite often, when Mrs Brown was busy, she let him go out to do the shopping for her. Mr Brown made a shopping trolley for him – an old basket on wheels with a handle for steering it.

Paddington was a good shopper and soon became well known to all the traders in the market. He was very thorough and took the job of shopping seriously. He would press the fruit to see that it had the right degree of firmness, as Mrs Bird had shown him, and he was always on the look-out for bargains. He was a popular bear with the traders and most of them went out of their way to save the best things of the day for him.

“That bear gets more for his ten pence than anyone I know,” said Mrs Bird. “I don’t know how he gets away with it, really I don’t. It must be the mean streak in him.”

“I’m not mean,” said Paddington, indignantly. “I’m just careful, that’s all.”

“Whatever it is,” replied Mrs Bird, “you’re worth your weight in gold.”

Paddington took this remark very seriously, and spent a long time weighing himself on the bathroom scales. Eventually he decided to consult his friend, Mr Gruber, on the subject.

Now Paddington spent a lot of his time looking in shop windows, and of all the windows in the Portobello Road, Mr Gruber’s was the best. For one thing it was nice and low so that he could look in without having to stand on tiptoe, and for another, it was full of interesting things. Old pieces of furniture, medals, pots and pans, pictures; there were so many things it was difficult to get inside the shop, and old Mr Gruber spent a lot of his time sitting in a deck-chair on the pavement. Mr Gruber, in his turn, found Paddington very interesting and soon they had become great friends. Paddington often stopped there on his way home from a shopping expedition and they spent many hours discussing South America, where Mr Gruber had been when he was a boy. Mr Gruber usually had a bun and a cup of cocoa in the morning for what he called his ‘elevenses’, and he had taken to sharing it with Paddington. “There’s nothing like a nice chat over a bun and a cup of cocoa,” he used to say, and Paddington, who liked all three, agreed with him – even though the cocoa did make his whiskers go a funny colour.

Paddington was always interested in bright things and he had consulted Mr Gruber one morning on the subject of his Peruvian centavos. He had an idea in the back of his mind that if they were worth a lot of money he could perhaps sell them and buy a present for the Browns. The one pound a week pocket-money Mr Brown gave him was nice, but by the time he had bought some buns on a Saturday morning there wasn't much left. After a great deal of consideration, Mr Gruber had advised Paddington to keep the coins. "It's not always the brightest things that fetch the most money, Mr Brown," he had said. Mr Gruber always called Paddington 'Mr Brown', and it made him feel very important.

He had taken Paddington into the back of the shop where his desk was, and from a drawer he had taken a cardboard box full of old coins. They had been rather dirty and disappointing. "See these, Mr Brown?" he had said. "These are what they call sovereigns. You wouldn't think they were very valuable to look at them, but they are. They're made of gold and they're worth fifty pounds each. That's more than one hundred pounds for an ounce. If you ever find any of those, just you bring them to me."

One day, having weighed himself carefully on the scales, Paddington hurried round to Mr Gruber, taking with him a piece of paper from his scrapbook, covered with mysterious calculations. After a big meal on a Sunday, Paddington had discovered he weighed nearly sixteen pounds. That was... he looked at his piece of paper again as he neared Mr Gruber's shop... that was nearly two hundred and sixty ounces, which meant he was worth nearly twenty six thousand pounds!

Mr Gruber listened carefully to all that Paddington had to tell him and then closed his eyes and thought for a moment. He was a kindly man, and he didn't want to disappoint Paddington.

"I've no doubt," he said at last, "that you're *worth* that. You're obviously a very valuable young bear. I know it. Mr and Mrs Brown know it. Mrs Bird knows it. But do other people?"

He looked at Paddington over his glasses. "Things aren't always what they seem in this world, Mr Brown," he said sadly.

Paddington sighed. It was very disappointing. "I wish they were," he said. "It would be nice."

"Perhaps," said Mr Gruber, mysteriously. "Perhaps. But we shouldn't have any nice surprises then, should we?"

He took Paddington into his shop and after offering him a seat disappeared for a moment. When he returned he was carrying a large picture of a boat. At least, half of it was a boat. The other half seemed to be the picture of a lady in a large hat.

"There you are," he said proudly. "That's what I mean by things not always being what they seem. I'd like your opinion on it, Mr Brown."

Paddington felt rather flattered but also puzzled. The picture didn't seem to be one thing or the other and he said so.

"Ah," said Mr Gruber, delightedly. "It isn't at the moment. But just you wait until I've cleaned it! I gave fifty pence for that picture years and years ago, when it was just a picture of a sailing ship. And what do you think? When I started to clean it the other day all the paint began to come off and I discovered there was another painting underneath." He looked around and then lowered his voice. "Nobody else knows," he whispered, "but I think the one underneath may be valuable. It may be what they call an 'old master'."



Seeing that Paddington still looked puzzled, he explained to him that in the old days, when artists ran short of money and couldn't afford any canvas to paint on, they sometimes painted on top of old pictures. And sometimes, very occasionally, they painted them on top of pictures by artists who afterwards became famous and whose pictures were worth a lot of money. But as they had been painted over, no one knew anything about them.

"It all sounds very complicated," said Paddington thoughtfully.

Mr Gruber talked for a long time about painting, which was one of his favourite subjects. But Paddington, though he was usually interested in anything Mr Gruber had to tell him, was hardly listening. Eventually, refusing Mr Gruber's offer of a second cup of cocoa, he slipped down off the chair and began making his way home. He raised his hat automatically whenever anyone said good-day to him, but there was a far-away expression in his eyes. Even the smell of buns from the bakery passed unheeded. Paddington had an idea.

When he got home he went upstairs to his room and lay on the bed for a long while staring up at the ceiling. He was up there so long that Mrs Bird became quite worried and poked her head round the door to know if he was all right.

"Quite all right, thank you," said Paddington, distantly. "I'm just thinking."

Mrs Bird closed the door and hurried downstairs to tell the others. Her news had a mixed reception. "I don't mind him *just* thinking," said Mrs Brown, with a worried expression on her face. "It's when he actually thinks *of* something that the trouble starts."

But she was in the middle of her housework and soon forgot the matter. Certainly both she and Mrs Bird were much too busy to notice the small figure of a bear creeping cautiously in the direction of Mr Brown's shed a few minutes later. Nor did they see him return armed with a bottle of Mr Brown's paint remover and a large pile of rags. Had they done so they might have had good cause to worry. And if Mrs Brown had seen him creeping on tiptoe into the drawing-room, closing the door carefully behind him, she wouldn't have had a minute's peace.



Fortunately everyone was much too busy to notice any of these things. Even more fortunately, no one came into the drawing-room for quite a long while. Because Paddington was in a mess. Things hadn't gone at all according to plan. He was beginning to wish he had listened more carefully to the things Mr Gruber had said on the subject of cleaning paintings.

To start with, even though he'd used almost half a bottle of Mr Brown's paint remover, the picture had only come off in patches. Secondly, and what was even worse, where it *had* come off there was nothing underneath. Only the white canvas. Paddington stood back and surveyed his handiwork. Originally it had been a painting of a lake, with a blue sky and several sailing boats dotted around. Now it looked like a storm at sea. All the boats had gone, the sky was a funny shade of grey, and half the lake had disappeared.

"What a good thing I found this old box of paints," he thought, as he stood back holding the end of the brush at paw's length and squinting at it as he'd once seen a real artist do. Holding a palette in his left paw, he squeezed some red paint on to it and then splodged it about with the brush. He looked nervously over his shoulder and then dabbed some of it on to the canvas.

Paddington had found the paints in a cupboard under the stairs. A whole box of them. There were reds and greens and yellows and blues. In fact, there were so many different colours it was difficult to know which to choose first.

He wiped the brush carefully on his hat and tried another colour and then another. It was all so interesting that he thought he would try a bit of each, and he very soon forgot the fact that he was supposed to be painting a picture.

In fact, it was more of a design than a picture, with lines and circles and crosses in all different colours. Even Paddington was startled when he finally stepped back to examine it. Of the original picture there was no trace at all. Rather sadly he put the tubes of paint back into the box and wrapped the picture in a canvas bag, leaning it against the wall, exactly as he'd found it. He decided reluctantly to have another try later on. Painting was fun while it lasted but it was much more difficult than it looked.



He was very silent all through dinner that evening. He was so silent that several times Mrs Brown asked him how he was, until eventually Paddington asked to be excused and went upstairs.

“I do hope he’s all right, Henry,” she said, after he’d gone. “He hardly touched his dinner and that’s so unlike him. And he seemed to have some funny red spots all over his face.”

“Crikey,” said Jonathan. “Red spots! I hope he’s given it to me, whatever it is, then I shan’t have to go back to school!”

“Well, he’s got green ones as well,” said Judy. “I saw some green ones!”

“*Green* ones!” Even Mr Brown looked worried. “I wonder if he’s sickening for anything? If they’re not gone in the morning I’ll send for the doctor.”

“He was so looking forward to going to the handicrafts exhibition, too,” said Mrs Brown. “It’ll be a shame if he has to stay in bed.”

“Do you think you’ll win a prize with your painting, Dad?” asked Jonathan.

“No one will be more surprised than your father if he does,” replied Mrs Brown. “He’s never won a prize yet!”

“What is it, Daddy?” asked Judy. “Aren’t you going to tell us?”

“It’s meant to be a surprise,” said Mr Brown modestly. “It took me a long time to do. It’s painted from memory.”

Painting was one of Mr Brown’s hobbies, and once a year he entered a picture for a handicrafts exhibition which was held in Kensington, near where they lived. Several famous people came to judge the pictures and there were a number of prizes. There were also lots of other competitions, and it was a sore point with Mr Brown that he had never won anything, whereas twice Mrs Brown had won a prize in the rug-making competition.

“Anyway,” he said, declaring the subject closed, “it’s too late now. The man collected it this afternoon, so we shall see what we shall see.”

The sun was shining the next day and the exhibition was crowded. Everyone was pleased that Paddington looked so much better. His spots had completely disappeared and he ate a large breakfast to make up for missing so much dinner the night before. Only Mrs Bird had her suspicions when she found Paddington’s ‘spots’ on his towel in the bathroom, but she kept her thoughts to herself.

The Browns occupied the middle five seats of the front row where the judging was to take place. There was an air of great excitement. It was news to Paddington that Mr Brown actually painted and he was looking forward to seeing a picture by someone he knew.

On the platform several important-looking men with beards were bustling about talking to each other and waving their arms in the air. They appeared to be having a great deal of argument about one

painting in particular.

“Henry,” whispered Mrs Brown, excitedly. “I do believe they’re talking about yours. I recognise the canvas bag.”

Mr Brown looked puzzled. “It certainly looks like my bag,” he said. “But I don’t think it can be. All the canvas was stuck to the painting. Didn’t you see? Just as if someone had put it inside while it was still wet. I painted mine ages ago.”

Paddington sat very still and stared straight ahead, hardly daring to move. He had a strange sinking feeling in the bottom of his stomach, as if something awful was about to happen. He began to wish he hadn’t washed his spots off that morning; then at least he could have stayed in bed.

Judy poked him with her elbow. “What’s the matter, Paddington?” she asked. “You look most peculiar. Are you all right?”

“I don’t feel ill,” said Paddington in a small voice. “But I think I’m in trouble again.”

“Oh dear,” said Judy. “Well, keep your paws crossed. This is it!”



Paddington sat up. One of the men on the platform, the most important-looking one with the biggest beard, was speaking. And there... Paddington’s knees began to tremble, there on the platform, on an easel in full view of everyone, was ‘his’ picture!

He was so dazed he only caught scraps of what the man was saying.

“... remarkable use of colour...”

“... very unusual...”

“... great imagination... a credit to the artist...”

And then, he almost fell off his seat with surprise. “The winner of the first prize is Mr Henry Brown of thirty-two Windsor Gardens!”

Paddington wasn’t the only one who felt surprised. Mr Brown, who was being helped up on to the platform, looked as if he had just been struck by lightning. “But... but...” he stuttered, “there must be some mistake.”

“Mistake?” said the man with the beard. “Nonsense, my dear sir. Your name’s on the back of the canvas. You *are* Mr Brown, aren’t you? Mr *Henry* Brown?”

Mr Brown looked at the painting with unbelieving eyes. “It’s certainly my name on the back,” he said. “It’s my writing...” He left the sentence unfinished and looked down towards the audience. He had his own ideas on the subject, but it was difficult to catch Paddington’s eye. It usually was when you particularly wanted to.

“I think,” said Mr Brown, when the applause had died down, and he had accepted the cheque for ten pounds which the man gave him, “proud as I am, I think I would like to donate the prize to a certain

home for retired bears in South America.” A murmur of surprise went round the assembly but it passed over Paddington’s head, though he would have been very pleased had he known its cause. He was staring hard at the painting, and in particular at the man with the large beard, who was beginning to look hot and bothered.

“I think,” said Paddington, to the world in general, “they might have stood it the right way up. It’s not every day a bear wins first prize in a painting competition!”



Chapter Six

A Visit to the Theatre

THE BROWNS WERE all very excited. Mr Brown had been given tickets for a box at the theatre. It was the first night of a brand new play, and the leading part was being played by the world famous actor, Sir Sealy Bloom. Even Paddington became infected with the excitement. He made several journeys to his friend, Mr Gruber, to have the theatre explained to him. Mr Gruber thought he was very lucky to be going to the first night of a new play. "All sorts of famous people will be there," he said. "I don't suppose many bears have that sort of opportunity once in a lifetime."

Mr Gruber lent Paddington several second-hand books about the theatre. He was rather a slow reader but there were lots of pictures and, in one of them, a big cut-out model of a stage which sprang up every time he opened the pages. Paddington decided that when he grew up he wanted to be an actor. He took to standing on his dressing-table and striking poses in the mirror just as he had seen them in the books.

Mrs Brown had her own thoughts on the subject. "I do hope it's a nice play," she said to Mrs Bird. "You know what Paddington's like... he does take these things so seriously."

"Oh, well," said Mrs Bird. "I shall sit at home and listen to the wireless in peace and quiet. But it'll be an experience for him and he does like experiences so. Besides, he's been very good lately."

"I know," said Mrs Brown. "That's what worries me!"

As it turned out, the play itself was the least of Mrs Brown's worries. Paddington was unusually silent all the way to the theatre. It was the first time he had been out after dark and the very first time he had seen the lights of London. Mr Brown pointed out all the famous landmarks as they drove past in the car, and it was a gay party of Browns that eventually trooped into the theatre.

Paddington was pleased to find it all exactly as Mr Gruber had described it to him, even down to the commissionaire who opened the door for them and saluted as they entered the foyer.

Paddington returned the salute with a wave of his paw and then sniffed. Everything was painted red and gold and the theatre had a nice, warm, friendly sort of smell. There was a slight upset at the cloakroom when he found he had to pay in order to leave his duffel coat and suitcase. The woman behind the counter turned quite nasty when Paddington asked for his things back.

She was still talking about it in a loud voice as the attendant led them along a passage towards their seats. At the entrance to the box the attendant paused.

“Programme, sir?” she said to Paddington.

“Yes, please,” said Paddington, taking five. “Thank you very much.”

“And would you like coffee in the interval, sir?” she asked.

Paddington’s eyes glistened. “Oh, yes, please,” he said, imagining it was a kind thought on the part of the theatre. He tried to push his way past, but the attendant barred the way.

“That’ll be seven pounds fifty pence,” she said. “One pound each for the programmes and fifty pence each for the coffee.”

Paddington looked as if he could hardly believe his ears. “Seven pounds and fifty pence?” he repeated. “*Seven pounds fifty?*”

“That’s all right, Paddington,” said Mr Brown, anxious to avoid another fuss. “It’s my treat. You go in and sit down.”

Paddington obeyed like a shot, but he gave the attendant some very queer looks while she arranged some cushions for his seat in the front row. All the same, he was pleased to see she had given him the one nearest the stage. He’d already sent a postcard to his Aunt Lucy with a carefully drawn copy of a plan of the theatre, which he’d found in one of Mr Gruber’s books, and a small cross in one corner marked ‘MY SEET’.

The theatre was quite full and Paddington waved to the people down below. Much to Mrs Brown’s embarrassment, several of them pointed and waved back.

“I *do* wish he wouldn’t be quite so friendly,” she whispered to Mr Brown.

“Wouldn’t you like to take off your duffel coat now?” asked Mr Brown. “It’ll be cold when you go out again.”

Paddington climbed up and stood on his chair. “I think perhaps I will,” he said. “It’s getting warm.”

Judy started to help him off with it. “Mind my marmalade sandwich!” cried Paddington, as she placed it on the ledge in front of him. But it was too late. He looked round guiltily.



“Crikey!” said Jonathan. “It’s fallen on someone’s head!” He looked over the edge of the box. “It’s that man with the bald head. He looks jolly cross.”

“Oh, Paddington!” Mrs Brown looked despairingly at him. “Do you *have* to bring marmalade sandwiches to the theatre?”

“It’s all right,” said Paddington, cheerfully. “I’ve some more in the other pocket if anyone wants one. They’re a bit squashed, I’m afraid, because I sat on them in the car.”

“There seems to be some sort of a row going on down below,” said Mr Brown, craning his head to look over the edge. “Some chap just waved his fist at me. And what’s all this about marmalade

sandwiches?" Mr Brown was a bit slow on the uptake sometimes.

"Nothing, dear," said Mrs Brown, hastily. She decided to let the matter drop. It was much easier in the long run.

In any case, Paddington was having a great struggle with himself over some opera glasses. He had just seen a little box in front of him marked OPERA GLASSES. TWENTY PENCE. Eventually, after a great deal of thought, he unlocked his suitcase and from a secret compartment withdrew twenty pence.

"I don't think much of these," he said, a moment later, looking through them at the audience. "Everyone looks smaller."

"You've got them the wrong way round, silly," said Jonathan.

"Well, I still don't think much of them," said Paddington, turning them round. "I wouldn't have bought them if I'd known. Still," he added, after a moment's thought, "they might come in useful next time."

Just as he began to speak the overture came to an end and the curtain rose. The scene was the living-room of a large house, and Sir Sealy Bloom, in the part of the village squire, was pacing up and down. There was a round of applause from the audience.

"You don't take them home," whispered Judy. "You have to put them back when you leave."

"WHAT!" cried Paddington, in a loud voice. Several calls of 'hush' came from the darkened theatre as Sir Sealy Bloom paused and looked pointedly in the direction of the Browns' box. "Do you mean to say..." words failed Paddington for the moment. "*Twenty pence!*" he said bitterly. "That's two buns' worth." He turned his gaze on Sir Sealy Bloom.

Sir Sealy Bloom looked rather irritable. He didn't like first nights, and this one in particular had started badly. He had a nasty feeling about it. He much preferred playing the hero, where he had the sympathy of the audience, and in this play he was the villain. Being the first night of the play, he wasn't at all sure of some of his lines. To make matters worse, he had arrived at the theatre only to discover that the prompt boy was missing and there was no one else to take his place. Then there was the disturbance in the stalls just before the curtain went up. Something to do with a marmalade sandwich, so the stage manager had said. Of course, that was all nonsense, but still, it was very disturbing. And then there was this noisy crowd in the box. He sighed to himself. It was obviously going to be one of those nights.

But if Sir Sealy Bloom's heart was not in the play, Paddington's certainly was. He soon forgot about his wasted twenty pence and devoted all his attention to the plot. He decided quite early on that he didn't like Sir Sealy Bloom and he stared at him hard through his opera glasses. He followed his every move and when, at the end of the first act, Sir Sealy, in the part of the hard-hearted father, turned his daughter out into the world without a penny, Paddington stood up on his chair and waved his programme indignantly at the stage.

Paddington was a surprising bear in many ways and he had a strong sense of right and wrong. As the curtain came down he placed his opera glasses firmly on the ledge and climbed off his seat.

"Are you enjoying it, Paddington?" asked Mr Brown.

"It's very interesting," said Paddington. He had a determined note to his voice and Mrs Brown looked at him sharply. She was beginning to recognise that tone and it worried her.

"Where are you going, dear?" she asked, as he made for the door of the box.

"Oh, just for a walk," said Paddington, vaguely.

"Well, don't be too long," she called, as the door closed behind him. "You don't want to miss any

of the second act.”

“Oh, don’t fuss, Mary,” said Mr Brown. “I expect he just wants to stretch his legs or something. He’s probably gone out to the cloakroom.”

But at that moment Paddington was going, not in the direction of the cloakroom, but towards a door leading to the back of the theatre. It was marked PRIVATE. ARTISTS ONLY. As he pushed the door open and passed through, he immediately found himself in an entirely different world. There were no red plush seats; everything was very bare. Lots of ropes hung down from the roof, pieces of scenery were stacked against the walls, and everyone seemed in a great hurry. Normally Paddington would have been most interested in everything, but now he had a purposeful look on his face.

Seeing a man bending over some scenery, he walked over and tapped him on the shoulder. “Excuse me,” he said. “Can you tell me where the man is?”

The scene hand went on working. “Man?” he said. “*What* man?”

“*The* man,” said Paddington, patiently. “The nasty man.”

“Oh, you mean Sir Sealy.” The scene hand pointed towards a long corridor. “He’s in his dressing-room. You’d better not go disturbing him ’cause he’s not in a very good mood.” He looked up. “Hey!” he cried. “You’re not supposed to be in here. Who let you in?”

Paddington was too far away to answer even if he had heard. He was already half-way up the corridor, looking closely at all the doors. Eventually he came to one with a large star on it and the words SIR SEALY BLOOM in big gold letters. Paddington drew a deep breath and then knocked loudly. There was no reply, so he knocked again. Still there was no reply, and so, very cautiously, he pushed open the door with his paw.

“Go away!” said a booming voice. “I don’t want to see anyone.”

Paddington peered round the door. Sir Sealy Bloom was lying stretched out on a long couch. He looked tired and cross. He opened one eye and gazed at Paddington.

“I’m not signing any autographs,” he growled.

“I don’t want your autograph,” said Paddington, fixing him with a hard stare. “I wouldn’t want your autograph if I had my autograph book, and I haven’t got my autograph book so there!”

Sir Sealy sat up. “You don’t want my autograph?” he said, in a surprised voice. “But everyone always wants my autograph!”

“Well, I don’t,” said Paddington. “I’ve come to tell you to take your daughter back!” He gulped the last few words. The great man seemed to have grown to about twice the size he had been on the stage, and he looked as if he was going to explode at any minute.

Sir Sealy clutched his forehead. “You want me to take my daughter back?” he said at last.

“That’s right,” said Paddington, firmly. “And if you don’t, I expect she can come and stay with Mr and Mrs Brown.”

Sir Sealy Bloom ran his hand distractedly through his hair and then pinched himself. “Mr and Mrs *Brown*,” he repeated in a dazed voice. He looked wildly round the room and then dashed to the door. “Sarah!” he called, in a loud voice. “Sarah, come in here at once!” He backed round the room until he had placed the couch between himself and Paddington. “Keep away, bear!” he said, dramatically, and then peered at Paddington, for he was rather short-sighted. “You are a bear, aren’t you?” he added.

“That’s right,” said Paddington. “From Darkest Peru!”

Sir Sealy looked at his woollen hat. “Well then,” he said crossly, playing for time, “you ought to know better than to wear a green hat in my dressing-room. Don’t you know green is a very unlucky

colour in the theatre? Take it off at once.”

“It’s not my fault,” said Paddington. “I wanted to wear my proper hat.” He had just started to explain all about his hat when the door burst open and the lady called Sarah entered. Paddington immediately recognised her as Sir Sealy’s daughter in the play.

“It’s all right,” he said. “I’ve come to rescue you.”

“You’ve *what*?” The lady seemed most surprised.

“Sarah,” Sir Sealy Bloom came out from behind the couch. “Sarah, protect me from this... this mad bear!”

“I’m not mad,” said Paddington, indignantly.

“Then kindly explain what you are doing in my dressing-room,” boomed the great actor.

Paddington sighed. Sometimes people were very slow to understand things. Patiently he explained it all to them. When he had finished, the lady called Sarah threw back her head and laughed.

“I’m glad you think it’s funny,” said Sir Sealy.

“But darling, don’t you see?” she said. “It’s a great compliment. Paddington really believes you were throwing me out into the world without a penny. It shows what a great actor you are!”

Sir Sealy thought for a moment. “Humph!” he said, gruffly. “Quite an understandable mistake, I suppose. He looks a remarkably intelligent bear, come to think of it.”

Paddington looked from one to the other. “Then you were only acting all the time,” he faltered.

The lady bent down and took his paw. “Of course, darling. But it was very kind of you to come to my rescue. I shall always remember it.”

“Well, I *would* have rescued you if you’d wanted it,” said Paddington.

Sir Sealy coughed. “Are you interested in the theatre, bear?” he boomed.

“Oh, yes,” said Paddington. “Very much. Except I don’t like having to pay so much for everything. I want to be an actor when I grow up.”

The lady called Sarah jumped up. “Why, Sealy darling,” she said, looking at Paddington. “I’ve an idea!” She whispered in Sir Sealy’s ear and then Sir Sealy looked at Paddington. “It’s a bit unusual,” he said, thoughtfully. “But it’s worth a try. Yes, it’s certainly worth a try!”

In the theatre itself the interval was almost at an end and the Browns were getting restless.

“Oh, dear,” said Mrs Brown. “I wonder where he’s got to?”

“If he doesn’t hurry up,” said Mr Brown, “he’s going to miss the start of the second act.”

Just then there was a knock at the door and an attendant handed him a note. “A young bear gentleman asked me to give you this,” he announced. “He said it was very urgent.”

“Er... thank you,” said Mr Brown, taking the note and opening it.

“What does it say?” asked Mrs Brown, anxiously. “Is he all right?”

Mr Brown handed her the note to read. “Your guess is as good as mine,” he said.

Mrs Brown looked at it. It was hastily written in pencil and it said: I HAVE BEEN GIVEN A VERRY IMPORTANT JOB. PADINGTON. P.S. I WILL TEL YOU ABOUT IT LAYTER.

“Now what on earth can that mean?” she said. “Trust something unusual to happen to Paddington.”

“I don’t know,” said Mr Brown, settling back in his chair as the lights went down. “But I’m not going to let it spoil the play.”

“I hope the second half is better than the first,” said Jonathan. “I thought the first half was rotten. That man kept on forgetting his lines.”

The second half *was* much better than the first. From the moment Sir Sealy strode on to the stage the

theatre was electrified. A great change had come over him. He no longer fumbled over his lines, and people who had coughed all through the first half now sat up in their seats and hung on his every word.

When the curtain finally came down on the end of the play, with Sir Sealy's daughter returning to his arms, there was a great burst of applause. The curtain rose again and the whole company bowed to the audience. Then it rose while Sir Sealy and Sarah bowed, but still the cheering went on. Finally Sir Sealy stepped forward and raised his hand for quiet.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said. "Thank you for your kind applause. We are indeed most grateful. But before you leave I would like to introduce the youngest and most important member of our company. A young... er, bear, who came to our rescue..." The rest of Sir Sealy's speech was drowned in a buzz of excitement as he stepped forward to the very front of the stage, where a small screen hid a hole in the boards which was the prompt box.

He took hold of one of Paddington's paws and pulled. Paddington's head appeared through the hole. In his other paw he was grasping a copy of the script.

"Come along, Paddington," said Sir Sealy. "Come and take your bow."

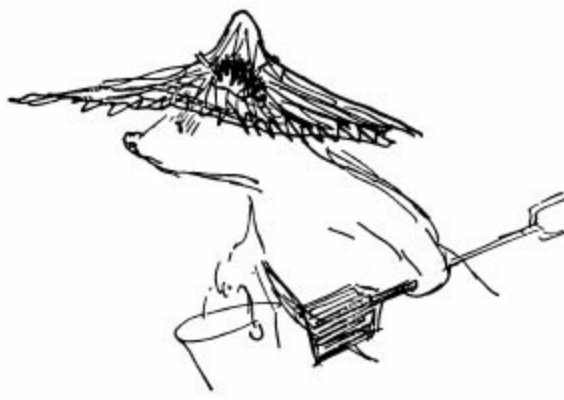
"I can't," gasped Paddington. "I think I'm stuck!"

And stuck he was. It took several stagehands, the fireman, and a lot of butter to remove him after the audience had gone. But he was far enough out to twist round and raise his hat to the cheering crowd before the curtain came down for the last time.

Several nights later, anyone going into Paddington's room would have found him sitting up in bed with his scrapbook, a pair of scissors, and a pot of paste. He was busy pasting in a picture of Sir Sealy Bloom, which the great man had signed: 'To Paddington, with grateful thanks.' There was also a signed picture from the lady called Sarah, and one of his proudest possessions – a newspaper cutting about the play headed PADDINGTON SAVES THE DAY!

Mr Gruber had told him that the photographs were probably worth a bit of money, but after much thought he had decided not to part with them. In any case, Sir Sealy Bloom had given him his twenty pence back *and* a pair of opera glasses.





Chapter Seven

Adventure at the Seaside

ONE MORNING MR Brown tapped the barometer in the hall. "It looks as if it's going to be a nice day," he said. "How about a trip to the sea?"

His remark was greeted with enthusiasm by the rest of the family, and in no time at all the house was in an uproar.

Mrs Bird started to cut a huge pile of sandwiches while Mr Brown got the car ready. Jonathan and Judy searched for their bathing suits and Paddington went up to his room to pack. An outing which involved Paddington was always rather a business, as he insisted on taking all his things with him. As time went by he had acquired lots of things. As well as his suitcase, he now had a smart weekend grip with the initials P.B. inscribed on the side and a paper carrier-bag for the odds and ends.

For the summer months Mrs Brown had bought him a sun hat. It was made of straw and very floppy. Paddington liked it, for by turning the brim up or down, he could make it different shapes, and it was really like having several hats in one.

"When we get to Brightsea," said Mrs Brown, "we'll buy you a bucket and spade. Then you can make a sand-castle."

"And you can go to the pier," said Jonathan, eagerly. "They've some super machines on the pier. You'd better bring plenty of coins."

"And we can go swimming," added Judy. "You *can* swim, can't you?"

"Not very well, I'm afraid," replied Paddington. "You see, I've never been to the seaside before!"

"*Never* been to the seaside!" Everyone stopped what they were doing and stared at Paddington.

"Never," said Paddington.

They all agreed that it must be nice to be going to the seaside for the first time in one's life; even Mrs Bird began talking about the time she first went to Brightsea, many years before. Paddington became very excited as they told him all about the wonderful things he was going to see.

The car was crowded when they started off. Mrs Bird, Judy, and Jonathan sat in the back. Mr Brown drove and Mrs Brown and Paddington sat beside him. Paddington liked sitting in the front, especially when the window was open, so that he could poke his head out in the cool breeze. After a minor delay when Paddington's hat blew off on the outskirts of London, they were soon on the open road.

“Can you smell the sea yet, Paddington?” asked Mrs Brown after a while.

Paddington poked his head out and sniffed. “I can smell something,” he said.

“Well,” said Mr Brown. “Keep on sniffing, because we’re almost there.” And sure enough, as they reached the top of a hill and rounded a corner to go down the other side, there it was in the distance, glistening in the morning sun.

Paddington’s eyes opened wide. “Look at all the boats on the dirt!” he cried, pointing in the direction of the beach with his paw.

Everyone laughed. “That’s not dirt,” said Judy. “That’s sand.” By the time they had explained all about sand to Paddington they were in Brightsea itself, and driving along the front. Paddington looked at the sea rather doubtfully. The waves were much bigger than he had imagined. Not so big as the ones he’d seen on his journey to England, but quite large enough for a small bear.

Mr Brown stopped the car by a shop on the esplanade and took out some money. “I’d like to fit this bear out for a day at the seaside,” he said to the lady behind the counter. “Let’s see now, we shall need a bucket and spade, a pair of sunglasses, one of those rubber tyres...” As he reeled off the list, the lady handed the articles to Paddington, who began to wish he had more than two paws. He had a rubber tyre round his middle which kept slipping down around his knees, a pair of sunglasses perched precariously on his nose, his straw hat, a bucket and spade in one hand, and his suitcase in the other.

“Photograph, sir?” Paddington turned to see an untidy man with a camera looking at him. “Only one pound, sir. Results guaranteed. Money back if you’re not satisfied.”

Paddington considered the matter for a moment. He didn’t like the look of the man very much, but he had been saving hard for several weeks and now had just over three pounds. It would be nice to have a picture of himself.

“Won’t take a minute, sir,” said the man, disappearing behind a black cloth at the back of the camera. “Just watch the birdie.”

Paddington looked around. There was no bird in sight as far as he could see. He went round behind the man and tapped him. The photographer, who appeared to be looking for something, jumped and then emerged from under his cloth. “How do you expect me to take your picture if you don’t stand in front?” he asked in an aggrieved voice. “Now I’ve wasted a plate, and” – he looked shiftily at Paddington – “that will cost you one pound!”

Paddington gave him a hard stare. “You said there was a bird,” he said. “And there wasn’t.”

“I expect it flew away when it saw your face,” said the man nastily. “Now where’s my pound?”

Paddington looked at him even harder for a moment. “Perhaps the bird took it when it flew away,” he said.

“Ha! Ha! Ha!” cried another photographer, who had been watching the proceedings with interest. “Fancy you being taken in by a bear, Charlie! Serves you right for trying to take photographs without a licence. Now be off with you before I call a policeman.”

He watched while the other man gathered up his belongings and slouched off in the direction of the pier, then he turned to Paddington. “These people are a nuisance,” he said. “Taking away the living from honest folk. You did quite right not to pay him any money. And if you’ll allow me, I’d like to take a nice picture of you myself, as a reward!”

The Brown family exchanged glances. “I don’t know,” said Mrs Brown. “Paddington always seems to fall on his feet.”

“That’s because he’s a bear,” said Mrs Bird darkly. “Bears always fall on their feet.” She led the

way on to the beach and carefully laid out a travelling rug on the sand behind a breakwater. "This will be as good a spot as any," she said. "Then we shall all know where to come back to, and no one will get lost."

"The tide's out," said Mr Brown. "So it will be nice and safe for bathing." He turned to Paddington. "Are you going in, Paddington?" he asked.

Paddington looked at the sea. "I might go for a paddle," he said.

"Well, hurry up," called Judy. "And bring your bucket and spade, then we can practise making sand-castles."

"Gosh!" Jonathan pointed to a notice pinned on the wall behind them. "Look... there's a sand-castle competition. Whizzo! First prize ten pounds for the biggest sand-castle!"

"Suppose we all join in and make one," said Judy. "I bet the three of us together could make the biggest one you've ever seen."



"I don't think you're allowed to," said Mrs Brown, reading the notice. "It says here everyone has to make their own."

Judy looked disappointed. "Well, I shall have a go, anyway. Come on, you two, let's have a bathe first, then we can start digging after lunch." She raced down the sand closely followed by Jonathan and Paddington. At least, Jonathan followed but Paddington only got a few yards before his life-belt slipped down and he went headlong in the sand.

"Paddington, *do* give me your suitcase," called Mrs Brown. "You can't take it in the sea with you. It'll get wet and be ruined."



Looking rather crestfallen, Paddington handed his things to Mrs Brown for safekeeping and then ran down the beach after the others. Judy and Jonathan were already a long way out when he got there, so he contented himself with sitting on the water's edge for a while, letting the waves swirl around him as they came in. It was a nice feeling, a bit cold at first, but he soon got warm. He decided the seaside was a nice place to be. He paddled out to where the water was deeper and then lay back in his rubber

tyre, letting the waves carry him gently back to the shore.

“Ten pounds! Supposing... supposing he won ten whole pounds!” He closed his eyes. In his mind he had a picture of a beautiful castle made of sand, like the one he’d once seen in a picture-book, with battlements and towers and a moat. It was getting bigger and bigger and everyone else on the beach had stopped to gather round and cheer. Several people said they had never seen such a big sand-castle, and... he woke with a start as he felt someone splashing water on him.



“Come on, Paddington,” said Judy. “Lying there in the sun fast asleep. It’s time for lunch, and we’ve got lots of work to do afterwards.” Paddington felt disappointed. It had been a nice sand-castle in his dream. He was sure it would have won first prize. He rubbed his eyes and followed Judy and Jonathan up the beach to where Mrs Bird had laid out the sandwiches – ham, egg, and cheese for everyone else, and special marmalade ones for Paddington – with ice-cream and fruit salad to follow.

“I vote,” said Mr Brown, who had in mind an after-lunch nap for himself, “that after we’ve eaten you all go off in different directions and make your own sand-castles. Then we’ll have our own private competition as well as the official one. I’ll give a pound to the one with the biggest castle.”

All three thought this was a good idea. “But don’t go too far away,” called Mrs Brown, as Jonathan, Judy and Paddington set off. “Remember the tide’s coming in!” Her advice fell on deaf ears; they were all much too interested in sand-castles. Paddington especially was gripping his bucket and spade in a very determined fashion.

The beach was crowded and he had to walk quite a long way before he found a deserted spot. First of all he dug a big moat in a circle, leaving himself a drawbridge so that he could fetch and carry the sand for the castle itself. Then he set to work carrying bucketloads of sand to build the walls of the castle.



He was an industrious bear and even though it was hard work and his legs and paws soon got tired, he persevered until he had a huge pile of sand in the middle of his circle. Then he set to work with his spade, smoothing out the walls and making the battlements. They were very good battlements, with holes for windows and slots for the archers to fire through.

When he had finished he stuck his spade in one of the corner towers, placed his hat on top of that, and then lay down inside next to his marmalade jar and closed his eyes. He felt tired, but very pleased with himself. With the gentle roar of the sea in his ears he soon went fast asleep.

“We’ve been all along the beach,” said Jonathan. “And we can’t see him anywhere.”

“He didn’t even have his life-belt with him,” said Mrs Brown anxiously. “Nothing. Just a bucket and spade.” The Browns were gathered in a worried group round the man from the lifesaving hut.

“He’s been gone several hours,” said Mr Brown. “And the tide’s been in over two!”

The man looked serious. “And you say he can’t swim?” he asked.

“He doesn’t even like having a bath much,” said Judy. “So I’m sure he can’t swim.”

“Here’s his photograph,” said Mrs Bird. “He only had it taken this morning.” She handed the man Paddington’s picture and then dabbed her eyes with a handkerchief. “I know something’s happened to him. He wouldn’t have missed tea unless something was wrong.”

The man looked at the picture. “We could send out a description,” he said, dubiously. “But it’s a job to see what he looks like by that. It’s all hat and dark glasses.”

“Can’t you launch a lifeboat?” asked Jonathan, hopefully.

“We could,” said the man. “If we knew where to look. But he might be anywhere.”

“Oh, dear,” Mrs Brown reached for her handkerchief as well. “I can’t bear to think about it.”

“Something will turn up,” said Mrs Bird, comfortingly. “He’s got a good head on his shoulders.”

“Well,” said the man, holding up a dripping straw hat. “You’d better have this, and in the meantime... we’ll see what we can do.”

“There, there, Mary!” Mr Brown held his wife’s arm. “Perhaps he just left it on the beach or something. It may have got picked up by the tide.” He bent down to pick up the rest of Paddington’s belongings. They seemed very small and lonely, lying there on their own.

“It’s Paddington’s hat all right,” said Judy, examining it. “Look – it’s got his mark inside!” She turned the hat inside out and showed them the outline of a paw mark in black ink and the words MY HAT – PADINGTON.

“I vote we all separate,” said Jonathan, “and comb the beach. We’ll stand more chance that way.”

Mr Brown looked dubious. “It’s getting dark,” he said.

Mrs Bird put down the travelling rug and folded her arms. “Well, I’m not going back until he’s found,” she said. “I couldn’t go back to that empty house – not without Paddington.”

“No one’s thinking of going back without him, Mrs Bird,” said Mr Brown. He looked helplessly out to sea. “It’s just...”

“P’raps he didn’t get swep’ out to sea,” said the lifesaving man, helpfully. “P’raps he’s just gone on the pier or something. There seems to be a big crowd heading that way. Must be something interesting going on.” He called out to a man who was just passing. “What’s going on at the pier, chum?”

Without stopping, the man looked back over his shoulder and shouted, “Chap just crossed the Atlantic all by ’isself on a raft. ’Undreds of days without food or water so they say!” He hurried on.

The lifesaving man looked disappointed. “Another of these publicity stunts,” he said. “We get ’em every year.”

Mr Brown looked thoughtful. “I wonder,” he said, looking in the direction of the pier.

“It would be just like him,” said Mrs Bird. “It’s the sort of thing that would happen to Paddington.”

“It’s got to be!” cried Jonathan. “It’s just got to be!”

They all looked at each other and then, picking up their belongings, joined the crowd hurrying in the direction of the pier. It took them a long time to force their way through the turnstile, for the news that

‘something was happening on the pier’ had spread and there was a great throng at the entrance. But eventually, after Mr Brown had spoken to a policeman, a way was made for them and they were escorted to the very end, where the paddle-steamers normally tied up.

A strange sight met their eyes. Paddington, who had just been pulled out of the water by a fisherman, was sitting on his upturned bucket talking to some reporters. Several of them were taking photographs while the rest fired questions at him.

“Have you come all the way from America?” asked one reporter.

The Browns, hardly knowing whether to laugh or cry, waited eagerly for Paddington’s reply.

“Well, no,” said Paddington, truthfully, after a moment’s pause. “Not America. But I’ve come a long way.” He waved a paw vaguely in the direction of the sea. “I got caught by the tide, you know.”

“And you sat in that bucket all the time?” asked another man, taking a picture.

“That’s right,” replied Paddington. “And I used my spade as a paddle. It was lucky I had it with me.”

“Did you live on plankton?” queried another voice.

Paddington looked puzzled. “No,” he said. “Marmalade.”

Mr Brown pushed his way through the crowd. Paddington jumped up and looked rather guilty.

“Now then,” said Mr Brown, taking his paw. “That’s enough questions for today. This bear’s been at sea for a long time and he’s tired. In fact,” he looked meaningfully at Paddington, “he’s been at sea all the afternoon!”

“Is it still only Tuesday?” asked Paddington, innocently. “I thought it was much later than that!”

“Tuesday,” said Mr Brown firmly. “And we’ve been worried to death over you!”

Paddington picked up his bucket and spade and jar of marmalade. “Well,” he said. “I bet not many bears have gone to sea in a bucket, all the same.”

It was dark when they drove along Brightsea front on their way home. The promenade was festooned with coloured lights and even the fountains in the gardens kept changing colour. It all looked very pretty. But Paddington, who was lying in the back of the car wrapped in a blanket, was thinking of his sand-castle.

“I bet mine was bigger than anyone else’s,” he said, sleepily.

“Bet you mine was the biggest,” said Jonathan.

“I think,” said Mr Brown, hastily, “you’d all better have a pound just to make sure.”

“Perhaps we can come again another day,” said Mrs Brown. “Then we can have another competition. How about that, Paddington?”

There was no reply from the back of the car. Sand-castles, paddling his bucket all across the harbour, and the sea air had proved too much for Paddington. He was fast asleep.



Chapter Eight

A Disappearing Trick

“OOOH,” SAID PADDINGTON, “is it really for me?” He stared hungrily at the cake. It really was a wonderful cake. One of Mrs Bird’s best. It was covered with sugar icing and it had a cream and marmalade filling. On the top there was one candle and the words: TO PADDINGTON. WITH BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY BIRTHDAY — FROM EVERYONE.

It had been Mrs Bird’s idea to have a birthday party. Paddington had been with them for two months. No one, not even Paddington, knew quite how old he was, so they decided to start again and call him one. Paddington thought this was a good idea, especially when he was told that bears had two birthdays every year – one in the summer and one in the winter.

“Just like the Queen,” said Mrs Bird. “So you ought to consider yourself very important.”

Paddington did. In fact, he went round to Mr Gruber straight away and told him the good news. Mr Gruber looked impressed and was pleased when Paddington invited him to the party.

“It’s not often anyone invites me out, Mr Brown,” he said. “I don’t know when I went out last and I shall look forward to it very much indeed.”

He didn’t say any more at the time, but the next morning a van drew up outside the Browns’ house and delivered a mysterious-looking parcel from all the shopkeepers in the Portobello Market.

“Aren’t you a lucky bear,” exclaimed Mrs Brown, when they opened the parcel and saw what was inside. It was a nice new shopping basket on wheels, with a bell on the side that Paddington could ring to let people know he was coming.

Paddington scratched his head. “It’s a job to know what to do first,” he said, as he carefully placed the basket with the other presents. “I shall have a lot of ‘thank you’ letters to write.”

“Perhaps you’d better leave them until tomorrow,” said Mrs Brown hastily. Whenever Paddington wrote any letters he generally managed to get more ink on himself than on the paper, and he was looking so unusually smart, having had a bath the night before, that it seemed a pity to spoil it.

Paddington looked disappointed. He liked writing letters. “Perhaps I can help Mrs Bird in the kitchen,” he said hopefully.

“I’m glad to say,” said Mrs Bird, as she emerged from the kitchen, “that I’ve just finished. But you can lick the spoon if you like.” She had bitter memories of other occasions when Paddington had

‘helped’ in the kitchen. “But not too much,” she warned, “or you won’t have room for this.”

It was then that Paddington saw his cake for the first time. His eyes, usually large and round, became so much larger and rounder, that even Mrs Bird blushed with pride. “Special occasions demand special things,” she said, and hurried off in the direction of the dining-room.

Paddington spent the rest of the day being hurried from one part of the house to another as preparations were made for his party. Mrs Brown was busy tidying up. Mrs Bird was busy in the kitchen. Jonathan and Judy were busy with the decorations. Everyone had a job except Paddington.

“I thought it was supposed to be *my* birthday,” he grumbled, as he was sent packing into the drawing-room for the fifth time after upsetting a box of marbles over the kitchen floor.

“So it is, dear,” said a flustered Mrs Brown. “But your time comes later.” She was beginning to regret telling him that bears had two birthdays every year, for already he was worrying about when the next one was due.

“Now just you watch out of the window for the postman,” she said, lifting him up on to the window-sill. But Paddington didn’t seem very keen on this. “Or else,” she said, “practise doing some of your conjuring tricks, ready for this evening.”

Among Paddington’s many presents was a conjuring outfit from Mr and Mrs Brown. It was a very expensive one from Barkridges. It had a special magic table, a large mystery box which made things disappear if you followed the instructions properly, a magic wand and several packs of cards. Paddington emptied them all over the floor and settled down in the middle to read the book of instructions.

He sat there for a long time, studying the pictures and diagrams, and reading everything twice to make sure. Every now and then he absent-mindedly dipped a paw into his marmalade pot, and then, remembering it was his birthday and that there was a big tea to come, he reached up and stood the jar on the magic table before returning to his studies.

The first chapter was called SPELLS. It showed how to wave the magic wand and the correct way to say ABRACADABRA. Paddington stood up clutching the book in one paw, and waved the wand several times through the air. He also tried saying ABRACADABRA. He looked round. Nothing seemed to have changed, and he was just about to try again, when his eyes nearly popped out of his head. The jar of marmalade which he’d placed on the magic table only a few minutes before had disappeared!

He searched hurriedly through the book. There was nothing about making marmalade disappear. Worse still, there was nothing about making it come back again, either. Paddington decided it must be a very powerful spell to make a whole pot vanish into thin air.

He was about to rush outside and tell the others when he thought better of it. It might be a good trick to do in the evening, especially if he could persuade Mrs Bird to give him another jar. He went out into the kitchen and waved his wand a few times in Mrs Bird’s direction, just to make sure.

“I’ll give you ABRACADABRA,” said Mrs Bird, pushing him out again. “And be careful with that stick or you’ll have someone’s eye out.”

Paddington returned to the drawing-room and tried saying his spell backwards. Nothing happened, so he started reading the next chapter of the instruction book, which was called THE MYSTERY OF THE DISAPPEARING EGG.

“I shouldn’t have thought you needed any book to tell you that,” said Mrs Bird at lunch time, as Paddington told them all about it. “The way you gobble your food is nobody’s business.”

“Well,” said Mr Brown, “so long as you don’t try sawing anyone in half this evening, I don’t mind.”

“I was only joking,” he added hurriedly, as Paddington turned an inquiring gaze on him. Nevertheless, as soon as lunch was over, Mr Brown hurried down the garden and locked up his tools. With Paddington there was no sense in taking chances.

As it happened he had no cause to worry, for Paddington had far too many things on his mind what with one thing and another. The whole family was there for tea as well as Mr Gruber. Several other people came along too, including the Browns’ next door neighbour, Mr Curry. The last named was a most unwelcome visitor. “Just because there’s a free tea,” said Mrs Bird. “I think it’s disgusting, taking the crumbs off a young bear’s plate like that. He’s not even been invited!”

“He’ll have to look slippery if he gets any crumbs off Paddington’s plate,” said Mr Brown. “All the same, it *is* a bit thick, after all the things he’s said in the past. And not even bothering to wish him many happy returns.”

Mr Curry had a reputation in the neighbourhood for meanness and for poking his nose into other people’s business. He was also very bad-tempered, and was always complaining about the least little thing which met with his disapproval. In the past that had often included Paddington, which was why the Browns had not invited him to the party.

But even Mr Curry had no cause to complain about the tea. From the huge birthday cake down to the last marmalade sandwich, everyone voted it was the best tea they had ever had. Paddington himself was so full he had great difficulty in mustering enough breath to blow out the candle. But at last he managed it without singeing his whiskers, and everyone, including Mr Curry, applauded and wished him a happy birthday.



“And now,” said Mr Brown, when the noise had died down. “If you’ll all move your seats back, I think Paddington has a surprise for us.”

While everyone was busy moving their seats to one side of the room, Paddington disappeared into the drawing-room and returned carrying his conjuring outfit. There was a short delay while he erected his magic table and adjusted the mystery box, but soon all was ready. The lights were turned off except for a standard lamp and Paddington waved his wand for quiet.

“Ladies and gentlemen,” he began, consulting his instruction book, “my next trick is impossible!”

“But you haven’t done one yet,” grumbled Mr Curry.

Ignoring the remark, Paddington turned over the page. “For this trick,” he said, “I shall require an egg.”

“Oh dear,” said Mrs Bird, as she hurried out to the kitchen, “I know something dreadful is going to happen.”

Paddington placed the egg in the centre of his magic table and covered it with a handkerchief. He

muttered ABRACADABRA several times and then hit the handkerchief with his wand.

Mr and Mrs Brown looked at each other. They were both thinking of their carpet. "Hey presto!" said Paddington, and pulled the handkerchief away. To everyone's surprise the egg had completely disappeared.

"Of course," said Mr Curry, knowledgeably, above the applause, "it's all done by sleight of paw. But very good though, for a bear. Very good indeed. Now make it come back again!"

Feeling very pleased with himself, Paddington took his bow and then felt in the secret compartment behind the table. To his surprise he found something much larger than an egg. In fact... it was a jar of marmalade. It was the one that had disappeared that very morning! He displayed it in his paw; the applause for this trick was even louder.

"Excellent," said Mr Curry, slapping his knee. "Making people think he was going to find an egg, and it was a jar of marmalade all the time. Very good indeed!"

Paddington turned over a page. "And now," he announced, flushed with success, "the disappearing trick!" He took a bowl of Mrs Brown's best flowers and placed them on the dining-table alongside his mystery box. He wasn't very happy about this trick, as he hadn't had time to practise it, and he wasn't at all sure how the mystery box worked or even where you put the flowers to make them disappear.

He opened the door in the back of the box and then poked his head round the side. "I shan't be a minute," he said, and then disappeared from view again.

The audience sat in silence. "Rather a slow trick, this one," said Mr Curry, after a while.

"I hope he's all right," said Mrs Brown. "He seems very quiet."

"Well, he can't have gone far," said Mr Curry. "Let's try knocking." He got up, knocked loudly on the box, and then put his ear to it. "I can hear someone calling," he said. "It sounds like Paddington. I'll try again." He shook the box and there was an answering thump from inside.

"I think he's shut himself in," said Mr Gruber. He too knocked on the box and called out, "Are you all right, Mr Brown?"

"NO!" said a small and muffled voice. "It's dark and I can't read my instruction book."

"Quite a good trick," said Mr Curry, some while later after they had prised open Paddington's mystery box with a penknife. He helped himself to some biscuits. "The disappearing bear. Very unusual! But I still don't see what the flowers were for."

Paddington looked at him suspiciously, but Mr Curry was far too busy with the biscuits.

"For my next trick," said Paddington, "I would like a watch."

"Are you sure?" asked Mrs Brown, anxiously. "Wouldn't anything else do?"

Paddington consulted his instruction book. "It says a watch," he said, firmly.

Mr Brown hurriedly pulled his sleeve down over his left wrist. Unfortunately, Mr Curry, who was in an unusually good mood after his free tea, stood up and offered his. Paddington took it gratefully and placed it on the table. "This is a jolly good trick," he said, reaching down into his box and pulling out a small hammer.

He covered the watch with a handkerchief and then hit it several times. Mr Curry's expression froze. "I hope you know what you're doing, young bear," he said.

Paddington looked rather worried. Having turned over the page he'd just read the ominous words, "It is necessary to have a second watch for this trick." Gingerly, he lifted up a corner of the handkerchief. Several cogs and some pieces of glass rolled across the table. Mr Curry let out a roar

of wrath.

“I think I forgot to say ABRACADABRA,” faltered Paddington.

“ABRACADABRA!” shouted Mr Curry, beside himself with rage. “ABRACADABRA!” He held up the remains of his watch. “Twenty years I’ve had this watch, and now look at it! This will cost someone a pretty penny!”

Mr Gruber took out an eyeglass and examined the watch carefully. “Nonsense,” he said, coming to Paddington’s rescue. “It’s one you bought from me for three pounds six months ago! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, telling lies in front of a young bear!”

“Rubbish!” spluttered Mr Curry. He sat down heavily on Paddington’s chair. “Rubbish! I’ll give you...” his voice trailed away and a peculiar expression came over his face. “I’m sitting on something,” he said. “Something wet and sticky!”

“Oh dear,” said Paddington. “I expect it’s my disappearing egg. It must have reappeared!”

Mr Curry grew purple in the face. “I’ve never been so insulted in my life,” he said. “Never!” He turned at the door and waved an accusing finger at the company. “It’s the last time I shall ever come to one of *your* birthday parties!”

“Henry,” said Mrs Brown, as the door closed behind Mr Curry, “you really oughtn’t to laugh.”

Mr Brown tried hard to keep a straight face. “It’s no good,” he said, bursting out. “I can’t help it.”

“Did you see his face when all the cogs rolled out?” said Mr Gruber, his face wet with tears.

“All the same,” said Mr Brown, when the laughter had died down. “I think perhaps you ought to try something a little less dangerous next time, Paddington.”

“How about that card trick you were telling me about, Mr Brown?” asked Mr Gruber. “The one where you tear up a card and make it come out of someone’s ear.”

“Yes, that sounds a nice quiet one,” said Mrs Brown. “Let’s see that.”

“You wouldn’t like another disappearing trick?” asked Paddington, hopefully.

“Quite sure, dear,” said Mrs Brown.

“Well,” said Paddington, rummaging in his box, “it’s not very easy doing card tricks when you’ve only got paws, but I don’t mind trying.”

He offered a pack of cards to Mr Gruber, who solemnly took one from the middle and then memorised it before replacing the card. Paddington waved his wand over the pack several times and then withdrew a card. He held up the seven of spades. “Was this it?” he said to Mr Gruber.

Mr Gruber polished his glasses and stared. “You know,” he said, “I do believe it was!”

“I bet all the cards are the same,” whispered Mr Brown to his wife.

“Ssh!” said Mrs Brown. “I thought he did it very well.”

“This is the difficult bit,” said Paddington, tearing it up. “I’m not very sure about this part.” He put the pieces under his handkerchief and tapped them several times with the wand.

“Oh!” said Mr Gruber, rubbing the side of his head. “I felt something go pop in my ear just then. Something cold and hard.” He felt in his ear. “Why I do believe...” He held up a shining round object to the audience. “It’s a sovereign! My birthday present for Paddington! Now I wonder how it got in there?”



“Oooh!” said Paddington, as he proudly examined it. “I didn’t expect that. Thank you very much, Mr Gruber.”

“Well,” said Mr Gruber. “It’s only a small present I’m afraid, Mr Brown. But I’ve enjoyed the little chats we’ve had in the mornings. I look forward to them very much and, er,” he cleared his throat and looked around, “I’m sure we all hope you have many more birthdays!”

When the chorus of agreement had died down, Mr Brown rose and looked at the clock. “And now,” he said, “it’s long past all our bedtimes, most of all yours, Paddington, so I suggest we all do a disappearing trick now.”

“I wish,” said Paddington, as he stood at the door waving everyone goodbye, “I wish my Aunt Lucy could see me now. She’d feel very pleased.”

“You’ll have to write and tell her all about it, Paddington,” said Mrs Brown, as she took his paw. “But in the morning,” she added hastily. “You’ve got clean sheets, remember.”

“Yes,” said Paddington. “In the morning. I expect if I did it now I’d get ink over the sheets or something. Things are always happening to me.”

“You know, Henry,” said Mrs Brown, as they watched Paddington go up the stairs to bed, looking rather sticky and more than a little sleepy, “it’s nice having a bear about the house.”

Postscript

A Bear Called Paddington didn't begin life as a book. The opening paragraph was simply an early-morning doodle brought on by the certain knowledge that if I didn't put something down on the blank sheet of paper in my typewriter nobody else would.

However, it caught my fancy, so I wrote a second paragraph, then a third, until by the end of the day I had completed a whole story.

The source of my inspiration was a toy bear sitting on the mantelpiece of our one-room flat near London's Portobello market. I had bought it in desperation the previous Christmas Eve as a stocking-filler for my wife, and we called him Paddington because I had always liked the sound of it and names are important, particularly if you are a bear and don't have very much else in the world.

In no time at all he became part of the family. In fact, for a long time he *was* the family and was treated as such; joining us at meal times, sharing our holidays, occasionally interrupting our conversations.

Ten working days later, having completed seven more stories, I realised I had a book on my hands. It hadn't been written with any particular age group in mind, which was fortunate, because until then I had always written for adults and if I had consciously aimed at a young audience I might have 'written down', which is always a bad idea. Anyway, I agree with Gertrude Stein: a book is a book is a book, and it should be enjoyable on all levels.

It was lucky, too, that I picked on a bear for my doodling. The late Peter Bull, actor and arctophile, once said that whereas dolls are always wondering what they are going to wear next, you never know quite what bears are thinking, and he was right. You feel you can trust them with your secrets and they won't pass them on. Another thing about bears is that one perceives them in the wild lumbering around on two legs, so they are already halfway to being human.

The first book in a series is always the most fun to write. The world is your oyster and you can go wherever your fancy takes you. However, at the same time you build in certain parameters which are there for all time. Although Paddington's adventures take place in the present, I always picture him going home at the end of the day to the rather safer pre-war world which I remember from my childhood.

I don't think they ever realised it, but my parents served as role models for Mr and Mrs Brown. (There is also a lot of my father in Paddington, for he was very law-abiding and never went out without a hat in case he bumped into someone he knew and had nothing to raise.) Jonathan and Judy were there to bridge the age gap. Mrs Bird was based on memories of my childhood best friend's live-in nanny. Paddington's 'best friend', Mr Gruber, is important because he knows what it is like to be a refugee in a strange country, so they have a special relationship. The Browns' long-suffering next-door neighbour, Mr Curry, triggers off many a story. I have only to put the two together and things start to happen. 'Number 32 Windsor Gardens' I saw as being just around the corner from our flat.

Paddington was, and always will be, very real to me. He has his feet firmly on the ground and he has a very strong sense of right and wrong. So much so that when I come up against a problem in my own life I often ask myself what he would do.

The fact that others believe in him just as much is rewarding. For example, the boy who wrote saying he was so used to Paddington being the name of a bear it now seemed a funny name for a station. And the nun who wrote to me out of the blue telling me she was in hospital – I suspect suffering from an incurable disease – and thanking me for all the comfort Paddington brought her. He couldn't have had a greater compliment paid him.

Writing comedy is a serious business; a matter of distillation, of finding exactly the right word. On the whole, without the benefit of an immediate audience response, one works in a kind of vacuum.

However, I did once find myself sitting in a restaurant and overhearing two men in the next booth discussing Paddington's exploits. They were both laughing their heads off, and that was very satisfying because in the circumstances it was obviously genuine. I didn't let on I was there for fear of embarrassing both parties.

Then, some years ago, on a promotional tour in Australia, I had to carry a stuffed Paddington everywhere I went. Each time I boarded a plane I knew it wouldn't be long before he would be asked up to the flight deck. On one occasion I left him up there, strapped into a spare bucket seat while the crew explained the controls. A little later on I received a second message asking if I would mind him staying up there because he wanted to practise landing the plane. I didn't tell the other passengers!

When I wrote the first book I had no idea that he would eventually be honoured with a life-size bronze statue on the station itself. People use the plinth to sit on while they eat their sandwiches, which is rather apposite really, and it's nice to think they will probably still be doing it long after I have gone.

I don't suppose we shall ever meet, but if we do I shan't be at all surprised. Being a polite bear I'm sure he will raise his hat, and as we go our separate ways I shall regret not wearing one too, so that I could raise it in return as a mark of respect.

MICHAEL BOND

April 2001

MICHAEL BOND
MORE ABOUT
PADDINGTON

Classic adventures of the bear from Darkest Peru.



illustrated by PEGGY FORTNUM

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HarperCollins *Children's Books*

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Chapter One

A FAMILY GROUP

The Browns' house at number thirty-two Windsor Gardens was unusually quiet. It was a warm summer day and all the family with the exception of Paddington, who had mysteriously disappeared shortly after lunch, were sitting on the veranda enjoying the afternoon sun.

Apart from the faint rustle of paper as Mr Brown turned the pages of an enormous book and the click of Mrs Brown's knitting needles, the only sound came from Mrs Bird, their housekeeper, as she prepared the tea things.

Jonathan and Judy were both much too busy piecing together a huge jigsaw puzzle to utter a word.

It was Mr Brown who first broke the silence. "You know," he began, taking a long draw at his pipe, "it's a funny thing, but I've been through this encyclopedia a dozen times and there's no mention of a bear like Paddington."

"Ah, and there won't be," exclaimed Mrs Bird. "Bears like Paddington are very rare. And a good thing too, if you ask me, or it would cost us a small fortune in marmalade." Mrs Bird was always going on about Paddington's fondness for marmalade, but it was noticeable she was never without a spare jar in the larder in case of emergency.

"Anyway, Henry," said Mrs Brown, as she put down her knitting, "why do you want to look up Paddington?"

Mr Brown twirled his moustache thoughtfully. "Oh, no reason in particular," he answered vaguely. "I was interested – that's all."

Having a bear in the family was a heavy responsibility – especially a bear like Paddington – and Mr Brown took the matter very seriously.

"The point is," he said, snapping the book shut, "if he's staying with us for good..."

"If?" There was a chorus of alarm from the rest of the family, not to mention Mrs Bird.

"What on earth do you mean, Henry?" exclaimed Mrs Brown. "If Paddington is staying with us for good. Of course he is."

"As he's staying with us," said Mr Brown, hastily, "there are one or two things I have in mind. First of all I've been thinking of decorating the spare room for him."

There was general agreement at this. Ever since he had first arrived on the scene, Paddington had occupied the guest-room. Being a polite bear he had never said anything, even when he'd been turned out to make room for visitors, but it had long been thought he should have a room of his own.

"The second thing," continued Mr Brown, "is a photograph. I think it would be nice if we could

have a family group taken.”

“A photograph?” exclaimed Mrs Bird. “What a funny thing you should say that.”

“Oh?” said Mr Brown. “Why’s that?”

Mrs Bird busied herself with the teapot. “You’ll see – all in good time,” she said. And try as they might that was all the others could get from her.

Fortunately, she was saved any further questions, for at that moment there came a loud banging noise from the direction of the dining-room and Paddington himself appeared at the French windows. He was struggling with a large cardboard box, across the top of which lay a mysterious-looking metal object with long spikes on one end.

But it wasn’t so much what he was carrying that caused a gasp of astonishment from the others. It was his general appearance.

His fur had an unusually soft, golden look about it, and his ears, or as much of them as they could see poking out from beneath the wide brim of his old hat, were as black and shiny as the tip of his nose. Even his paws and whiskers had to be seen to be believed.

Everyone sat up in amazement and Mrs Brown dropped several stitches.

“Good heavens!” spluttered Mr Brown, nearly spilling his tea over the encyclopedia. “What *have* you been doing to yourself?”

“I’ve been having a bath,” said Paddington, looking most offended.

“A *bath*?” repeated Judy, slowly. “Without being asked?”

“Crikey!” said Jonathan. “We’d better put the flags out.”

“You *are* all right?” asked Mr Brown. “I mean – you’re not feeling ill or anything?”

Paddington became even more injured at the excitement he had caused. It wasn’t as if he *never* had a wash. In fact he had one most mornings. It was simply that he had decided views on baths in particular. Having a bath meant getting his fur wet all over and it took a long time to dry. “I only wanted to look nice for the photograph,” he said firmly.

“The photograph?” everyone echoed. It was really uncanny the way Paddington knew about things.

“Yes,” said Paddington. An important expression came over his face as he bent down and started undoing the string round his cardboard box. “I’ve bought myself a camera.”

There was a moment’s silence while the Browns watched the back view of Paddington bending over the box.

“A camera,” said Mrs Brown at last. “But aren’t they very expensive?”

“This one wasn’t,” said Paddington, breathing hard. He stood up, clutching the biggest camera the Browns had ever seen. “I bought it at a sale in the market. It was only three pounds!”

“Three pounds!” exclaimed Mr Brown looking most impressed. He turned to the others. “I must say I’ve never known a bear with such an eye for a bargain as Paddington.”

“Gosh!” said Jonathan. “It’s got a hood to put over your head and everything.”

“What’s that long thing?” asked Judy.

“That’s a tripod,” explained Paddington proudly. He sat down on the floor and began unfolding the legs. “It’s to stand the camera on so that it doesn’t shake.”

Mr Brown picked up the camera and examined it. As he turned it over some rusty screws and several old nails fell out. “Isn’t it rather old?” he asked, without thinking. “It looks as if someone’s been using it as a work-box instead of a camera.”

Paddington lifted the brim of his hat and gave Mr Brown a hard stare. “It’s a very rare sort,” he

replied. "The man in the bargain shop said so."

"Well, *I* think it's super," exclaimed Jonathan, excitedly. "Bags you take my picture first, Paddington."

"I've only got one plate," said Paddington decidedly. "Extra ones cost a lot and I haven't any pocket money left – so I'm afraid you'll all have to be in a group."

"It certainly looks most complicated, and rather large for a bear," remarked Mrs Brown as Paddington screwed the camera on to the tripod and then adjusted the legs so that they were the right height. "Are you sure you'll be able to work it?"

"I think so," said Paddington. His voice became muffled as he disappeared underneath the black hood at the back. "Mr Gruber lent me a book all about photography and I've been practising under the bedclothes."



Mr Gruber, who kept an antique shop in the Portobello market, was a close friend of Paddington and helped him with all his problems.

"Well, in that case" – Mr Brown took charge of the situation – "I suggest we all go on to the lawn and let Paddington take our picture while the sun's shining." And he led the way outside while Paddington bustled around erecting his camera and tripod.

In a few moments Paddington announced that everything was ready and he began arranging the group as he wanted them, running back to the camera every now and then to peer at them through the lens.

Because the camera was so near the ground he had to put Mr Brown crouching in a rather uncomfortable position behind Jonathan and Judy, with Mrs Brown and Mrs Bird sitting on either side.

Although he didn't say anything, Paddington was a bit disappointed with the view through the camera. He could just recognise Mr Brown because of his moustache, but the others were much more difficult. Everyone seemed blurred, almost as if they were standing in a fog. It was strange, for when he took his head out of the cloth it was quite sunny outside.

The Browns waited patiently while Paddington sat on the grass and consulted his instruction book. Almost at once he discovered a very interesting chapter headed focus. It explained how, if you wanted nice clear pictures, it was important to make sure the camera was the right distance away, and

properly adjusted. It even had a picture showing a man measuring the distance with a piece of string.



Several minutes went by, for Paddington was rather a slow reader, and there were a number of diagrams to examine.

“I hope he’s not too long,” said Mr Brown. “I think I’ve got cramp coming on.”

“He’ll be disappointed if you move,” said Mrs Brown. “He took such a lot of trouble arranging us all and it really looks very nice.”

“That’s all very well,” grumbled Mr Brown. “You’re sitting down.”

“Ssh!” replied Mrs Brown. “I think he’s almost ready now. He’s doing something with a piece of string.”

“What on earth is that for?” asked Mr Brown.

“It’s to measure you,” said Paddington, tying a loop in the end.

“Well, if you don’t mind,” protested Mr Brown, when he saw what Paddington was up to, “I’d much rather you tied the *other* end on to the camera instead of this end to my ear!” The rest of his sentence disappeared in a gurgle as Paddington pulled the string tight.

Paddington looked rather surprised and examined the knot round Mr Brown’s ear with interest. “I think I must have made a slip knot by mistake,” he announced eventually. Paddington wasn’t very good at knots – mainly because having paws made things difficult for him.

“Really, Henry,” said Mrs Brown. “Don’t make such a fuss. Anyone would think you’d been hurt.”

Mr Brown rubbed his ear, which had gone a funny mauve colour. “It’s *my* ear,” he said, “and it jolly well does hurt.”

“Now where’s he going?” exclaimed Mrs Bird, as Paddington hurried off towards the house.

“I expect he’s gone to measure the string,” said Jonathan.

“Huh!” said Mr Brown. “Well, I’m going to stand up.”

“Henry!” said Mrs Brown. “If you do I shall be very cross.”

“It’s too late anyway,” groaned Mr Brown. “My leg’s gone to sleep.”

Luckily for Mr Brown, Paddington arrived back at that moment. He stared hard at the sun and then at the waiting group. “I’m afraid you’ll have to come over here,” he said, after consulting his

instruction book. "The sun's moved."

"I'm not surprised," grumbled Mr Brown, as he sat on the lawn rubbing his leg. "At the rate we're going it will have set before we're finished."

"I never realised having a picture taken could be so complicated," said Mrs Bird.

"What I'm not sure about," whispered Judy, "is why Paddington bothered having a bath if *he's* taking the photograph."

"That's a point," said Mr Brown. "How *are* you going to be in the picture, Paddington?"

Paddington gave Mr Brown a strange look. That was something he hadn't thought of either, but he decided to meet that difficulty when it came. He had a lot of other important things to do first. "I'm going to press the shutter," he said, after a moment's thought, "and then run round the other side."

"But even bears can't run *that* fast," persisted Mr Brown.

"I'm sure Paddington knows best, Henry," whispered Mrs Brown. "And even if he doesn't, for goodness' sake don't say anything. If he finds out he's had a bath for nothing we shall never hear the last of it."

"It seems a very long hood," said Mrs Bird, looking towards the camera. "I can't see Paddington at all."

"That's because he's small," explained Jonathan. "He's had to lower the tripod."

The Browns sat very still with a fixed smile on their faces as Paddington came out from beneath his hood. He made some complicated adjustments to the front of the camera and then, after announcing he was about to fit the photographic plate, disappeared again.



Suddenly, to everybody's surprise, the camera and tripod began to rock backwards and forwards in a most dangerous manner.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mrs Bird. "Whatever's happening now?"

"Look out!" shouted Mr Brown. "It's coming towards us."

They all stood up and moved away, staring with wide-open eyes at the camera as it followed them. But when it got to within several feet it suddenly stopped, then turned left and headed towards a rose bush.

"I do hope he's all right," said Mrs Brown anxiously.

"I wonder if we ought to do anything," said Mrs Bird, as there was a muffled cry from Paddington.

But before anyone could reply, the camera rebounded from the rose bush and shot back across the lawn. It went twice round the pond in the middle and then jumped up in the air several times before toppling over, to land with a dull thud in the middle of Mr Brown's best flower bed.



"Good heavens!" shouted Mr Brown, as he rushed forward. "My petunias!"

"Never mind your petunias, Henry," exclaimed Mrs Brown. "What about Paddington?"

"Well, no wonder," said Mr Brown as he bent down and lifted the hood. "He's got his head stuck inside the camera!"

"I should be careful, Dad," said Jonathan as Mr Brown began pulling at Paddington's legs. "His whiskers might be caught in the shutter."

Mr Brown stopped pulling and crawled round to peer through the lens. "I can't see anything," he said after a moment's pause. "It's all dark inside." He tapped the case and there came another faint cry from within.

"Butter!" said Mrs Bird, hurrying towards the kitchen. "There's nothing like butter when anyone's stuck." Mrs Bird was a great believer in butter. She had used it several times in the past when Paddington had got himself stuck.

All the same, even with Jonathan holding one end and Mr Brown pulling on the other, it was some while before Paddington's head finally came away from the camera. He sat on the grass rubbing his ears and looking very crestfallen. Things hadn't gone at all according to plan.

"I vote," said Mr Brown, when order had finally been restored, "that we set everything up exactly as it was before and tie a string to the shutter. Then Paddington can sit in the group with us and work it from a distance. It'll be much safer that way."

Everyone agreed that this was a good idea, and while Mr Brown arranged the group once again, Paddington busied himself setting up his camera and fitting the photographic plate inside it – making sure to stand well back this time. There was a slight setback when he pulled the string too hard and the tripod fell over, but finally the big moment arrived. There was a click from the camera and everyone relaxed.

The man in the photographic shop looked most surprised when Mrs Bird, all the Browns, and Paddington trooped in through the door a little later.

"It's certainly a very rare sort," he said, examining Paddington's camera with interest. "Very rare. I've read about them of course – but I've never actually seen one before. It... it must have been kept

in a pantry or something. It seems to have a lot of butter inside it.”

“I had a bit of an accident when I tried to put the plate in,” said Paddington.

“We’re all very anxious to see the result of the photograph,” added Mr Brown hastily. “We were wondering if you could do it for us while we wait?”

The man said he would be only too pleased to oblige. From all he had seen and heard he was quite eager to see the picture, and he hurried off to his dark-room leaving the Browns alone in the shop. He couldn’t remember ever having a young bear photographer in the shop before.

When he returned there was a puzzled expression on his face. “You did say you took this picture today?” he asked, looking through the window at the bright sunshine.

“That’s right,” said Paddington, eyeing him suspiciously.

“Well, sir –” the man held the plate up to the light for Paddington to see, “it’s nice and sharp – and I can certainly see you all – but it looks as if it was foggy at the time. And these patches of light – like moonbeams – they’re very odd!”

Paddington took the plate from the man and examined it carefully. “I expect that’s where I had my torch on under the bedclothes,” he said at last.

“Well, I think it’s a very nice picture for a first attempt,” said Mrs Bird. “And I’d like six postcard prints, please. I’m sure Paddington’s Aunt Lucy in Peru would love one. She lives in the home for retired bears in Lima,” she added, for the benefit of the shopkeeper.

“Does she?” said the man, looking most impressed. “Well, it’s the first time I’ve ever had any pictures sent overseas – especially to a home for retired bears in Peru.”

He thought for a moment. “I tell you what,” he said, “if I could borrow this camera for a week to put in my shop window, I’ll not only do all the prints you want but I’ll take a photograph of each of you into the bargain. How’s that?”

“I might have known,” said Mr Brown, as they were walking home, “that if Paddington took our photographs something odd would happen. Fancy getting all these pictures for nothing!”

“Bears always fall on their feet,” said Mrs Bird, looking at Paddington.

But Paddington wasn’t listening. He was still thinking about his camera.

Early next morning he hurried down to the shop and was pleased to see it already occupied a position of honour in the middle of the window.

Underneath it was a notice which said: A VERY RARE TYPE OF EARLY CAMERA – NOW OWNED BY MR PADDINGTON BROWN – A YOUNG LOCAL BEAR GENTLEMAN.

But Paddington was even more pleased by another notice next to it which said: AN EXAMPLE OF HIS WORK – and underneath that was his picture.

It was a little blurred and there were several paw marks near the edge, but one or two people in the neighbourhood came up and congratulated him and several of them said they could quite clearly recognise everyone in it. All in all Paddington thought it had been a very good three pounds’ worth.



Chapter Two

A SPOT OF DECORATING

Paddington gave a deep sigh and pulled his hat down over his ears in an effort to keep out the noise. There was such a hullabaloo going on it was difficult to write up the notes in his scrapbook.

The excitement had all started when Mr and Mrs Brown and Mrs Bird received an unexpected invitation to a wedding. Luckily both Jonathan and Judy were out for the day or things might have been far worse. Paddington hadn't been included in the invitation, but he didn't really mind. He didn't like weddings very much – apart from the free cake – and he'd been promised a piece of that whether he went or not.

All the same he was beginning to wish everyone would hurry up and go. He had a special reason for wanting to be alone that day.

He sighed again, wiped the pen carefully on the back of his paw, and then mopped up some ink blots which somehow or other had found their way on to the table. He was only just in time, for at that moment the door burst open and Mrs Brown rushed in.

"Ah, there you are, Paddington!" She stopped short in the middle of the room and stared at him. "Why on earth are you wearing your hat indoors?" she asked. "And why is your tongue all blue?"

Paddington stuck out his tongue as far as he could. "It *is* a funny colour," he admitted, squinting down at it with interest. "Perhaps I'm sickening for something!"

"You'll be sickening for something all right if you don't clear up this mess," grumbled Mrs Bird as she entered. "Just look at it. Bottles of ink. Glue. Bits of paper. My best sewing scissors. Marmalade all over the table runner, and goodness knows what else."

Paddington looked around. It *was* in a bit of a state.

"I've almost finished," he announced. "I've just got to rule a few more lines and things. I've been writing my memories."

Paddington took his scrapbook very seriously and spent many long hours carefully pasting in pictures and writing up his adventures. Since he'd been at the Browns', so much had happened it was now more than half full.

"Well, make sure you *do* clear everything up," said Mrs Brown, "or we shan't bring you back any cake. Now do take care of yourself. And don't forget – when the baker comes we want two loaves." With that she waved goodbye and followed Mrs Bird out of the room.

"You know," said Mrs Bird, as she stepped into the car, "I have a feeling that bear has something

up his paw. He seemed most anxious for us to leave.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” said Mrs Brown. “I don’t see what he *can* do. We shan’t be away all that long.”

“Ah!” replied Mrs Bird darkly. “That’s as may be. But he’s been hanging about on the landing upstairs half the morning. I’m sure he’s up to something.”

Mr Brown, who didn’t like weddings much either, and was secretly wishing he could stay at home with Paddington, looked over his shoulder as he let in the clutch. “Perhaps I ought to stay as well,” he said. “Then I could get on with decorating his new room.”

“Now, Henry,” said Mrs Brown firmly. “You’re coming to the wedding and that’s that. Paddington will be quite all right by himself. He’s a very capable bear. And as for you wanting to get on with decorating his new room... you haven’t done a thing towards it for over a fortnight, so I’m sure it can wait another day.”

Paddington’s new room had become a sore point in the Brown household. It was over two weeks since Mr Brown had first thought of doing it. So far he had stripped all the old wallpaper from the walls, removed the picture rails, the wood round the doors, the door handle, and everything else that was loose, or that he had made loose, and bought a lot of bright new wallpaper, some whitewash, and some paint. There matters had rested.

In the back of the car Mrs Bird pretended she hadn’t heard a thing. An idea had suddenly come into her mind and she was hoping it hadn’t entered Paddington’s as well; but Mrs Bird knew the workings of Paddington’s mind better than most and she feared the worst. Had she but known, her fears were being realised at that very moment. Paddington was busy scratching out the words ‘AT A LEWSE END’ in his scrapbook and was adding, in large capital letters, the ominous ones: ‘DECKERATING MY NEW ROOM!’



It was while he’d been writing ‘AT A LEWSE END’ in his scrapbook earlier in the day that the idea had come to him. Paddington had noticed in the past that he often got his best ideas when he was ‘at a loose end’.

For a long while all his belongings had been packed away ready for the big move to his new room, and he was beginning to get impatient. Every time he wanted anything special he had to undo yards of string and brown paper.

Having underlined the words in red, Paddington cleared everything up, locked his scrapbook carefully in his suitcase, and hurried upstairs. He had several times offered to lend a paw with the decorating, but for some reason or other Mr Brown had put his foot down on the idea and hadn’t even

allowed him in the room while work was in progress. Paddington couldn't quite understand why. He was sure he would be very good at it.

The room in question was an old box-room which had been out of use for a number of years, and when he entered it, Paddington found it was even more interesting than he had expected.

He closed the door carefully behind him and sniffed. There was an exciting smell of paint and whitewash in the air. Not only that, but there were some steps, a trestle table, several brushes, a number of rolls of wallpaper, and a big pail of whitewash.

The room had a lovely echo as well, and he spent a long time sitting in the middle of the floor while he was stirring the paint, just listening to his new voice.

There were so many different and interesting things around that it was a job to know what to do first. Eventually Paddington decided on the painting. Choosing one of Mr Brown's best brushes, he dipped it into the pot of paint and then looked round the room for something to dab it on.

It wasn't until he had been working on the window-frame for several minutes that he began to wish he had started on something else. The brush made his arm ache, and when he tried dipping his paw in the paint pot instead and rubbing it on, more paint seemed to go on to the glass than the wooden part, so that the room became quite dark.



"Perhaps," said Paddington, waving the brush in the air and addressing the room in general, "perhaps if I do the ceiling first with the whitewash I can cover all the drips on the wall with the wallpaper."

But when Paddington started work on the whitewashing he found it was almost as hard as painting. Even by standing on tip-toe at the very top of the steps, he had a job to reach the ceiling. The bucket of whitewash was much too heavy for him to lift, so that he had to come down the steps every time in order to dip the brush in. And when he carried the brush up again, the whitewash ran down his paw and made his fur all matted.



Looking around him, Paddington began to wish he was still ‘at a loose end’. Things were beginning to get in rather a mess again. He felt sure Mrs Bird would have something to say when she saw it.

It was then that he had a brainwave. Paddington was a resourceful bear and he didn’t like being beaten by things. Recently he had become interested in a house which was being built nearby. He had first seen it from the window of his bedroom and since then he’d spent many hours talking to the men and watching while they hoisted their tools and cement up to the top floor by means of a rope and pulley. Once, Mr Briggs, the foreman, had even taken him up in the bucket too, and had let him lay several bricks.

Now the Browns’ house was an old one and in the middle of the ceiling there was a large hook where a big lamp had once hung. Not only that, but in one corner of the room there was a thin coil of rope as well...

Paddington set to work quickly. First he tied one end of the rope to the handle of the bucket. Then he climbed up the steps and passed the other end through the hook in the ceiling. But even so, when he had climbed down again, it still took him a long time to pull the bucket anywhere near the top of the steps. It was full to the brim with whitewash and very heavy, so that he had to stop every few seconds and tie the other end of the rope to the steps for safety.

It was when he undid the rope for the last time that things started to go wrong. As Paddington closed his eyes and leaned back for the final pull he suddenly felt to his surprise as if he was floating on air. It was a most strange feeling. He reached out one foot and waved it around. There was definitely nothing there. He opened one eye and then nearly let go of the rope in astonishment as he saw the bucket of whitewash going past him on its way down.

Suddenly everything seemed to happen at once. Before he could even reach out a paw or shout for help, his head hit the ceiling and there was a clang as the bucket hit the floor.

For a few seconds Paddington clung there, kicking the air and not knowing what to do. Then there was a gurgling sound from below. Looking down, he saw to his horror that all the whitewash was running out of the bucket. He felt the rope begin to move again as the bucket got lighter, and then it shot past him again as he descended, to land with a bump in the middle of a sea of whitewash.

Even then his troubles weren’t over. As he tried to regain his balance on the slippery floor, he let go of the rope, and with a rushing noise the bucket shot downwards again and landed on top of his head, completely covering him.



Paddington lay on his back in the whitewash for several minutes, trying to get his breath back and wondering what had hit him. When he did sit up and take the bucket off his head he quickly put it back on again. There was whitewash all over the floor, the paint pots had been upset into little rivers of brown and green, and Mr Brown's decorating cap was floating in one corner of the room. When Paddington saw it he felt very glad he'd left *his* hat downstairs.

One thing was certain – he was going to have a lot of explaining to do. And that was going to be even more difficult than usual, because he couldn't even explain to himself quite what had gone wrong.

It was some while later, when he was sitting on the upturned bucket thinking about things, that the idea of doing the wallpapering came to him. Paddington had a hopeful nature and he believed in looking on the bright side. If he did the wallpapering really well, the others might not even notice the mess he'd made.

Paddington was fairly confident about the wallpapering. Unknown to Mr Brown, he had often watched him in the past through a crack in the door, and it looked quite simple. All you had to do was to brush some sticky stuff on the back of the paper and then put it on the wall. The high parts weren't too difficult, even for a bear, because you could fold the paper in two and put a broom in the middle where the fold was. Then you simply pushed the broom up and down the wall in case there were any nasty wrinkles.

Paddington felt much more cheerful now he'd thought of the wallpapering. He found some paste already mixed in another bucket, which he put on top of the trestle while he unrolled the paper. It was a little difficult at first because every time he tried to unroll the paper he had to crawl along the trestle pushing it with his paws and the other end rolled up again and followed behind him. But eventually he managed to get one piece completely covered in paste.

He climbed down off the trestle, carefully avoiding the worst of the whitewash, which by now was beginning to dry in large lumps, and lifted the sheet of wallpaper on to a broom. It was a long sheet of paper, much longer than it had seemed when he was putting the paste on, and somehow or other, as Paddington waved the broom about over his head, it began to wrap itself around him.



After a struggle he managed to push his way out and headed in the general direction of a piece of wall. He stood back and surveyed the result. The paper was torn in several places, and there seemed to be a lot of paste on the outside, but Paddington felt quite pleased with himself. He decided to try another piece, then another, running backwards and forwards between the trestle and the walls as fast as his legs could carry him, in an effort to get it all finished before the Browns returned.

Some of the pieces didn't quite join, others overlapped, and on most of them were some very odd-looking patches of paste and whitewash. None of the pieces were as straight as he would have liked, but when he put his head on one side and squinted, Paddington felt the overall effect was quite nice, and he felt very pleased with himself.

It was as he was taking a final look round the room at his handiwork that he noticed something very strange. There was a window, and there was also a fireplace. But there was no longer any sign of a door. Paddington stopped squinting and his eyes grew rounder and rounder. He distinctly remembered there *had* been a door because he had come through it. He blinked at all four walls. It was difficult to see properly because the paint on the window-glass had started to dry and there was hardly any light coming through – but there most definitely wasn't a door!

"I can't understand it," said Mr Brown as he entered the dining-room. "I've looked everywhere and there's no sign of Paddington. I told you I should have stayed at home with him."

Mrs Brown looked worried. "Oh dear, I hope nothing's happened to him. It's so unlike him to go out without leaving a note."

"He's not in his room," said Judy.

"Mr Gruber hasn't seen him either," added Jonathan. "I've just been down to the market and he says he hasn't seen him since they had cocoa together this morning."

"Have *you* seen Paddington anywhere?" asked Mrs Brown as Mrs Bird entered, carrying a tray of supper things.

"I don't know about Paddington," said Mrs Bird. "I've been having enough trouble over the water pipes without missing bears. I think they've got an air lock or something. They've been banging away ever since we came in."

Mr Brown listened for a moment. "It *does* sound like water pipes," he said. "And yet... it isn't regular enough, somehow." He went outside into the hall. "It's a sort of thumping noise..."

"Crikey!" shouted Jonathan. "Listen... it's someone sending an S.O.S."

Everyone exchanged glances and then, in one voice, cried: "Paddington!"

"Mercy me," said Mrs Bird as they burst through the papered-up door. "There must have been an earthquake or something. And either that's Paddington or it's his ghost!" She pointed towards a small, white figure as it rose from an upturned bucket to greet them.

"I couldn't find the door," said Paddington, plaintively. "I think I must have papered it over when I did the decorating. It was there when I came in. I remember seeing it. So I banged on the floor with a broom handle."

"Gosh!" said Jonathan, admiringly. "What a mess!"

"You... papered... it over... when... you... did... the... decorating," repeated Mr Brown. He was a bit slow to grasp things sometimes.

"That's right," said Paddington. "I did it as a surprise." He waved a paw round the room. "I'm afraid it's in a bit of a mess, but it isn't dry yet."

While the idea was slowly sinking into Mr Brown's mind, Mrs Bird came to Paddington's rescue. "Now it's not a bit of good holding an inquest," she said. "What's done is done. And if you ask me it's a good thing too. Now perhaps we shall get some proper decorators in to do the job." With that she took hold of Paddington's paw and led him out of the room.



“As for you, young bear – you’re going straight into a hot bath before all that plaster and stuff sets hard!”

Mr Brown looked after the retreating figures of Mrs Bird and Paddington and then at the long trail of white footprints and pawmarks. “Bears!” he said, bitterly.

Paddington hung about in his room for a long time after his bath and waited until the last possible minute before going downstairs to supper. He had a nasty feeling he was in disgrace. But surprisingly the word ‘decorating’ wasn’t mentioned at all that evening.

Even more surprisingly, while he was sitting up in bed drinking his cocoa, several people came to see him and each of them gave him ten pence. It was all very mysterious, but Paddington didn’t like to ask why in case they changed their minds.

It was Judy who solved the problem for him when she came in to say good night.

“I expect Mummy and Mrs Bird gave you ten pence because they don’t want Daddy to do any more decorating,” she explained. “He always starts things and never finishes them. And I expect Daddy gave you one because he didn’t want to finish it anyway. Now they’re getting a proper decorator in, so everyone’s happy!”

Paddington sipped his cocoa thoughtfully. “Perhaps if I did another room I’d get another thirty pence,” he said.

“Oh no, you don’t,” said Judy sternly. “You’ve done quite enough for one day. If I were you I shouldn’t mention the word ‘decorating’ for a long time to come.”

“Perhaps you’re right,” said Paddington sleepily, as he stretched out his paws. “But I *was* at a loose end.”



Chapter Three

PADDINGTON TURNS DETECTIVE

The old box-room was finished at last and everyone, including Paddington, agreed that he was a very lucky bear to move into such a nice room. Not only was the paintwork a gleaming white, so that he could almost see his face in it, but the walls were gaily papered and he even had new furniture of his own as well.

“In for a penny, in for a pound!” Mr Brown had said. And he had bought Paddington a brand-new bed with special short legs, a spring mattress, and a cupboard for his odds and ends.

There were several other pieces of furniture and Mrs Brown had been extravagant and bought a thick pile carpet for the floor. Paddington was very proud of his carpet and he’d carefully spread some old newspapers over the parts where he walked so that his paws wouldn’t make it dirty.

Mrs Bird’s contribution had been some bright new curtains for the windows, which Paddington liked very much. In fact, the first night he spent in his new room he couldn’t make up his mind whether to have them drawn together so that he could admire them, or left apart so that he could see the view. He got out of bed several times and eventually decided to have one drawn and the other left back so that he could have the best of both worlds.

Then something strange caught his eye. Paddington made a point of keeping a torch by the side of his bed in case there was an emergency during the night, and it was while he was flashing it on and off to admire the drawn curtain that he noticed it. Each time he flashed the torch there was an answering flicker of light from somewhere outside. He sat up in bed, rubbing his eyes, and stared in the direction of the window.

He decided to try a more complicated signal. Two short flashes followed by several long ones. When he did so he nearly fell out of bed with surprise, for each time he sent a signal it was repeated in exactly the same way through the glass.

Paddington jumped out of bed and rushed to the window. He stayed there for a long while peering out at the garden, but he couldn’t see anything at all. Having made sure the window was tightly shut, he drew both curtains and hurried back to bed, pulling the clothes over his head a little farther than usual. It was all very mysterious and Paddington didn’t believe in taking any chances.



It was Mr Brown, at breakfast next morning, who gave him his first clue.

“Someone’s stolen my prize marrow!” he announced crossly. “They must have got in during the night.”

For some weeks past Mr Brown had been carefully nursing a huge marrow which he intended to enter for a vegetable show. He watered it morning and evening and measured it every night before going to bed.

Mrs Brown exchanged a glance with Mrs Bird. “Never mind, Henry, dear,” she said. “You’ve got several others almost as good.”

“I *do* mind,” grumbled Mr Brown. “And the others will never be as good – not in time for the show.”

“Perhaps it was one of the other competitors, Dad,” said Jonathan. “Perhaps they didn’t want you to win. It was a jolly good marrow.”

“That’s quite possible,” said Mr Brown, looking more pleased at the thought. “I’ve a good mind to offer a small reward.”

Mrs Bird hastily poured out some more tea. Both she and Mrs Brown appeared anxious to change the subject. But Paddington pricked up his ears at the mention of a reward. As soon as he had finished his toast and marmalade he asked to be excused and disappeared upstairs without even having a third cup of tea.

It was while she was helping Mrs Bird with the washing-up that Mrs Brown first noticed something odd going on in the garden.

“Look!” she said, nearly dropping one of the breakfast plates in her astonishment. “Behind the cabbage patch. Whatever is it?”

Mrs Bird followed her gaze out of the window to where something brown and shapeless kept bobbing up and down. Her face cleared. “It’s Paddington,” she said. “I’d recognise his hat anywhere.”

“Paddington?” echoed Mrs Brown. “But what on earth is he doing crawling about in the cabbage patch on his paws and knees?”

“He looks as if he’s lost something,” said Mrs Bird. “That’s Mr Brown’s magnifying glass he’s

got.”



Mrs Brown sighed. “Oh well, we shall know what it is soon enough, I expect.”

Unaware of the interest he was causing, Paddington sat down behind a raspberry cane and undid a small notebook which he opened at a page marked LIST OF CLEWS.

Recently Paddington had been reading a mystery story which Mr Gruber had lent him and he had begun to fancy himself as a detective. The mysterious flashes of the night before and the loss of Mr Brown’s marrow convinced him his opportunity had come at last.

So far it had all been rather disappointing. He had found several footprints, but he’d traced them all back to the house. In the big gap left by Mr Brown’s prize marrow there were two dead beetles and an empty seed packet, but that was all.

All the same, Paddington wrote the details carefully in his notebook and drew a map of the garden – putting a large X to mark the spot where the marrow had once been. Then he went back upstairs to his room in order to think things out. When he got there he made another addition to his map – a drawing of the new house which was being built beyond the edge of the garden. Paddington decided that was where the mysterious flashes must have come from the night before. He stared at it through his opera glasses for some time but the only people he could see were the builders.

Shortly afterwards, anyone watching the Browns’ house would have seen the small figure of a bear emerge from the front door and make its way towards the market. Fortunately for Paddington’s plans no one saw him leave, nor did anyone see him when he returned some while later carrying a large parcel in his arms. There was an excited gleam in his eyes as he crept back up the stairs and entered his bedroom, carefully locking the door behind him. Paddington liked parcels and this one was particularly interesting.

It took him a long time to undo the knots on the string, because his paws were trembling with excitement, but when he did pull the paper apart it revealed a long cardboard box, very brightly coloured, with the words MASTER DETECTIVE’S DISGUISE OUTFIT on the front.

Paddington had been having a battle with himself ever since he’d first seen it several days before in a shop window. Although seven pounds seemed an awful lot of money to pay for anything – especially when you only get one pound a week pocket money – Paddington felt very pleased with himself as he emptied the contents on to the floor. There was a long black beard, some dark glasses, a police whistle, several bottles of chemicals marked ‘Handle with Care’ – which Paddington hurriedly put back in the box – a finger-print pad, a small bottle of invisible ink, and a book of

instructions.



It seemed a very good disguise outfit. Paddington tried writing his name on the lid of the box with the invisible ink and he couldn't see it at all. Then he tested the finger-print pad with his paw and blew several blasts on the police whistle under the bedclothes. He rather wished he'd thought of doing it the other way round as a lot of the ink came off on the sheets, which was going to be difficult to explain.

But he liked the beard best of all. It had two pieces of wire for fitting over the ears, and when he turned and suddenly caught sight of himself in the mirror it quite made him jump. With his hat on, and an old raincoat of Jonathan's which Mrs Brown had put out for the jumble sale, he could hardly recognise himself. After studying the effect in the mirror from all possible angles, Paddington decided to try it out downstairs. It was difficult to walk properly; Jonathan's old coat was too long for him and he kept treading on it. Apart from that, his ears didn't seem to fit the beard as well as he would have liked, so that he had to hang on to it with one paw while he went backwards down the stairs, holding on to the banisters with the other paw. He was so intent on what he was doing that he didn't hear Mrs Bird coming up until she was right on top of him.



Mrs Bird looked most startled when she bumped into him. "Oh, Paddington," she began, "I was just coming to see you. I wonder if you would mind going down to the market for me and fetching half a pound of butter?"

"I'm not Paddington," said a gruff voice from behind the beard. "I'm Sherlock Holmes – the famous detective!"

“Yes, dear,” said Mrs Bird. “But don’t forget the butter. We need it for lunch.” With that she turned and went back down the stairs towards the kitchen. The door shut behind her and Paddington heard the murmur of voices.

He pulled off the beard disappointedly. “Thirty-five buns’ worth!” he said bitterly, to no one in particular. He almost felt like going back to the shop and asking for his money back. Thirty-five buns were thirty-five buns and it had taken him a long time to save that much money.

But when he got outside the front door Paddington hesitated. It seemed such a pity to waste his disguise, and even if Mrs Bird had seen through it, Mr Briggs, the foreman at the building site, might not. Paddington decided to have one more try. He might even pick up some more clues.

By the time he arrived at the new house he was feeling much more pleased with himself. Out of the corner of his eye he had noticed quite a number of people staring at him as he passed. And when he’d looked at them over the top of his glasses several of them had hurriedly crossed to the other side of the road.



He crept along outside the house until he heard voices. They seemed to be coming from an open window on the first floor and he distinctly recognised Mr Briggs’s voice among them. There was a ladder propped against the wall and Paddington clambered up the rungs until his head was level with the window-sill. Then he carefully peered over the edge.

Mr Briggs and his men were busy round a small stove making themselves a cup of tea. Paddington stared hard at Mr Briggs, who was in the act of pouring some water into the teapot, and then, after adjusting his beard, he blew a long blast on his police whistle.

There was a crash of breaking china as Mr Briggs jumped up. He pointed a trembling hand in the direction of the window.

“Cor!” he shouted. “Look! H’an apparition!” The others followed his gaze with open mouths. Paddington stayed just long enough to see four white faces staring at him and then he slid down the ladder on all four paws and hid behind a pile of bricks. Almost immediately there was the sound of excited voices at the window.

“Can’t see it now,” said a voice. “Must ’ave vanished.”

“Cor!” repeated Mr Briggs, mopping his brow with a spotted handkerchief. “Whatever it was, I

don't never want to see nothing like it again. Fair chilled me to the marrow it did!" With that he slammed the window shut and the voices died away.

From behind the pile of bricks Paddington could hardly believe his ears. He had never even dreamed that Mr Briggs and his men could be mixed up in the affair. And yet – he had definitely heard Mr Briggs say his marrow had been chilled.

After removing his beard and dark glasses, Paddington sat down behind the bricks and made several notes in his book with the invisible ink. Then he made his way slowly and thoughtfully in the direction of the grocer's.

It had been a very good day's detecting, and Paddington decided he would have to pay another visit to the building site when all was quiet.

It was midnight. All the household had long since gone to bed.

“You know,” said Mrs Brown, just as the clock was striking twelve, “it’s a funny thing, but I’m sure Paddington’s up to something.”

“There’s nothing funny in that,” replied Mr Brown sleepily. “He’s always up to *something*. What is it this time?”

“That’s just the trouble,” said Mrs Brown. “I don’t really know. But he was wandering around wearing a false beard this morning. He nearly startled poor Mrs Bird out of her wits. He’s been writing things in his notebook all the evening too, and do you know what?”

“No,” said Mr Brown, stifling a yawn. “What?”

“When I looked over his shoulder there was nothing there!”

“Oh well, bears will be bears,” said Mr Brown. He paused for a moment as he reached up to turn out the light. “That’s strange,” he said. “I could have sworn I heard a police whistle just then.”

“Nonsense, Henry,” said Mrs Brown. “You must be dreaming.”

Mr Brown shrugged his shoulders as he turned out the light. He was much too tired to argue. All the same he knew he *had* heard a whistle. But as he closed his eyes and prepared himself for sleep, it never crossed his mind that the cause of it might be Paddington.

Lots of things had been happening to Paddington since he’d crept out of the Browns’ house under cover of darkness and made his way round to the building site. So many things had happened, one after the other, that he almost wished he’d never decided to be a detective in the first place. He felt very glad when, in answer to several loud blasts on his whistle, a large black car drew up at the side of the road and two men in uniform got out.



“Hallo, hallo,” said the first of the men, looking hard at Paddington. “What’s going on here?”

Paddington pointed a paw dramatically in the direction of the new house. “I’ve captured a burglar!” he announced.

“A *what?*” asked the second policeman, peering at Paddington. He’d come across some very strange things in the course of duty, but he’d never been called out in the middle of the night by a

young bear before. This one seemed to be wearing a long black beard and a duffle coat. It was most unusual.

“A burglar,” repeated Paddington. “I think he’s the one that took Mr Brown’s marrow!”

“Mr Brown’s marrow?” repeated the first policeman, looking rather dazed as he followed Paddington through his secret entrance into the house.

“That’s right,” said Paddington. “Now he’s got my marmalade sandwiches. I took a big parcel of them inside with me in case I got hungry while I was waiting.”

“Of course,” said the second policeman, trying to humour Paddington. “Marmalade sandwiches.” He tapped his forehead as he looked at his colleague. “And where is the burglar now – eating your sandwiches?”

“I expect so,” said Paddington. “I shut him in the room and I put a piece of wood under the door so that he couldn’t get out. I got my beard caught in one of the sandwiches – so I switched my torch on to take some of the hairs out of the marmalade and then it happened!”

“What happened?” chorused the policemen. They were finding it rather difficult to keep up with Paddington’s description of the course of events.

“I saw someone flashing a light outside the window,” explained Paddington, as patiently as he could. “Then I heard footsteps coming up the stairs, so I lay in wait.” He pointed towards a door at the top of the stairs. “He’s in there!”

Before either of the policemen could ask any more questions there came the sound of banging and a voice cried, “Let me out!”

“Good heavens!” exclaimed the first policeman. “There *is* someone in there.” He looked at Paddington with renewed respect. “Did you get a description, sir?”

“He was about eight feet tall,” said Paddington, recklessly, “and he sounded very cross when he found he couldn’t get out.”

“Hmm!” said the second policeman. “Well, we’ll soon see about that. Stand back!” With that he pulled the piece of wood from under the door and flung it open, shining his torch into the room.

Everyone stood back and waited for the worst to happen. To their surprise, when the man came out it was another policeman.

“Locked in!” he exclaimed bitterly. “I see some lights flashing from an empty house, so I go to investigate... and what happens? I’m locked in... by a *bear*!” He pointed towards Paddington. “And if I’m not mistaken, that’s him!”

Paddington suddenly began to feel very small. All three policemen were looking at him, and in the excitement his beard had fallen off one ear.

“Hmm,” said the first policeman. “And what were *you* doing in an empty house at gone midnight, young fellow-me-bear? And wearing a disguise at that! I can see we shall have to take you along to the station for questioning.”

“It’s a bit difficult to explain,” said Paddington, sadly. “I’m afraid it’s going to take rather a long time. You see... it’s all to do with Mr Brown’s marrow – the one he was going to enter for the vegetable show...”

The policemen weren’t the only ones who found it all rather hard to understand. Mr Brown was still asking questions long after Paddington had been returned from the police station to the family’s safe keeping.

“I still don’t see how my losing a marrow has got anything to do with Paddington being arrested,”

he said for the hundredth time.

“But Paddington wasn’t arrested, Henry,” said Mrs Brown. “He was only detained for questioning. Anyway, he was only trying to get your marrow back for you. You ought to be very grateful.”

She sighed. She would have to tell her husband the truth sooner or later. She’d already told Paddington. “I’m afraid it’s all my fault really,” she said. “You see... *I* cut your marrow by mistake!”

“*You* did?” exclaimed Mr Brown. “You cut my prize marrow?”

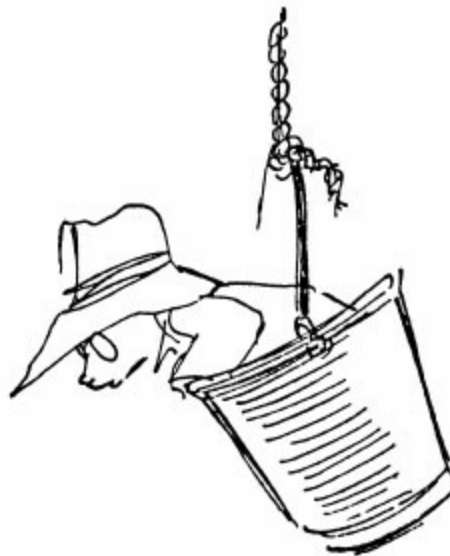
“Well, I didn’t realise it was your prize one,” said Mrs Brown. “And you know how fond you are of stuffed marrow. We had it for dinner last night!”

Back in his own room, Paddington felt quite pleased with himself as he got into bed. He’d have a lot to tell his friend, Mr Gruber in the morning. Once the inspector at the police station had heard his full story he had complimented Paddington on his bravery and ordered his immediate release.

“I wish there were more bears about like you, Mr Brown,” he had said. And he had given Paddington a real police whistle as a souvenir. Even the policeman who had been locked in said he quite understood how it had all come about.

Besides, he had solved the mystery of the flashing lights at last. It hadn’t been anyone in the garden at all, but simply the reflection of his own torch on the window. When he stood up on the end of the bed he could even see himself quite plainly in the glass.

In a way Paddington was sorry about the marrow. Especially as he wouldn’t get the reward. But he was very glad the culprit hadn’t been Mr Briggs. He liked Mr Briggs – and besides, he’d been promised another ride in his bucket. He didn’t want to miss that.





Chapter Four

PADDINGTON AND THE BONFIRE

Soon after the marrow adventure the weather changed. It began to get colder. The leaves fell from the trees and it became dark very early in the evenings. Jonathan and Judy went back to school and Paddington was left on his own for much of the day.

But one morning, towards the end of October, a letter arrived with his name on the envelope. It was marked 'Urgent' and 'Strictly Personal' and it was in Jonathan's writing. Paddington didn't get many letters, only an occasional picture postcard from his Aunt Lucy in Peru, so it was all the more exciting.

In some ways it was a rather mysterious letter and Paddington couldn't make head or tail of it. In it Jonathan asked him to collect all the dry leaves he could find and sweep them into a pile ready for when he came home in a few days' time. Paddington puzzled about it for a long time, and in the end he decided to consult his friend Mr Gruber on the subject. Mr Gruber knew about most things, and even if he couldn't tell the answer to a question right away, he had a huge library of books in his antique shop and knew just where to look. He and Paddington often had a long chat about things in general over their morning cocoa, and Mr Gruber liked nothing better than to help Paddington with his problems.

"A problem shared is a problem halved, Mr Brown," he was fond of saying. "And I must say, that since you came to live in the district I've never been short of things to look up."

As soon as he had finished his breakfast, Paddington put on his scarf and duffle coat, collected the morning shopping list from Mrs Bird, and set off with his basket on wheels towards the shops in the Portobello Road.

Paddington enjoyed shopping. He was a popular bear with the street traders in the market, even though he usually struck a hard bargain. He always compared the prices on the various stalls very carefully before actually buying anything. Mrs Bird said he made the housekeeping money go twice as far as anyone else.

It was even colder outside than Paddington had expected, and when he stopped to look in a newsagent's on the way, his breath made the bottom of the window quite cloudy. Paddington was a polite bear, and when he saw the shopkeeper glaring at him through the door he carefully rubbed the steamy part with his paw in case anyone else wanted to look in. As he did so he suddenly noticed that

the inside of the window had changed since he'd last passed that way.

Before, it had been full of chocolate and sweets. Now they were all gone and in their place was a very ragged-looking dummy sitting on top of a pile of logs. It held a notice in its hand which said:

REMEMBER, REMEMBER,

THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER,

GUNPOWDER, TREASON, AND PLOT.

And underneath that was an even larger notice saying:

GET YOUR FIREWORKS HERE!

Paddington studied it all carefully for a few moments and then hurried on to Mr Gruber's, pausing only to pick up his morning supply of buns at the bakery, where he had a standing order.

Now that the cold weather had set in, Mr Gruber no longer sat on the pavement in front of his shop in the morning. Instead, he had arranged a sofa by the stove in the back of the shop. It was a cosy corner, surrounded by books, but Paddington didn't like it quite so much as being outside. For one thing, the sofa was an old one and some of the horsehairs poked through, but he quickly forgot about this as he handed Mr Gruber his share of buns and began telling him of the morning's happenings.

"Gunpowder, treason and plot?" said Mr Gruber, as he handed Paddington a large mug of steaming cocoa. "Why, that's to do with Guy Fawkes' Day."

He smiled apologetically and rubbed the steam from his glasses when he saw that Paddington still looked puzzled.

"I always forget, Mr Brown," he said, "that you come from Darkest Peru. I don't suppose you know about Guy Fawkes."



Paddington wiped the cocoa from his whiskers with the back of his paw in case it left a stain and shook his head.

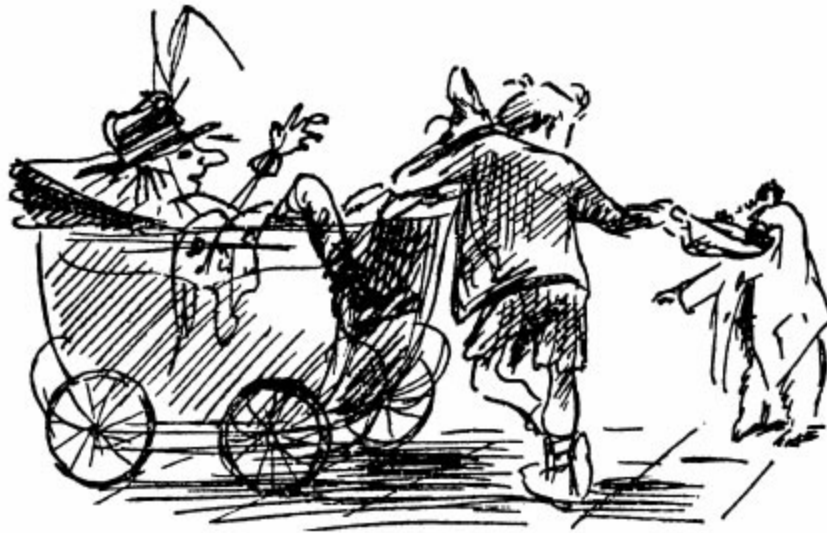
"Well," continued Mr Gruber. "I expect you've seen fireworks before. I seem to remember when I was in South America many years ago they always had them on fête days."

Paddington nodded. Now that Mr Gruber mentioned it, he did remember his Aunt Lucy taking him to a firework display. Although he'd only been very small at the time he had enjoyed it very much.

"We only have fireworks once a year here," said Mr Gruber. "On November the Fifth." And then he went on to tell Paddington all about the plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament many years ago, and how its discovery at the last moment had been celebrated ever since by the burning of bonfires and letting off of fireworks.

Mr Gruber was very good at explaining things and Paddington thanked him when he had finished.

“Oi!” said the boy as Paddington turned to go. “Oi! You’re supposed to give me a penny – not take one yourself.”



“If you don’t like giving a penny for the guy,” said the small boy as he turned to go, “why don’t you get one of your own? All you need is an old suit and a bit of straw.”

Paddington was very thoughtful as he made his way home. He even almost forgot to ask for a second helping at lunch.

“I do hope he hasn’t hit on another of his ideas,” said Mrs Brown, as Paddington asked to be excused and disappeared into the garden. “It’s most unlike him to have to be reminded about things like that. Especially when it’s stew. He’s usually so fond of dumplings.”

“I expect it’s an Idea,” said Mrs Bird, ominously. “I know the signs.”

“Well, I expect the fresh air will do him good,” said Mrs Brown, looking out of the window. “And it’s very good of him to offer to sweep up all the leaves. The garden’s in such a mess.”

“It’s November,” said Mrs Bird. “Guy Fawkes!”

“Oh!” said Mrs Brown. “Oh *dear!*”

For the next hour Paddington enjoyed himself in the garden with Mrs Bird’s dustpan and brush. The Browns had a number of trees and very soon he had a large pile of leaves, almost twice his own height, in the middle of the cabbage patch. It was while he was sitting down for a rest in the middle of the flower bed that he felt someone watching him.

He looked up to see Mr Curry, the Browns’ next-door neighbour, eyeing him suspiciously over the fence. Mr Curry wasn’t very fond of bears and he was always trying to catch Paddington doing something he shouldn’t so that he could report him. He had a reputation in the neighbourhood for being mean and disagreeable, and the Browns had as little to do with him as possible.

“What are you doing, bear?” he growled at Paddington. “I hope you’re not thinking of setting light to all those leaves.”

“Oh no,” said Paddington. “It’s for Guy Fawkes.”

“Fireworks!” said Mr Curry, grumpily. “Nasty things. Banging away and frightening people.”

Paddington, who had been toying with the idea of trying out one of his sparklers, hastily hid the packet behind his back. “Aren’t you having any fireworks then, Mr Curry?” he asked, politely.

“Fireworks?” Mr Curry looked at Paddington with distaste. “Me? I can’t afford them, bear. Waste of money. And what’s more, if I get any coming over in my garden I shall report the whole matter to the police!”

Paddington felt very glad he hadn’t tested his sparkler.

“Mind you, bear” – a sly gleam came into Mr Curry’s eye and he looked round carefully to make sure no one else was listening – “if anyone likes to invite me to their firework display, that’s a different matter.” He signalled Paddington over to the fence and began whispering in his ear. As Paddington listened his face got longer and longer and his whiskers began to sag.

“I think it’s disgraceful,” said Mrs Bird later on that day when she heard that Mr Curry had invited himself to the firework party. “Frightening a young bear like that with talk of police and such like. Just because he’s too mean to buy his own fireworks. It’s a good job he didn’t say it to me – I’d have told him a thing or two!”

“Poor Paddington,” said Mrs Brown. “He looked most upset. Where is he now?”

“I don’t know,” said Mrs Bird. “He’s gone off somewhere looking for some straw. I expect it’s to do with his bonfire.”

She returned to the subject of Mr Curry. “When I think of all the errands that young bear’s run for him – wearing his paws to the bone – just because he’s too lazy to go himself.”

“He does take advantage of people,” said Mrs Brown. “Why, he even left his old suit on the porch this morning to be collected by our laundry for cleaning.”

“Did he?” exclaimed Mrs Bird, grimly. “Well, we’ll soon see about *that!*” She hurried out to the front door and then called out to Mrs Brown. “You *did* say the porch?”

“That’s right,” replied Mrs Brown. “In the corner.”

“It’s not there now,” called Mrs Bird. “Someone must have taken it away.”

“That’s very strange,” said Mrs Brown. “I didn’t hear anyone knock. And the laundryman hasn’t been yet. How very odd.”

“It’ll serve him right,” said Mrs Bird, as she returned to the kitchen, “if someone’s taken it. That’ll teach him a lesson!” In spite of her stern appearance, Mrs Bird was a kindly soul at heart, but she became very cross when people took advantage of others, especially Paddington.

“Oh well,” said Mrs Brown. “I expect it’ll sort itself out. I must try and remember to ask Paddington if he’s seen it when he comes in.”

As it happened Paddington was gone for quite a long time, so that when he did finally return, Mrs Brown had forgotten all about the matter. It had been dark for some time when he let himself into the garden by the back way. He pushed his basket up the path until he reached Mr Brown’s shed, and then, after a struggle, managed to lift a large object out of the basket, and place it in a corner behind the lawn-mower. There was also a small cardboard box marked GI FAWKES, which rattled when he shook it.

Paddington shut the door of the shed, carefully hid the cardboard box underneath his hat in the bottom of the basket, and then crept quietly out of the garden and round to the front door. He felt pleased with himself. It had been a very good evening’s work indeed – much better than he had expected – and that night, before he went to sleep, he spent a long time writing a letter to Jonathan in which he told him all about it.

“Gosh, Paddington,” exclaimed Jonathan, several days later, when they were getting ready for the display. “What a super lot of fireworks!” He peered into the cardboard box, which was full almost to the brim. “I’ve never seen so many.”

“Honestly, Paddington,” said Judy admiringly. “Anyone would think you’d been collecting in the street or something.”



Paddington waved a paw vaguely through the air and exchanged a knowing glance with Jonathan. But before he had time to explain things to Judy, Mr Brown entered the room.

He was dressed in an overcoat and gumboots and he was carrying a lighted candle. “Right,” he said. “Are we all ready? Mr Gruber’s waiting in the hall and Mrs Bird’s got the chairs all ready on the veranda.” Mr Brown looked as eager as anyone to start the firework display and he eyed Paddington’s box enviously.

“I vote,” he said, holding up his hand for silence when they were all outside in the garden, “that as this is Paddington’s first November the Fifth, we let him set off the first firework.”

“Hear! hear!” applauded Mr Gruber. “What sort would you like, Mr Brown?”

Paddington looked thoughtfully at the box. There were so many different shapes and sizes it was difficult to decide. “I think I’ll have one of those you can hold in the paw first,” he said. “I think I’ll have a sparkler.”

“Dull things, sparklers,” said Mr Curry, who was sitting in the best chair helping himself to some marmalade sandwiches.

“If Paddington wants a sparkler, he shall have one,” said Mrs Bird, giving Mr Curry a freezing look.

Mr Brown handed Paddington the candle, taking care not to let the hot wax drip on to his fur, and there was a round of applause as the sparkler burst into life. Paddington waved it over his head several times and there was another round of applause as he moved it up and down to spell out the letters P-A-D-I-N-G-T-U-N.

“Very effective,” said Mr Gruber.

“But that’s not how you spell *Paddington*,” grumbled Mr Curry, his mouth full of sandwich.

“It’s how *I* spell it,” said Paddington. He gave Mr Curry one of his special hard stares, but

unfortunately it was dark and so the full effect was lost.

“How about lighting the bonfire?” said Mr Brown hurriedly. “Then we can all see what we’re doing.” There was a crackle from the dried leaves as he bent down to apply the match.

“That’s better,” said Mr Curry, rubbing his hands together. “I find it rather draughty on this veranda of yours. I think I’ll let off a few more fireworks if there are no more sandwiches left.” He looked across at Mrs Bird.

“There aren’t,” said Mrs Bird. “You’ve just had the last one. Honestly,” she continued, as Mr Curry moved away and began rummaging in Paddington’s box, “the cheek of some people. And he never even brought so much as a Catherine wheel himself.”

“He does spoil things,” said Mrs Brown. “Everyone’s been looking forward to this evening. I’ve a good mind...” Whatever Mrs Brown had been about to say was lost as there came a cry from the direction of the garden shed.

“Crikey, Paddington,” shouted Jonathan. “Why ever didn’t you tell us?”

“Tell us what?” asked Mr Brown, trying to divide his attention between a Roman candle which had just fizzled out and the mysterious object which Jonathan was dragging from the shed.

“It’s a guy!” shouted Judy with delight.

“It’s a super one too!” exclaimed Jonathan. “It looks just like a real person. Is it yours, Paddington?”

“Well,” said Paddington, “yes... and no.” He looked rather worried. In the excitement he had quite forgotten about the guy which he’d used when he’d collected the money for fireworks. He wasn’t at all sure he wanted the others to know about it in case too many questions were asked.

“A guy!” said Mr Curry. “Then it had better go on the bonfire.” He peered at it through the smoke. For some odd reason there was a familiar look about it which he couldn’t quite place.

“Oh no,” said Paddington hurriedly. “I don’t think you’d better do that. It’s not really for burning.”

“Nonsense, bear,” said Mr Curry. “I can see you don’t know much about Guy Fawkes Night. Guys are always burned.” He pushed the others on one side and with the help of Mr Brown’s garden rake placed the guy on top of the bonfire.

“There!” he exclaimed, as he stood back rubbing his hands. “That’s better. That’s what I call a bonfire.”

Mr Brown removed his glasses, polished them, and then looked hard at the bonfire. He didn’t recognise the suit the guy was wearing and he was glad to see it wasn’t one of his. All the same, he had a nasty feeling at the back of his mind. “It... it seems a very well-dressed sort of guy,” he remarked.

Mr Curry started and then stepped forward to take a closer look. Now that the bonfire was well and truly alight it was easier to see. The trousers were blazing merrily and the jacket had just started to smoulder. His eyes nearly popped out and he pointed a trembling finger towards the flames.

“That’s my suit!” he roared. “My suit! The one you were supposed to send to the cleaners!”

“What!” exclaimed Mr Brown. Everyone turned to look at Paddington.

Paddington was as surprised as the others. It was the first he had heard of Mr Curry’s suit. “I found it on the doorstep,” he said. “I thought it had been put out for the rummage sale...”

“The *rummage sale*?” cried Mr Curry, almost beside himself with rage. “The *rummage sale*? My best suit! I’ll... I’ll...” Mr Curry was spluttering so much he couldn’t think of anything to say. But Mrs Bird could.

“To start with,” she said, “it wasn’t your best suit. It’s been sent to the cleaners at least six times to my knowledge. And I’m quite sure Paddington didn’t know it was yours. In any case,” she finished triumphantly, “who was it insisted it should go on the bonfire in the first place?”

Mr Brown tried hard not to laugh, and then he caught Mr Gruber’s eye looking at him over the top of his handkerchief. “You *did*, you know,” he spluttered. “You said put it on the bonfire. And Paddington tried to stop you!”

Mr Curry struggled hard for a moment as he looked from one to the other. But he knew when he was beaten. He gave one final glare all round the party and then stalked off into the night. A moment later the sound of a front door being slammed echoed around the houses.

“Well,” chuckled Mr Gruber, “I must say that when young Mr Brown’s around there’s never a dull moment!” He felt underneath his chair and brought out a cardboard box. “Now I vote we get on with the display. And just in case we run out of fireworks – I’ve brought a few more along.”

“You know, it’s funny you should say that,” said Mr Brown, feeling under *his* chair. “But I have some as well!”

Afterwards everyone in the neighbourhood voted it was the best firework display they had seen for many a year. Quite a number of people turned up to watch, and even Mr Curry was seen peeping from behind his curtains on several occasions.

And as Paddington lifted a tired paw and waved the last sparkler in the air to spell out the words T-H-E E-N-D, everyone agreed they had never seen such a successful bonfire before – or such a well-dressed guy.





Chapter Five
TROUBLE AT NUMBER THIRTY-TWO

That evening, after the bonfire had died away, the weather suddenly became even colder. When Paddington went upstairs to bed he opened his window a few inches and peeped out in case there were any more fireworks to see. He sniffed the cold night air and then hastily shut the window, diving into bed and pulling the blankets over his ears.

In the morning he woke much earlier than usual, shivering with cold, and found to his surprise that the ends of his whiskers, which had become uncovered during the night, were quite stiff. Having listened for a while to make sure breakfast was being cooked, he put on his duffle coat and went along to the bathroom.

When he reached the bathroom, Paddington made several interesting discoveries. First, his flannel, which he'd left folded over the towel rail the night before, was as stiff as a board, and it made a funny crackling noise when he tried to bend it straight. Then, when he turned the tap, nothing happened. Paddington decided quite quickly that he wasn't meant to wash that morning and hurried back to his own room.

But when he got there he had yet another surprise. He drew the curtains and tried to look out of his window, only to find that it was all white and frosted – just like the one in the bathroom. Paddington breathed heavily on the glass and rubbed it with the back of his paw. When he had made a hole big enough to peer through, he nearly fell over backwards with astonishment.

All traces of the previous evening's bonfire had completely vanished. Instead, everything was covered by a thick blanket of white. Not only that, but there were millions of large white flakes falling out of the sky.

He rushed downstairs to tell the others. The Browns were all sitting round the breakfast table when he burst into the dining-room. Paddington waved his paws wildly in the air and called for them to look out of the window.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr Brown, looking up from his morning paper. "What *is* the matter?"

"Look!" said Paddington, pointing towards the garden. "Everything's gone white!"

Judy threw back her head and laughed. "It's all right, Paddington – it's only snow. It happens every year."

“Snow?” said Paddington, looking puzzled. “What’s snow?”

“It’s a nuisance,” said Mr Brown crossly. Mr Brown wasn’t in a very good mood that morning. He hadn’t expected the weather to change so quickly and all the upstairs water pipes had frozen. To make matters worse, everyone had been blaming him because he’d forgotten to stoke the boiler before going to bed.

“Snow?” said Judy. “Well, it’s... it’s sort of frozen rain. It’s very soft.”

“Jolly good for snowballs,” exclaimed Jonathan. “We’ll show you how to make them after breakfast. We can clear the paths at the same time.”

Paddington sat down at the breakfast table and began undoing his napkin, hardly able to take his eyes off the scene outside the window.

“Paddington!” said Mrs Brown, suspiciously. “Did you wear your duffle coat when you washed this morning?”

“A lick and a promise,” said Mrs Bird, as she handed him a steaming bowl of porridge. “And more promise than lick if you ask me.”

But Paddington was much too busy thinking about the snow to hear what they were saying. He was wondering if he could speed up the breakfast by having all his things on one plate. But just as he reached out for the bacon and eggs and the marmalade, he caught Mrs Bird’s eye and hurriedly pretended he was only conducting to the music on the wireless.

“If you do go out after breakfast, Paddington,” said Mrs Brown, “I think it would be nice if you could clear Mr Curry’s path for him before you do ours. We all know it wasn’t your fault about his suit last night, but it would show you mean well.”

“That’s a good idea,” exclaimed Jonathan. “We’ll give you a hand. Then we can use all the snow we get to build a snowman this afternoon. How about it, Paddington?”

Paddington looked rather doubtful. Whenever he tried to do anything for Mr Curry, something always seemed to go wrong.

“But no playing snowballs,” warned Mrs Bird. “Mr Curry always sleeps with his bedroom window open – even in the middle of winter. If you wake him he won’t like it at all.”

Paddington, Jonathan and Judy agreed to be as quiet as they could and as soon as breakfast was over they dressed in their warmest clothes and rushed outside to look at the snow.

Paddington was very impressed. It was much deeper than he had expected, but not at all as cold as he thought it would be, except when he stood for very long in the one place. Within a few minutes all three were busy with shovels and brooms clearing Mr Curry’s paths for him.

Jonathan and Judy started on the pavement outside the house. Paddington fetched his seaside bucket and spade and began work on Mr Curry’s back garden path, which was not quite so wide.

He filled his bucket with snow and then tipped it through a hole in the Browns’ fence near the place they intended building a snowman later in the day. It was hard work, for the snow was deep and came right up to the edge of his duffle coat, and as fast as he cleared a space, more snow came down, covering the part he’d just done.

After working for what seemed like hours, Paddington decided to have a rest. But no sooner had he settled himself on the bucket than something hit him on the back of the head, nearly knocking his hat off into the bargain.

“Caught you!” yelled Jonathan with delight. “Come on, Paddington – make yourself some snowballs – then we can have a fight.”



Paddington jumped up from his bucket and dodged round the side of Mr Curry's shed. Then, after first making sure Mrs Bird was nowhere in sight, he gathered up some snow and rolled it into a hard ball. Holding it firmly in his right paw he closed his eyes and took careful aim.

"Yah!" shouted Jonathan, as Paddington opened his eyes. "Missed me by a mile. You'd better get some practice in!"

Paddington stood behind Mr Curry's shed scratching his head and examining his paw. He knew the snowball must have gone somewhere but he hadn't the least idea where. After thinking about it for some time he decided to have another go. If he crept very quietly round the side of the house he might even be able to catch Jonathan unawares and get his own back.



It was as he tip-toed past Mr Curry's back door, clutching a snowball in his paw, that he noticed for the first time the door was open. The wind was blowing the snow through into the kitchen and there was already a small pile of it on the mat. Paddington hesitated for a moment and then pulled the door shut. There was a click as it closed, and he carefully tested it with his paw to make certain it was properly fastened. He was sure Mr Curry wouldn't want snow all over his kitchen floor, and he felt very pleased at being able to do another good deed – apart from sweeping the path.

To Paddington's surprise, when he peered round the corner at the front of the house Mr Curry was

already there. He was wearing a dressing gown over his pyjamas and he looked cold and cross. He broke off his conversation with Jonathan and Judy and stared in Paddington's direction.

"Ah, there you are, bear!" he exclaimed. "Have you been throwing snowballs?"

"Snowballs?" repeated Paddington, hurriedly putting his paw behind his back. "Did you say snowballs, Mr Curry?"

"Yes," said Mr Curry. "*Snowballs!* A large one came through my bedroom window a moment ago and landed right in the middle of my bed. Now it's all melted on my hot-water bottle! If I thought you had done it on purpose, bear..."



"Oh no, Mr Curry," said Paddington, earnestly. "I wouldn't do a thing like that *on purpose*. I don't think I could. It's difficult throwing snowballs by paw – especially big ones like that."

"Like what?" asked Mr Curry, suspiciously.

"Like the one you said landed in your bed," said Paddington sounding rather confused. He was beginning to wish Mr Curry would hurry up and go. The snowball was making his paw very cold.

"Mmm," said Mr Curry. "Well, I'm not standing out here in the snow discussing bears' pranks. I came downstairs intending to tell you off." He looked round approvingly at the clean pavement. "But I must admit I've been pleasantly surprised. In fact," he turned to go back indoors, "if you make as good a job of the rest I might even give you ten pence!"

"Between you," he added, in case they mistook his meaning.

"Ten pence!" exclaimed Jonathan disgustedly. "One measly ten-penny piece."

"Oh well," said Judy, "at least we've done our good deed for the day. It should last for a while – even with Mr Curry."

Paddington looked doubtful. "I don't think it'll last *very* long," he said, listening hard. "In fact, I think it's nearly over." Even as he spoke there came a roar of rage from Mr Curry followed by several loud bangs.

“Whatever’s up now?” exclaimed Judy. “That sounds like Mr Curry banging on his back door.”

“I thought I was doing him a good turn,” said Paddington, looking very worried, “so I shut it. I think he must be locked out.”

“Oh gosh, Paddington,” groaned Judy. “You are an unlucky bear today.”

“Who shut my door?” roared Mr Curry as he strode round to the front again. “Who locked me out of my house? Bear!” he barked. “Where are you, bear?”

Mr Curry glared down the road but there was not a soul in sight. If he had been a little less cross, he might have noticed three distinct sets of pawprints and footprints where Paddington, Jonathan, and Judy had beaten a hasty retreat.

After a distance the three tracks separated. Jonathan’s and Judy’s disappeared into the Browns’ house. Paddington’s went towards the market.

He had seen quite enough of Mr Curry for one day. Besides, it had gone half past ten and he had promised to meet Mr Gruber for morning cocoa at eleven.

“I really think Mr Curry has gone a bit funny in the head,” said Mrs Brown, later that day. “He was standing outside the house in his pyjamas and dressing gown this morning – in all that snow. Then he started running around in circles waving his fist.”

“Mmm,” replied Mrs Bird, “I saw Paddington playing snowballs in his back garden just before that happened.”

“Oh dear,” said Mrs Brown. She looked out of the window. The sky had cleared at last and the garden, with all the trees bowed down under the weight of snow, looked just like a Christmas card. “It seems very still,” she said. “Almost as if something was about to happen.”

Mrs Bird followed her gaze. “They’ve made a wonderful snowman. I’ve never seen quite such a good one before. It’s only small but it looks most life-like.”

“Isn’t that Paddington’s old hat they’ve put on top?” asked Mrs Brown. She looked round as the door opened and Jonathan and Judy entered the room. “We were just saying,” she continued, “what a lovely snowman you’ve made.”

“It isn’t a snowman,” said Jonathan mysteriously. “It’s a *snowbear*. It’s meant to be a surprise for Dad. He’s coming down the road now.”

“It looks as if he’ll have more than one surprise coming his way,” said Mrs Bird. “I can see Mr Curry waiting for him by the fence.”

“Oh crikey,” groaned Jonathan. “That’s torn it.”

“Trust Mr Curry to spoil things,” said Judy. “I hope he doesn’t keep Dad talking too long.”

“Why, dear?” asked Mrs Brown. “Does it matter?”

“Does it matter?” cried Jonathan, rushing to the window. “I’ll say it does!”

Mrs Brown didn’t pursue the subject. She had no doubt she would hear all about it in due course – whatever it was.

It took Mr Brown a long time to get rid of Mr Curry and put his car away in the garage. When he did come indoors he looked very fed up.

“That Mr Curry,” he exclaimed. “Telling tales about Paddington again. If I’d been there this morning he’d have got more than a snowball in his bed.” He looked round the room. “By the way, where is Paddington?” Paddington usually liked helping Mr Brown put his car away and it was most unusual for him not to be there ready to give paw signals.

"I haven't seen him for ages," said Mrs Brown. She looked at Jonathan and Judy. "Do you know where he is?"

"Didn't he jump out at you, Dad?" asked Jonathan.

"Jump out at me!" exclaimed Mr Brown, looking puzzled. "Not that I know of. Why, was he supposed to?"

"But you saw the snowbear, didn't you?" asked Judy. "Just by the garage."

"Snowbear?" said Mr Brown. "Good heavens – you don't mean – that wasn't Paddington?"

"What's that young bear been up to now?" asked Mrs Bird. "Do you mean to say he's been out there covered in snow all this time? I've never heard of such a thing."

"Well, it wasn't really his idea," said Jonathan. "Not all of it."

"I expect he heard Mr Curry's voice and got frightened," said Judy.

"Just you bring him indoors at once," said Mrs Bird. "Why, he might catch his death of cold. I've a good mind to send him to bed without any supper."

It wasn't that Mrs Bird was cross with Paddington – she was simply worried in case anything happened to him, and when he came through the door her manner changed at once.

She took one of his paws in her hand and then felt his nose. "Good gracious!" she exclaimed. "He's like an iceberg."

Paddington shivered. "I don't think I like being a snowbear very much," he said in a weak voice.

"I should think not, indeed," exclaimed Mrs Bird. She turned to the others. "That bear's going to bed at once – with a hot-water bottle and a bowl of broth. Then I'm sending for the doctor."

With that she made Paddington sit by the fire while she hurried upstairs to fetch a thermometer.

Paddington lay back in Mr Brown's armchair with his eyes closed. He certainly felt very strange. He couldn't remember ever having felt like it before. One moment he seemed to be as cold as the snow outside, the next he felt as if he was on fire.

He wasn't quite sure how long he lay there, but he vaguely remembered Mrs Bird sticking something long and cold under his tongue, which she told him not to bite. After that he didn't remember much more, except that everyone started running around, preparing soup and filling hot-water bottles, and generally making sure his room was comfortable for him.

Within a few minutes everything was ready and the Browns all trooped upstairs to make sure he was properly tucked in bed. Paddington thanked them all very much and then, after waving a paw limply in their direction, lay back and closed his eyes.

"He *must* be feeling bad," whispered Mrs Bird. "He hasn't even touched his soup."

"Gosh," said Jonathan miserably, as he followed Judy down the stairs. "It was mostly my idea. I shall never forgive myself if anything happens to him."

"It was my idea as well," said Judy, comfortingly, "I expect we all thought of it together. Anyway," she added, as the front doorbell rang, "that must be the doctor – so we shall soon know."

Doctor MacAndrew was a long time with Paddington, and when he came downstairs again he looked very serious.

"How is he, Doctor?" asked Mrs Brown, anxiously. "He's not seriously ill, is he?"

"Aye, he is," said Doctor MacAndrew. "Ye may as well know. That young bear's verra ill indeed. Playing in the snow when he's not used to it, no doubt. I've given him a wee drop o' medicine to tide him over the night and I'll be along first thing in the morning."

"But he *is* going to be all right, isn't he, Doctor MacAndrew?" cried Judy.

Doctor MacAndrew shook his head gravely. "I wouldna care to give an opinion," he said. "I wouldna care to give an opinion at all." With that he bade them all good night and drove away.

It was a very sad party of Browns that went upstairs that evening. While they were getting ready for bed, Mrs Bird quietly moved her things into Paddington's room so that she could keep an eye on him during the night.

But she wasn't the only one who couldn't think of sleep. Several times the door to Paddington's room gently opened and either Mr and Mrs Brown or Jonathan and Judy crept in to see how he was getting on. Somehow it didn't seem possible that anything *could* happen to Paddington. But every time they looked at Mrs Bird she just shook her head and went on with her sewing so that they couldn't see her face.



The next day the news of Paddington's illness quickly spread around the neighbourhood and by lunch time there was a steady stream of callers asking after him.

Mr Gruber was the first one on the scene. "I wondered what had happened to young Mr Brown when he didn't turn up for elevenses this morning," he said, looking very upset. "I kept his cocoa hot for over an hour."

Mr Gruber went away again, but returned shortly afterwards carrying a bunch of grapes and a large basket of fruit and flowers from the rest of the traders in the Portobello market. "I'm afraid there isn't much about at this time of the year," he said apologetically, "but we've done the best we can."

He paused at the door. "I'm sure he'll be all right, Mrs Brown," he said. "With so many people *wanting* him to get well, I'm sure he will."



Mr Gruber raised his hat to Mrs Brown and then began walking slowly in the direction of the park. Somehow he didn't want to go back to his shop that day.

Even Mr Curry knocked on the door that afternoon and brought with him an apple and a jar of calves' foot jelly, which he said was very good for invalids.

Mrs Bird took all the presents up to Paddington's room and placed them carefully beside his bed in case he should wake up and want something to eat.

Doctor MacAndrew called a number of times during the next two days but, despite everything he did, there seemed to be no change at all. "We'll just have to bide our time," was all he would say.

It was three days later, at breakfast time, that the door to the Browns' dining-room burst open and Mrs Bird rushed in.

"Oh, do come quickly," she cried. "It's Paddington!"

Everyone jumped up from the table and stared at Mrs Bird.

"He's... he's not worse, is he?" asked Mrs Brown, voicing the thoughts of them all.

"Mercy me, no," said Mrs Bird, fanning herself with the morning paper. "That's what I'm trying to tell you. He's much better. He's sitting up in bed asking for a marmalade sandwich!"

"A marmalade sandwich?" exclaimed Mrs Brown. "Oh, thank goodness!" She wasn't quite sure whether she wanted to laugh or cry. "I never knew hearing the word marmalade could make me feel so happy."

Just as she spoke there was a loud ring from the bell which Mr Brown had installed by the side of Paddington's bed in case of emergency.

"Oh dear," exclaimed Mrs Bird. "I hope I haven't spoken too soon!" She rushed out of the room and everyone followed her up the stairs to Paddington's room. When they entered, Paddington was lying on his back with his paws in the air, staring up at the ceiling.

"Paddington!" called Mrs Brown, hardly daring to breathe. "Paddington, are you all right?"

Everyone listened anxiously for the reply. "I think I've had a bit of a relapse," said Paddington, in a weak voice. "I think I'd better have *two* marmalade sandwiches – just to make sure."

There was a sigh of relief from the Browns and Mrs Bird as they exchanged glances. Even if he wasn't quite himself yet, Paddington was definitely on the road to recovery.





Chapter Six

PADDINGTON AND THE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

“I suppose I shouldn’t say it,” remarked Mrs Bird, “but I shall be glad when Christmas is over.”

The few weeks before Christmas were usually busy ones for Mrs Bird. There were so many mince-pies, puddings, and cakes to be made that much of her time was spent in the kitchen. This year matters hadn’t been helped by the fact that Paddington was at home for most of the day ‘convalescing’ after his illness. Paddington was very interested in mince-pies, and if he had opened the oven door once to see how they were getting on, he’d done it a dozen times.

Paddington’s convalescence had been a difficult time for the Browns. While he had remained in bed it had been bad enough, because he kept getting grape-pips all over the sheets. But if anything, matters had got worse once he was up and about. He wasn’t very good at ‘doing nothing’ and it had become a full-time occupation keeping him amused and out of trouble. He had even had several goes at knitting something – no one ever quite knew what – but he’d got in such a tangle with the wool, and it had become so sticky with the marmalade, that in the end they had to throw it away. Even the dustman had said very nasty things about it when he came to collect the rubbish.

“He seems very quiet at the moment,” said Mrs Brown. “I think he’s busy with his Christmas list.”

“You’re not *really* taking him shopping with you this afternoon, are you?” asked Mrs Bird. “You know what happened last time.”*

Mrs Brown sighed. She had vivid memories of the last time she had taken Paddington shopping. “I can’t not take him,” she said. “I did promise and he’s been looking forward to it so much.”

Paddington liked shopping. He always enjoyed looking in the shop windows and since he had read in the paper about all the Christmas decorations, he had thought of very little else. Besides, he had a special reason for wanting to go shopping this time. Although he hadn’t told anyone, Paddington had been saving hard for some while in order to buy the Browns and his other friends some presents.

He had already bought a frame for his picture and sent it, together with a large jar of honey, to his Aunt Lucy in Peru, because presents for overseas had to be posted early.

He had several lists marked ‘SEACRET’ which were locked away in his case, and he had been keeping his ears open for some time listening to conversation in the hope of finding something they all needed.

“Anyway,” said Mrs Brown, “it’s so nice having him around again, and he’s been so good lately, I think he ought to have a treat.

“Besides,” she added, “I’m not taking him to Barkridges this time – I’m taking him to Crumbold &

Ferns.”

Mrs Bird put down her baking tray. “Are you sure you’re doing the right thing taking him there?” she exclaimed. “You know what they’re like.”

Crumbold & Ferns was a very old-established shop where everyone spoke in whispers and all the assistants wore frock-coats. Only the best people went to Crumbold & Ferns.

“It’s Christmas,” said Mrs Brown recklessly. “It’ll be a nice treat for him.”

And when Paddington set off with Mrs Brown after lunch, even Mrs Bird had to admit he looked smart enough to go anywhere. His duffle coat, which had just come back from the cleaners, was spotlessly clean, and even his old hat – which Paddington always insisted on wearing when he went on shopping expeditions – looked unusually neat.

All the same, as Paddington waved his paw at the corner, and Mrs Bird turned to go back indoors, she couldn’t help feeling glad she was staying at home.

Paddington enjoyed the journey to Crumbold & Ferns. They went by bus and he managed to get a front seat downstairs. By standing on the seat he could just see through the little hole in the screen behind the driver’s back. Paddington tapped on the glass several times and waved his paw at the man behind the wheel, but he was much too busy with the traffic to look round – in fact they drove a long way without stopping at all.

The conductor was cross when he saw what Paddington was doing. “Oi!” he shouted. “Stop that there tapping! It’s bears like you what get buses a bad name. We’ve gone past three queues already.”

But he was a kindly man and when Paddington said he was sorry, he explained to him all about the signals for making buses stop or go on, and he gave him the end of a roll of tickets as a present. When he had collected all the fares, he came back again and pointed out some buildings of interest to Paddington as they passed them. He even presented him with a large bullseye which he found in his money bag. Paddington liked seeing new places and he was sorry when the journey came to an end and he had to say goodbye to the conductor.

There was another slight upset when they reached Crumbold & Ferns. Paddington had an accident with the revolving door. It wasn’t really his fault, but he tried to follow Mrs Brown into the store just as a very distinguished-looking gentleman with a beard came out the other side. The man was in a great hurry and when he pushed the revolving door it started going round at great speed, taking Paddington with it. He went round several times until he found to his astonishment that he was outside on the pavement once more.

He had a brief glimpse of the man with the beard waving to him from the back of a large car as it drove away. The man also appeared to be shouting something, but Paddington never knew what it was, for at that moment he trod on something sharp and fell over backwards again.

He sat in the middle of the pavement examining his foot and found to his surprise that it had a tie-pin sticking in it. Paddington knew it was a tie-pin because Mr Brown had one very like it – except that his was quite ordinary, whereas this one had something big and shiny fixed to the middle of it. Paddington pinned it to the front of his duffle coat for safety and then suddenly became aware that someone was speaking to him.

“Are you all right, sir?” It was the doorkeeper – a very dignified man in a smart uniform with lots of medals.

“I think so, thank you,” said Paddington, as he stood up and dusted himself, “but I’ve lost my bullseye somewhere.”

“Your bullseye?” said the man. “Dear me!” If he felt surprised he showed no signs of it. Doorkeepers at Crumbold & Ferns were always very well trained. All the same he couldn’t help wondering about Paddington. When he noticed the tie-pin with the enormous diamond in the middle, he realised at once that he was dealing with someone very important. “Probably one of these society bears,” he thought to himself. But when he caught sight of Paddington’s old hat he wasn’t quite so sure. “Perhaps he’s a huntin’, shootin’, and fishin’ bear up from the country for the day,” he decided. “Or even a society bear that’s seen better days.”

So he held up the passers-by with a stern wave of the hand while they searched the pavement. As he guided Paddington back through the revolving door to Mrs Brown, who was waiting anxiously on the other side, he tried hard to look as if helping a young bear of quality find his bullseye was an everyday event at Crumbold & Ferns.

Paddington returned his salute with a wave of the paw and then looked around. The inside of the shop was most impressive. Everywhere they went, tall men in frock-coats bowed low and wished them good afternoon. Paddington’s paw was quite tired by the time they reached the Household Department.

As they both had some secret shopping to do, Mrs Brown left Paddington with the assistant and arranged to meet him outside the entrance to the shop in a quarter of an hour.

The man assured Mrs Brown that Paddington would be quite safe. “Although I don’t recall any actual bears,” he said, when she explained that Paddington came from Darkest Peru, “we have a number of very distinguished foreign gentlemen among our clients. Many of them do all their Christmas shopping here.”

He turned and looked down at Paddington as Mrs Brown left, brushing an imaginary speck of dust from his frock-coat.

Secretly Paddington was feeling rather overawed by Crumbold & Ferns, and not wishing to disgrace Mrs Brown by doing the wrong thing, he gave his own coat a passing tap with his paw. The assistant watched with fascination as a small cloud of dust rose into the air and then slowly settled on his nice, clean counter.

Paddington followed the man’s gaze. “I expect it came off the pavement,” he said, by way of explanation. “I had an accident in the revolving door.”

The man coughed. “Oh dear,” he said. “How very unfortunate.” He gave Paddington a sickly smile and decided to ignore the whole matter. “And what can we do for you, sir?” he asked, brightly.

Paddington looked round carefully to make sure Mrs Brown was nowhere in sight. “I want a clothes-line,” he announced.

“A *what?*” exclaimed the assistant.

Paddington hurriedly moved the bullseye to the other side of his mouth. “A clothes-line,” he repeated, in a muffled voice. “It’s for Mrs Bird. Her old one broke the other day.”

The assistant swallowed hard. He found it impossible to understand what this extraordinary young bear was saying.

“Perhaps,” he suggested, for a Crumbold & Ferns assistant rarely bent down, “you wouldn’t mind standing on the counter?”

Paddington sighed. It really was most difficult trying to explain things sometimes. Climbing up on to the counter he unlocked his suitcase and withdrew an advertisement which he’d cut from Mr Brown’s newspaper several days before.

“Ah!” The assistant’s face cleared. “You mean one of our special *expanding* clothes-lines, sir.” He reached up to a shelf and picked out a small green box. “A very suitable choice, if I may say so, sir. As befits a young bear of taste. I can thoroughly recommend it.”

The man pulled a piece of rope through a hole in the side of the box and handed it to Paddington. “This type of expanding clothes-line is used by some of the best families in the country.”

Paddington looked suitably impressed as he climbed down, holding on to the rope with his paw.

“You see,” continued the man, bending over the counter, “it is all quite simple. The clothes-line is all contained inside this box. As you walk away with the rope, it unwinds itself. Then, when you have finished with it, you simply turn this handle...” A puzzled note came into his voice.

“You simply turn this handle,” he repeated, trying again. Really, it was all most annoying. Instead of the clothes-line going back into the box as it was supposed to, more was actually coming out.

“I’m extremely sorry, sir,” he began, looking up from the counter. “Something seems to have jammed...” His voice trailed away and a worried look came into his eyes, for Paddington was nowhere in sight.

“I say,” he called, to another assistant farther along the counter. “Have you seen a young bear gentleman go past – pulling on a clothes-line?”

“He went that way,” replied the other man, briefly. He pointed towards the china department. “I think he got caught in the crowd.”

“Oh dear,” said Paddington’s assistant, as he picked up the green box and began pushing his way through the crowd of shoppers, following the trail of the clothes-line. “Oh dear! Oh dear!”

As it happened, the assistant wasn’t the only one to feel worried. At the other end of the clothes-line Paddington was already in trouble. Crumbold & Ferns was filled with people doing their Christmas shopping, and none of them seemed to have time for a small bear. Several times he’d had to crawl under a table in order to avoid being trodden on.

It was a very good clothes-line, and Paddington felt sure Mrs Bird would like it. But he couldn’t help wishing he’d chosen something else. There seemed to be no end to it, and he kept getting it tangled round people’s legs.

He went on and on, round a table laden with cups and saucers, past a pillar, underneath another table, and still the clothes-line trailed after him. All the time the crowd was getting thicker and thicker and Paddington had to push hard to make any headway at all. Once or twice he nearly lost his hat.



Just as he had almost given up hope of ever finding his way back to the Household Department again, he caught sight of the assistant. To Paddington's surprise, the man was sitting on the floor, looking very red in the face. His hair was all ruffled and he appeared to be struggling with a table leg.

"Ah, there you are!" he gasped, when he caught sight of Paddington. "I suppose you realise, young bear, I've been following you all round the China Department. Now you've tied everything up in knots."

"Oh dear," said Paddington, looking at the rope. "Did *I* do that? I'm afraid I got lost. Bears aren't very good in crowds, you know. I must have gone under the same table twice."

"What have you done with the other end?" shouted the assistant.



He wasn't in the best of tempers. It was hot and noisy under the table and people kept kicking him. Apart from that, it was most undignified.

“It’s here,” said Paddington, trying to find his end of the rope. “At least – it was a moment ago.”

“Where?” shouted the assistant. He didn’t know whether it was simply the noise of the crowd, but he still couldn’t understand a word this young bear uttered. Whenever he did say anything it seemed to be accompanied by a strong crunching noise and a strong smell of peppermint.

“Speak up,” he shouted, cupping a hand to his ear. “I can’t hear a word you say.”

Paddington looked at the man uneasily. He looked rather cross and he was beginning to wish he had left his bullseye on the pavement outside. It was a very nice bullseye but it made talking most difficult.

It was as he felt in his duffle coat pocket for a handkerchief that it happened.

The assistant jumped slightly and the expression on his face froze and then gradually changed to one of disbelief.

“Excuse me,” said Paddington, tapping him on the shoulder, “but I think my bullseye has fallen in your ear!”

“Your *bullseye*?” exclaimed the man, in a horrified tone of voice. “Fallen in my ear?”

“Yes,” said Paddington. “It was given to me by a bus conductor and I’m afraid it’s got a bit slippery where I’ve been sucking it.”

The assistant crawled out from under the table and drew himself up to his full height. With a look of great distaste, he withdrew the remains of Paddington’s bullseye from his ear. He held it for a moment between thumb and forefinger and then hurriedly placed it on a nearby counter. It was bad enough having to crawl around the floor untangling a clothes-line – but to have a bullseye in his ear – such a thing had never been known before in Crumbold & Ferns.

He took a deep breath and pointed a trembling finger in Paddington’s direction. But as he opened his mouth to speak he noticed that Paddington was no longer there. Neither, for that matter, was the clothes-line. He was only just in time to grab the table as it rocked on its legs. As it was, several plates and a cup and saucer fell to the floor.

The assistant raised his eyes to the ceiling and made a mental note to avoid any young bears who came into the shop in future.

There seemed to be a commotion going on in the direction of the entrance hall. He had his own ideas on the possible cause of it, but wisely he decided to keep his thoughts to himself. He had had quite enough to do with bear customers for one day.

Mrs Brown pushed her way through the crowd which had formed on the pavement outside Crumbold & Ferns.

“Excuse me,” she said, pulling on the doorkeeper’s sleeve. “Excuse me. You haven’t seen a young bear in a blue duffle coat, have you? We arranged to meet here and there are so many people about I’m really rather worried.”

The doorkeeper touched his cap. “That wouldn’t be the young gentleman in question, ma’am?” he asked, pointing through a gap in the crowd to where another man in uniform was struggling with the revolving door. “If it is – he’s stuck. Good and proper. Can’t get in and can’t get out. Right in the middle he is, so to speak.”

“Oh dear,” said Mrs Brown. “That certainly sounds as if it might be Paddington.”

Standing on tip-toe, she peered over the shoulder of a bearded gentleman in front of her. The man was shouting words of encouragement as he tapped on the glass and she just caught a glimpse of a familiar paw as it waved back in acknowledgement.

“It *is* Paddington,” she exclaimed. “Now how on earth did he get in there?”

“Ah,” said the doorkeeper. “That’s just what we’re trying to find out. Something to do with ’is getting a clothes-line wrapped round the ’inges, so they say.”

There was a ripple of excitement from the crowd as the door started to revolve once more.

Everyone made a rush for Paddington, but the distinguished man with the beard reached him first. To everyone’s surprise, he took hold of his paw and began pumping it up and down.

“Thank you, bear,” he kept saying. “Glad to know you, bear!”

“Glad to know you,” repeated Paddington, looking as surprised as anyone.

“I say,” exclaimed the doorkeeper respectfully, as he turned to Mrs Brown. “I didn’t know he was a friend of Sir Gresholm Gibbs.”

“Neither did I,” said Mrs Brown. “And who might Sir Gresholm Gibbs be?”

“Sir Gresholm,” repeated the doorkeeper, in a hushed voice. “Why, he’s a famous millionaire. He’s one of Crumbold & Ferns’ most important customers.”

He pushed back the crowd of interested spectators to allow Paddington and the distinguished man a free passage.

“Dear lady,” said Sir Gresholm, bowing low as he approached. “You must be Mrs Brown. I’ve just been hearing all about you.”

“Oh?” said Mrs Brown doubtfully.

“This young bear of yours found a most valuable diamond tie-pin which I lost earlier this afternoon,” said Sir Gresholm. “Not only that, but he’s kept it in safe custody all this time.”

“A diamond tie-pin?” exclaimed Mrs Brown, looking at Paddington. It was the first she had heard of any diamond tie-pin.

“I found it when I lost my bullseye,” said Paddington, in a loud stage whisper.

“An example to us all,” boomed Sir Gresholm, as he turned to the crowd and pointed at Paddington. Paddington waved a paw modestly in the air as one or two people applauded.

“And now, dear lady,” continued Sir Gresholm, turning to Mrs Brown. “I understand you intend showing this young bear some of the Christmas decorations.”

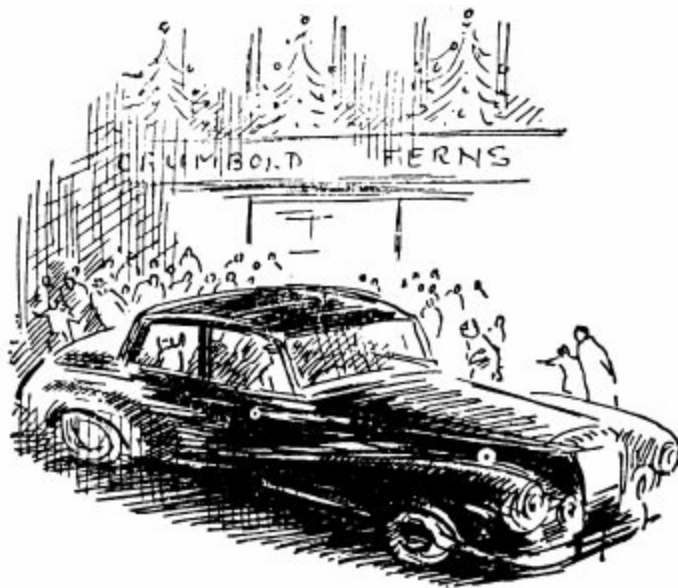
“Well,” said Mrs Brown. “I was hoping to. He hasn’t seen them before and it’s really his first trip

out since he was ill.”

“In that case,” said Sir Gresholm, waving to a luxurious car which was parked by the side of the pavement, “my car is at your disposal.”

“Ooh,” said Paddington. “Is it really?” His eye glistened. He’d never seen such an enormous car before, let alone ever dreamt of riding in one.

“Yes, indeed,” said Sir Gresholm, as he held the door open for them. “That is,” he added, as he noticed a worried expression cross Paddington’s face, “if you would do me the honour.”



“Oh yes,” said Paddington, politely. “I would like to do you the honour very much indeed.” He hesitated. “But I’ve left my bullseye on one of the counters in Crumbold & Ferns.”

“Oh dear,” said the gentleman, as he helped Paddington and Mrs Brown into the car. “Then there’s only one thing we can do.”

He tapped on the glass window behind the driver with his stick. “Drive on, James,” he said. “And don’t stop until we reach the nearest sweet shop.”

“One with bullseyes, please, Mr James,” called Paddington.

“Definitely one with bullseyes,” repeated Sir Gresholm. “That’s most important.” He turned to Mrs Brown with a twinkle in his eye. “You know,” he said, “I’m looking forward to this.”

“So am I,” said Paddington earnestly, as he gazed out of the window at all the lights.

As the huge car drew away from the kerb he stood on the seat and gave a final wave of his paw to the crowd of open-mouthed spectators, and then settled back, holding on to a long gold tassel with his other paw.

It wasn’t every day a bear was able to ride round London in such a magnificent car and Paddington wanted to enjoy it to the full.



Chapter Seven

CHRISTMAS

Paddington found that Christmas took a long time to come. Each morning when he hurried downstairs he crossed the date off the calendar, but the more days he crossed off the farther away it seemed.

However, there was plenty to occupy his mind. For one thing, the postman started arriving later and later in the morning, and when he did finally reach the Browns' house there were so many letters to deliver he had a job to push them all through the letterbox. Often there were mysterious-looking parcels as well, which Mrs Bird promptly hid before Paddington had time to squeeze them.

A surprising number of the envelopes were addressed to Paddington himself, and he carefully made a list of all those who had sent him Christmas cards so that he could be sure of thanking them.

"You may be only a small bear," said Mrs Bird, as she helped him arrange the cards on the mantelpiece, "but you certainly leave your mark."

Paddington wasn't sure how to take this, especially as Mrs Bird had just polished the hall floor, but when he examined his paws they were quite clean.

Paddington had made his own Christmas cards. Some he had drawn himself, decorating the edges with holly and mistletoe; others had been made out of pictures cut from Mrs Brown's magazines. But each one had the words *A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR* printed on the front, and they were signed *PADINGTUN BROWN* on the inside – together with his special paw mark to show that they were genuine.

Paddington wasn't sure about the spelling of *A MERRY CHRISTMAS*. It didn't look at all right. But Mrs Bird checked all the words in a dictionary for him to make certain.

"I don't suppose many people get Christmas cards from a bear," she explained. "They'll probably want to keep them, so you ought to make sure they are right."

One evening Mr Brown arrived home with a huge Christmas tree tied to the roof of his car. It was placed in a position of honour by the dining-room window and both Paddington and Mr Brown spent a long time decorating it with coloured electric lights and silver tinsel.

Apart from the Christmas tree, there were paper chains and holly to be put up, and large coloured bells made of crinkly paper. Paddington enjoyed doing the paper chains. He managed to persuade Mr Brown that bears were very good at putting up decorations and together they did most of the house, with Paddington standing on Mr Brown's shoulders while Mr Brown handed up the drawing pins. It came to an unhappy end one evening when Paddington accidentally put his paw on a drawing pin which he'd left on top of Mr Brown's head. When Mrs Bird rushed into the dining-room to see what all the fuss was about, and to inquire why all the lights had suddenly gone out, she found Paddington hanging by his paws from the chandelier and Mr Brown dancing around the room rubbing his head.

But by then the decorations were almost finished and the house had taken on quite a festive air. The sideboard was groaning under the weight of nuts and oranges, dates and figs, none of which Paddington was allowed to touch, and Mr Brown had stopped smoking his pipe and was filling the air instead with the smell of cigars.

The excitement in the Browns' house mounted, until it reached fever pitch a few days before Christmas, when Jonathan and Judy arrived home for the holidays.

But if the days leading up to Christmas were busy and exciting, they were nothing compared with Christmas Day itself.

The Browns were up early on Christmas morning – much earlier than they had intended. It all started when Paddington woke to find a large pillow-case at the bottom of his bed. His eyes nearly popped out with astonishment when he switched his torch on, for it was bulging with parcels, and it certainly hadn't been there when he'd gone to bed on Christmas Eve.

Paddington's eyes grew larger and larger as he unwrapped the brightly coloured paper round each present. A few days before, on Mrs Bird's instructions, he had made a list of all the things he hoped to have given him and had hidden it up one of the chimneys. It was a strange thing, but everything on that list seemed to be in the pillow-case.

There was a large chemistry outfit from Mr Brown, full of jars and bottles and test tubes, which looked very interesting. And there was a miniature xylophone from Mrs Brown, which pleased him no end. Paddington was fond of music – especially the loud sort, which was good for conducting – and he had always wanted something he could actually play.

Mrs Bird's parcel was even more exciting, for it contained a checked cap which he'd specially asked for and had underlined on his list. Paddington stood on the end of his bed, admiring the effect in the mirror for quite a while.

Jonathan and Judy had each given him a travel book. Paddington was very interested in geography, being a much-travelled bear, and he was pleased to see there were plenty of maps and coloured pictures inside.

The noise from Paddington's room was soon sufficient to wake both Jonathan and Judy, and in no time at all the whole house was in an uproar, with wrapping paper and bits of string everywhere.

"I'm as patriotic as the next man," grumbled Mr Brown. "But I draw the line when bears start playing the National Anthem at six o'clock in the morning – especially on a xylophone."

As always, it was left to Mrs Bird to restore order. "No more presents until after lunch," she said firmly. She had just tripped over Paddington on the upstairs landing, where he was investigating his new chemical outfit, and something nasty had gone in one of her slippers.

"It's all right, Mrs Bird," said Paddington, consulting his instruction book, "it's only some iron filings. I don't think they're dangerous."

"Dangerous or not," said Mrs Bird, "I've a big dinner to cook – not to mention your birthday cake to finish decorating."

Being a bear, Paddington had two birthdays each year – one in the summer and one at Christmas – and the Browns were holding a party in his honour to which Mr Gruber had been invited.

After they'd had breakfast and been to church, the morning passed quickly and Paddington spent most of his time trying to decide what to do next. With so many things from which to choose it was most difficult. He read some chapters from his books and made several interesting smells and a small explosion with his chemical outfit.

Mr Brown was already in trouble for having given it to him, especially when Paddington found a chapter in the instruction book headed ‘Indoor Fireworks’. He made himself a ‘never ending’ snake which wouldn’t stop growing and frightened Mrs Bird to death when she met it coming down the stairs.

“If we don’t watch out,” she confided to Mrs Brown, “we shan’t last over Christmas. We shall either be blown to smithereens or poisoned. He was testing my gravy with some litmus paper just now.”

Mrs Brown sighed. “It’s a good job Christmas only comes once a year,” she said as she helped Mrs Bird with the potatoes.

“It isn’t over yet,” warned Mrs Bird.

Fortunately, Mr Gruber arrived at that moment and some measure of order was established before they all sat down to dinner.

Paddington’s eyes glistened as he surveyed the table. He didn’t agree with Mr Brown when he said it all looked too good to eat. All the same, even Paddington got noticeably slower towards the end when Mrs Bird brought in the Christmas pudding.

“Well,” said Mr Gruber, a few minutes later, as he sat back and surveyed his empty plate, “I must say that’s the best Christmas dinner I’ve had for many a day. Thank you very much indeed!”

“Hear! Hear!” agreed Mr Brown. “What do you say, Paddington?”

“It was very nice,” said Paddington, licking some cream from his whiskers. “Except I had a bone in my Christmas pudding.”

“You *what?*” exclaimed Mrs Brown. “Don’t be silly – there are no bones in Christmas pudding.”

“I had one,” said Paddington, firmly. “It was all hard – and it stuck in my throat.”

“Good gracious!” exclaimed Mrs Bird. “The five pence! I always put a piece of silver in the Christmas pudding.”

“What!” said Paddington, nearly falling off his chair. “A five pence? I’ve never heard of a five pence pudding before.”

“Quick,” shouted Mr Brown, rising to the emergency. “Turn him upside down.”

Before Paddington could reply, he found himself hanging head downwards while Mr Brown and Mr Gruber took it in turns to shake him. The rest of the family stood round watching the floor.

“It’s no good,” said Mr Brown, after a while. “It must have gone too far.” He helped Mr Gruber lift Paddington into an armchair, where he lay gasping for breath.

“I’ve got a magnet upstairs,” said Jonathan. “We could try lowering it down his throat on a piece of string.”

“I don’t think so, dear,” said Mrs Brown, in a worried tone of voice. “He might swallow that and then we should be even worse off.” She bent over the chair. “How do you feel, Paddington?”

“Sick,” said Paddington, in an aggrieved tone of voice.

“Of course you do, dear,” said Mrs Brown. “It’s only to be expected. There’s only one thing to do – we shall have to send for the doctor.”

“Thank goodness I scrubbed it first,” said Mrs Bird. “It might have been covered with germs.”

“But I *didn’t* swallow it,” gasped Paddington. “I only nearly did. Then I put it on the side of my plate. I didn’t know it was five pence because it was all covered with Christmas pudding.”

Paddington felt very fed up. He’d just eaten one of the best dinners he could ever remember and now he’d been turned upside down and shaken without even being given time to explain.

Everyone exchanged glances and then crept quietly away, leaving Paddington to recover by himself. There didn't seem to be much they *could* say.

But after the dinner things had been cleared away, and by the time Mrs Bird had made some strong coffee, Paddington was almost himself again. He was sitting up in the chair helping himself to some dates when they trooped back into the room. It took a lot to make Paddington ill for very long.

When they had finished their coffee, and were sitting round the blazing fire feeling warm and comfortable, Mr Brown rubbed his hands. "Now, Paddington," he said, "it's not only Christmas, it's your birthday as well. What would you like to do?"

A mysterious expression came over Paddington's face. "If you all go in the other room," he announced, "I've a special surprise for you."

"Oh dear, *must* we, Paddington?" said Mrs Brown. "There isn't a fire."

"I shan't be long," said Paddington, firmly. "But it's a special surprise and it has to be prepared." He held the door open and the Browns, Mrs Bird, and Mr Gruber filed obediently into the other room.

"Now close your eyes," said Paddington, when they were all settled, "and I'll let you know when I'm ready."

Mrs Brown shivered. "I hope you won't be too long," she called. But the only reply was the sound of the door clicking shut.

They waited for several minutes without speaking, and then Mr Gruber cleared his throat. "Do you think young Mr Brown's forgotten about us?" he asked.

"I don't know," said Mrs Brown. "But I'm not waiting much longer."

"Henry!" she exclaimed, as she opened her eyes.

"Have you gone to sleep?"

"Er, wassat?" snorted Mr Brown. He had eaten such a large dinner he was finding it difficult to keep awake. "What's happening? Have I missed anything?"

"Nothing's happening," said Mrs Brown. "Henry, you'd better go and see what Paddington's up to."

Several more minutes went by before Mr Brown returned to announce that he couldn't find Paddington anywhere.

"Well, he must be *somewhere*," said Mrs Brown. "Bears don't disappear into thin air."

"Crikey!" exclaimed Jonathan, as a thought suddenly struck him. "You don't think he's playing at Father Christmas, do you? He was asking all about it the other day when he put his list up the chimney. I bet that's why he wanted us to come in here – because this chimney connects with the one upstairs – and there isn't a fire."

"Father Christmas?" said Mr Brown. "I'll give him Father Christmas!" He stuck his head up the chimney and called Paddington's name several times. "I can't see anything," he said, striking a match. As if in answer a large lump of soot descended and burst on top of his head.

"Now look what you've done, Henry," said Mrs Brown. "Shouting so – you've disturbed the soot. All over your clean shirt!"

"If it is young Mr Brown, perhaps he's stuck somewhere," suggested Mr Gruber. "He did have rather a large dinner. I remember wondering at the time where he put it all."

Mr Gruber's suggestion had an immediate effect on the party and everyone began to look serious.

"Why, he might suffocate with the fumes," exclaimed Mrs Bird, as she hurried out to the broom cupboard.

When she returned, armed with a mop, everyone took it in turns to poke it up the chimney but even

though they strained their ears they couldn't hear a sound.

It was while the excitement was at its height that Paddington came into the room. He looked most surprised when he saw Mr Brown with his head up the chimney.

"You can come into the dining-room now," he announced, looking round the room. "I've finished wrapping my presents and they're all on the Christmas tree."

"You don't mean to say," spluttered Mr Brown, as he sat in the fireplace rubbing his face with a handkerchief, "you've been in the other room all the time?"

"Yes," said Paddington, innocently, "I hope I didn't keep you waiting too long."



Mrs Brown looked at her husband. "I thought you said you'd looked everywhere," she exclaimed.

"Well – we'd just come from the dining-room," said Mr Brown, looking very sheepish. "I didn't think he'd be *there*."

"It only goes to show," said Mrs Bird hastily, as she caught sight of the expression on Mr Brown's face, "how easy it is to give a bear a bad name."

Paddington looked most interested when they explained to him what all the fuss was about.

"I never thought of coming down the chimney," he said, staring at the fireplace.

"Well, you're not thinking about it now either," replied Mr Brown sternly.

But even Mr Brown's expression changed as he followed Paddington into the dining-room and saw the surprise that had been prepared for them.

In addition to the presents that had already been placed on the tree, there were now six newly wrapped ones tied to the lower branches. If the Browns recognised the wrapping paper they had used for Paddington's presents earlier in the day, they were much too polite to say anything.

"I'm afraid I had to use old paper," said Paddington apologetically, as he waved a paw at the tree. "I hadn't any money left. That's why you had to go in the other room while I wrapped them."

“Really, Paddington,” said Mrs Brown. “I’m very cross with you – spending all your money on presents for us.”

“I’m afraid they’re rather ordinary,” said Paddington, as he settled back in a chair to watch the others. “But I hope you like them. They’re all labelled so that you know which is which.”

“Ordinary?” exclaimed Mr Brown as he opened his parcel. “I don’t call a pipe rack ordinary. And there’s an ounce of my favourite tobacco tied to the back as well!”

“Gosh! A new stamp album!” cried Jonathan. “Whizzo! And it’s got some stamps inside already.”

“They’re Peruvian ones from Aunt Lucy’s postcards,” said Paddington. “I’ve been saving them for you.”

“And I’ve got a box of paints,” exclaimed Judy. “Thank you very much, Paddington. It’s just what I wanted.”

“We all seem to be lucky,” said Mrs Brown, as she unwrapped a parcel containing a bottle of her favourite lavender water. “How *did* you guess? I finished my last bottle only a week ago.”

“I’m sorry about your parcel, Mrs Bird,” said Paddington, looking across the room. “I had a bit of a job with the knots.”

“It must be something special,” said Mr Brown. “It seems all string and no parcel.”

“That’s because it’s really clothes-line,” explained Paddington, “not string. I rescued it when I got stuck in the revolving doors at Crumbold & Ferns.”

“That makes two presents in one,” said Mrs Bird, as she freed the last of the knots and began unwinding yards and yards of paper. “How exciting. I can’t think what it can be.”

“Why,” she exclaimed. “I do believe it’s a brooch! And it’s shaped like a bear – how lovely!” Mrs Bird looked most touched as she handed the present round for everyone to see. “I shall keep it in a safe place,” she added, “and only wear it on special occasions – when I want to impress people.”

“I don’t know what mine is,” said Mr Gruber, as they all turned to him. He squeezed the parcel. “It’s such a funny shape.”

“It’s a drinking mug!” he exclaimed, his face lighting up with pleasure. “And it even has my name painted on the side!”

“It’s for your elevenses, Mr Gruber,” said Paddington. “I noticed your old one was getting rather chipped.”

“I’m sure it will make my cocoa taste better than it ever has before,” said Mr Gruber.

He stood up and cleared his throat. “I think I would like to offer a vote of thanks to young Mr Brown,” he said, “for all his nice presents. I’m sure he must have given them a great deal of thought.”

“Hear! Hear!” echoed Mr Brown, as he filled his pipe.

Mr Gruber felt under his chair. “And while I think of it, Mr Brown, I have a small present for you.”

Everyone stood round and watched while Paddington struggled with his parcel, eager to see what Mr Gruber had bought him. A gasp of surprise went up as he tore the paper to one side, for it was a beautifully bound leather scrapbook, with ‘Paddington Brown’ printed in gold leaf on the cover.

Paddington didn’t know what to say, but Mr Gruber waved his thanks to one side. “I know how you enjoy writing about your adventures, Mr Brown,” he said. “And you have so many I’m sure your present scrapbook must be almost full.”

“It is,” said Paddington, earnestly. “And I’m sure I shall have lots more. Things happen to me, you know. But I shall only put my best ones in here!”

When he made his way up to bed later that evening, his mind was in such a whirl, and he was so full

of good things, he could hardly climb the stairs – let alone think about anything. He wasn't quite sure which he had enjoyed most. The presents, the Christmas dinner, the games, or the tea – with the special marmalade-layer birthday cake Mrs Bird had made in his honour. Pausing on the corner half way up, he decided he had enjoyed giving his own presents best of all.

“Paddington! Whatever have you got there?” He jumped and hastily hid his paw behind his back as he heard Mrs Bird calling from the bottom of the stairs.

“It's only some five pence pudding, Mrs Bird,” he called, looking over the banisters guiltily. “I thought I might get hungry during the night and I didn't want to take any chances.”

“Honestly!” Mrs Bird exclaimed, as she was joined by the others. “What does that bear look like? A paper hat about ten sizes too big on his head – Mr Gruber's scrapbook in one paw – and a plate of Christmas pudding in the other!”

“I don't care what he looks like,” said Mrs Brown, “so long as he stays that way. The place wouldn't be the same without him.”

But Paddington was too far away to hear what was being said. He was already sitting up in bed, busily writing in his scrapbook.

First of all, there was a very important notice to go on the front page. It said:

PADINGTUN BROWN,

32 WINDSOR GARDENS,

LUNDUN,

ENGLAND,

YUROPE,

THE WORLD.

Then, on the next page he added, in large capital letters: MY ADDVENTURES. CHAPTER WUN.

Paddington sucked his pen thoughtfully for a moment and then carefully replaced the top on the bottle of ink before it had a chance to fall over on the sheets. He felt much too sleepy to write any more. But he didn't really mind. Tomorrow was another day – and he felt quite sure he *would* have some more adventures – even if he didn't know what they were going to be as yet.

Paddington lay back and pulled the blankets up round his whiskers. It was warm and comfortable and he sighed contentedly as he closed his eyes. It was nice being a bear. Especially a bear called Paddington.

* See *A Bear Called Paddington*

MICHAEL BOND
PADDINGTON
HELPS OUT

Classic adventures of the bear from Darkest Peru.



illustrated by PEGGY FORTNUM


PADDINGTON HELPS OUT

by MICHAEL BOND



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Chapter One
A PICNIC ON THE RIVER

Paddington sat up in bed with a puzzled expression on his face. Happenings at number thirty-two Windsor Gardens, particularly breakfast, always followed a strict timetable and it was most unusual for anything to waken him quite so early.

He took a careful look around his room, but everything seemed to be in its place.

The photograph of his Aunt Lucy, taken shortly before she entered the home for retired bears in Lima, was on the table beside the bed, along with his jar of special marmalade and several other items.

His old hat and duffle coat were both hanging on the door peg, and his Peruvian centavos were under the pillow.

Most important of all, when he lifted the bedclothes and peered underneath, his small leather suitcase with its secret compartment containing his scrapbook and a number of important papers was still at the bottom of the bed.

Paddington heaved a sigh of relief. Although he had lived with the Browns for over a year he had never quite got used to having a room of his own and he wasn't the sort of bear who believed in taking chances.

It was at that point, just as he was absentmindedly dipping his paw into the marmalade jar before going back to sleep, that Paddington pricked up his ears and listened.

There were voices – quite a number of voices – coming from the garden. Several times he heard a door bang, and then, in the distance, he heard a noise remarkably like that of clinking plates followed by the sound of Mr Brown shouting orders.

Paddington scrambled out of bed and hurried across the room to the window. It sounded most interesting and he didn't like to think he might be missing anything. As he peered through the glass he nearly fell over backwards with astonishment at the sight which met his eyes. He breathed heavily on the window-pane and rubbed it with his paw to make sure he wasn't dreaming the whole thing.

For there, on the lawn outside, all the Brown family – Mr and Mrs Brown and Jonathan and Judy – were gathered round a large wicker basket. Not only that, but as he watched, Mrs Bird, their housekeeper, came out of the kitchen carrying a huge plate piled high with sandwiches.

Paddington climbed off the window-sill and hurried downstairs. It was all very mysterious and it definitely needed investigating.

“Trust Paddington!” said everyone as he came through the kitchen door just as they were shutting the lid of the hamper.

“That bear can smell out a marmalade sandwich a mile away,” grumbled Mrs Bird.

“Honestly,” said Judy, waving her finger at him. “It was meant to be a surprise. We got up specially early.”

Paddington looked from one to the other with growing surprise.

“It’s all right, Paddington,” laughed Mrs Brown. “There’s no need to be alarmed. We’re only going for a picnic on the river.”

“And we’re having a competition,” cried Jonathan, waving a fishing net in the air. “Dad’s promised a prize to whoever makes the first catch.”

Paddington’s eyes grew rounder and rounder. “A picnic?” he exclaimed. “I don’t think I’ve ever been for a picnic on the river before.”

“That’s good,” said Mr Brown, twirling his moustache briskly. “Because you’re going on one now. So hurry up and eat your breakfast. It’s a lovely day and we may as well make the most of it.”

Paddington needed no second bidding, and while the Browns were busy packing the rest of the picnic gear into the car he hurried back indoors where his breakfast was waiting. He liked doing new things and he was looking forward to the day’s outing. One of the nicest things about living with the Browns was the number of surprises he had.

“I hope I’ve never ever done everything, Mrs Bird,” he said as she came into the dining-room to see if he’d finished his toast and marmalade. “I shouldn’t have any surprises left then!”

“Hmm,” replied Mrs Bird sternly, as she bundled him out of the room. “You’ll be getting a surprise if you don’t wash those bacon-and-egg stains off your whiskers before we go out. I’ve never known such a bear for getting in a mess.”

Paddington put on his injured expression as he disappeared into the hall. “I was only trying to be quick, Mrs Bird,” he explained.

Nevertheless, he hurried upstairs to the bathroom. There were several important things to be done before he went out for the day. First of all there was his suitcase to be packed, and then he had to consult his atlas. Paddington was very keen on geography and he was interested in the thought of having a picnic on the river. It sounded most unusual.

“I don’t know why it is,” said Mrs Bird, as she adjusted her hat for what seemed like the fortieth time, “but whenever this family goes anywhere it always takes enough to keep a regiment for a month.”

The Browns were packed into the car, jogging along the road towards the river. Besides the Browns, Mrs Bird and Paddington, there was the hamper, a gramophone, a pile of records, a number of parcels and some fishing nets – not to mention several sunshades, a tent and a pile of cushions.

Mrs Brown shifted uncomfortably as she agreed with Mrs Bird. Paddington’s leather suitcase was sticking in her back and his old hat, which he insisted on wearing in case of sunstroke, kept tickling the side of her face.

“Is it much farther?” she asked.

Paddington, who was sitting beside her on the front seat, consulted his map. “I think it’s the next turning on the right,” he announced, following the route with his paw.

“I do hope so,” said Mrs Brown. They had already taken one wrong turning that morning when Paddington had followed a piece of dried marmalade peel on his map by mistake.

“Fancy turning right at a piece of dried marmalade peel,” grumbled Mr Brown. “That policeman didn’t like it at all.”

Anxious to make amends, Paddington stuck his head out of the window and sniffed.

“I think we must be getting near, Mr Brown,” he called. “I can smell something unusual.”

“That’s the gas works,” said Mr Brown, following the direction of Paddington’s paw. “The river’s on *this* side.”

Just as he spoke they swept round a corner and there, straight in front of them, was a broad expanse of water.

Paddington’s eyes lit up as they all clambered out of the car and while the others were unloading the supplies he stood on the water’s edge and surveyed the scene. He was most impressed.

The towpath was crowded with people and there were boats everywhere. Rowing boats, canoes, punts and sailing boats with their white sails billowing in the wind. As he watched, a steamer packed with more people swept by, sending a large wave shooting across the water and causing all the smaller boats to rock. Everyone on board seemed very cheerful and happy and several of them pointed towards Paddington and waved.

Paddington raised his hat in reply and then turned to the others. “I think I’m going to like the river,” he announced.

“I do hope so, dear,” said Mrs Brown uneasily. “It *is* your treat.”

She looked at the row of boats moored by the landing stage. The day before it had seemed a very good idea of Mr Brown’s to have a picnic on the river. But now they were actually here she had a nasty feeling in the back of her mind and she knew Mrs Bird was feeling the same way. Close to, the boats looked awfully small.

“Are you sure they’re safe, Henry?” she asked, looking at them nervously.

“Safe?” echoed Mr Brown, as he led the way on to the landing stage. “Of course they’re safe, Mary. You just leave everything to me.

“I’ll put you in charge of all the ropes and things, Paddington,” he called. “That means you can steer.”

“Thank you very much, Mr Brown,” said Paddington, feeling most important. His eyes gleamed with excitement as he climbed into the boat and carefully examined everything with his paws.

“The boatman’s rather busy,” said Mr Brown, as he helped the others in. “So I said we would shove off by ourselves.”

“Paddington!” exclaimed Mrs Brown, as she picked Mrs Bird’s best sun hat off the floor of the boat. “*Do* mind what you’re doing with that fishing net. You’ll have someone’s head off.”

“I’m sorry, Mrs Bird,” said Paddington. “I was only testing it.”

“All right,” said Mr Brown, as he settled himself on his seat and took a firm grip on the oars. “Here we go. Stand by at the helm, Paddington.”

“Do what, Mr Brown?” cried Paddington.

“Pull on the ropes,” shouted Mr Brown. “Come on – left paw down.”

“Oh dear,” said Mrs Bird nervously, as she clutched the side of the boat with one hand and gripped her sunshade with the other. Out of the corner of her eye she could already see a number of people staring in their direction.

In the back of the boat Paddington pulled hard on the two ropes tied to the rudder. He wasn’t quite sure whether Mr Brown had meant *his*, Mr Brown’s, left, or his own left, so he pulled both just to

make certain. Everyone waited expectantly while Mr Brown strained on the oars.

"I should have thought, Henry," said Mrs Brown, after a few moments had gone by, "it would have been much easier if you'd untied the boat from the landing stage first."

"What!" exclaimed Mr Brown. He mopped his brow and looked crossly over his shoulder. "Hasn't anyone done that yet?"

"I'll do it, Mr Brown," called Paddington importantly, as he clambered along the side of the boat. "I'm in charge of ropes."

The Browns waited patiently while Paddington examined the rope. He wasn't very good at knots because they were rather difficult with paws, but eventually he announced that all was ready.

"Right!" shouted Mr Brown, as he braced himself once more. "Here we go. Cast off, Paddington. Hold on, everyone!"

"Do what, Mr Brown?" cried Paddington, above the splashing of the water. Having a picnic on the river was much more complicated than he had expected. There were so many ropes to pull he was getting a bit confused. First of all Mr Brown told him to untie the rope. Now he had shouted to everyone to hold on.

Paddington closed his eyes and held on to the rope with both paws as tightly as he could.

He wasn't quite sure what happened next. One moment he was standing on the boat -the next moment it wasn't there any more.

"Henry!" shouted Mrs Brown, as there was a loud splash. "For goodness' sake! Paddington's fallen in the water!"

"Bear overboard!" cried Jonathan, as the boat shot away from the bank.

"Hold on, Paddington!" called Judy. We're coming.

"But I *did* hold on," cried Paddington, as he came up spluttering for air. "That's how I fell in."



Mrs Brown lunged into the water with her sunshade. "Do hurry, Henry," she cried.

"I'm sure Paddington can't swim," said Judy.

"What did you say?" called Paddington.

"She said 'you can't swim'," yelled Mr Brown.

When he heard what Mr Brown said Paddington began waving his paws wildly in the air and there was a gurgle as he promptly sank.

"There now, Henry," exclaimed Mrs Brown. "Now look what you've done. He was all right until you spoke."

“I like that!” said Mr Brown, giving his wife an expressive look.

“It’s all right,” shouted Jonathan. “Someone’s thrown him a lifebelt!”

By the time the Browns reached the landing stage Paddington had already been rescued and he was lying on his back surrounded by a large crowd. Everyone was staring down at him making suggestions while the man in charge of the boats pulled his paws back and forth, giving him artificial respiration.



“Thank goodness he’s safe,” exclaimed Mrs Brown thankfully.

“Don’t see why ’e shouldn’t be,” said the man. “If ’e’d layed ’isself down it’d only ’ve come up to ’is whiskers. The water’s only about nine inches deep just ’ere. Probably a lot less now – judging by the amount ’e’s swallowed. Kept ’is mouth open when ’e went under, I dare say.”

Judy bent down and looked at Paddington. “I think he’s trying to say something,” she said.

“Grrr,” said Paddington as he sat up.

“Now just you lay still for a moment, young feller-me-bear,” said the boatman, pushing Paddington back down again.

“Grrr,” said Paddington. “ITHINKI’VELOSTMYHAT.”

“ITHINKI’VELOSTMYHAT,” repeated the man, looking at Paddington with renewed interest. “Are you one of them foreign bears? We get a rare lot of overseas visitors at this time of year,” he said, turning to the Browns.

“I *come* from Peru,” spluttered Paddington, as he got his breath back. “But I *live* at number thirty-two Windsor Gardens in London, and I think I’ve lost my hat.”

“Oh dear,” said Mrs Brown, clutching her husband’s arm. “Did you hear that, Henry? Paddington’s lost his hat!”

The Brown family stared at each other in dismay. They often grumbled about Paddington’s hat – usually when he wasn’t listening – because it was so old. People had a habit of pointing at it when they were out and it made them feel embarrassed. But all the same, they couldn’t even begin to picture Paddington without it.

“I had it on when I fell in the water,” cried Paddington, feeling on top of his head. “And now it isn’t there any more.”

“Gosh,” said Jonathan. “It had so many holes in it too! Perhaps it’s sunk.”

“Sunk!” cried Paddington in dismay. He ran to the edge of the landing stage and peered at the muddy water. “But it can’t have *sunk*!”

“He’s always worn it,” explained Mrs Brown to the boatman. “Ever since we’ve known him. It was given to him by his uncle in Peru.”

“*Darkest* Peru,” said Paddington.

“*Darkest* Peru,” repeated the boatman, looking most impressed. He turned to Paddington and

touched his forelock. "You'll be wanting the Thames Conservancy, sir."

"No, I don't," said Paddington firmly. "I want my hat."

"He means they look after the river, dear," explained Mrs Brown. "They may have found it for you."

"It's the current, sir," explained the boatman. "Once you get away from the bank it's very strong and it may have got swep' over the weir." He pointed along the river towards a row of buildings in the distance.

"Got swep' over the weir?" repeated Paddington slowly.

The boatman nodded. "If it ain't already been sucked into a whirlpool."

Paddington gave the man a hard stare. "My hat!" he exclaimed, hardly able to believe his ears. "Got sucked into a whirlpool?"



"Come along," said Mr Brown hastily. "If we hurry we may be just in time to see it go over."

Closely followed by Mr and Mrs Brown, Mrs Bird, Jonathan and Judy, the boatman and a crowd of interested sightseers, Paddington hurried along the towpath with a grim expression on his face, leaving a trail of water behind him.

By the time they reached the weir the news had already spread and several men in peaked caps were peering anxiously into the water.

"I hear you've lost a very valuable Persian cat," said the lock-keeper to Mr Brown.

"Not a *cat*," said Mr Brown. "A *hat*. And it's from Peru."

"It belongs to this young bear gentleman, Fred," explained the boatman as he joined them. "It's a family heirloom."

"A family heirloom?" repeated the lock-keeper, scratching his head as he looked at Paddington. "I've never heard of a hat being a family heirloom before. Especially a bear's heirloom."

"Mine is," said Paddington firmly. "It's a very rare sort of hat and it's got a marmalade sandwich inside. I put it in there in case of an emergency."

"A marmalade sandwich?" said the lock-keeper, looking more and more surprised. "Wait a minute – it wouldn't be that thing we fished out just now would it? All sort of shapeless... like a... like a..." He tried hard to think of words to describe it.

“That *sounds* like it,” said Mrs Bird.

“Herbert!” called the man to a boy who was standing nearby watching the proceedings with an open mouth. “See if we’ve still got that wassname in the shed.

“It might well be an heirloom,” he continued, turning to the Browns. “It looks as if it’s been handed down a lot.”

Everyone waited anxiously while Herbert disappeared into a small hut by the side of the lock. He returned after a few moments carrying a bucket.

“We put it in here,” said the lock-keeper apologetically, “because we’d never seen anything like it before. We were going to send it to the museum.”

Paddington peered into the bucket. “That’s not a wassname,” he exclaimed thankfully. “That’s my hat.”

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief. “Thank goodness,” said Mrs Bird, echoing all their thoughts.

“There’s a fish inside it as well,” said the lock-keeper.

“What!” exclaimed Paddington. “A fish? Inside my hat?”

“That’s right,” said the man. “It must have been after your marmalade sandwich. Probably got in through one of the holes.”

“Crikey,” exclaimed Jonathan admiringly, as the Browns gathered round the bucket. “So there is!”

“That means Paddington’s won the prize for catching the first fish,” said Judy. “Congratulations!”

“Well, if it’s some kind of competition,” said the lock-keeper, “I’d better get you a jam-jar to put it in, sir.

“I suppose,” he said, looking rather doubtfully at the hat, “you’ll be wanting to wear it again?”

As Paddington gave him a hard stare he backed away and hurried off in search of a jam-jar. “There you are,” he said when he returned. “With the compliments of the Thames Conservancy.”

“Thank you very much,” said Paddington gratefully, offering the man his paw.

“Not at all,” said the man, as he stood on the side of the lock to wave them goodbye. “It’s a pleasure. After all, it’s not every day we have the opportunity of saving a bear’s heirloom from going over the weir. I shall remember today for a long time to come.”



“And so shall I remember it,” said Mr Brown as he stopped rowing somewhere later and let the

boat drift lazily downstream in the current. “It may not have been the quietest day we’ve ever spent on the river, but it’s certainly the nicest.”

And the Brown family, as they lay back in the boat watching the shimmering water and listening to the music from the gramophone, had to agree.

Paddington, as he held on tightly to his hat with one paw while he dipped the other into a jar of his favourite marmalade, agreed most of all. Now that he had got his hat back and everything had been restored to normal he felt it was quite the nicest day he’d had for a long time.





Chapter Two

PADDINGTON MAKES A BID

Paddington's friend, Mr Gruber, laughed no end when he heard all about the trip on the river.

"Oh dear, Mr Brown," he said, wiping the tears from his eyes, "things do happen to you. I wish I could have been there to see it all."

It was the morning after the picnic and Paddington had hurried round as soon as possible to tell Mr Gruber about it.

Mr Gruber kept an antique shop in the Portobello Road. It was near the Browns' house and Paddington usually called in when he was doing the morning shopping so that they could share a bun and a cup of cocoa for their 'elevenses'. In his younger days Mr Gruber had been to South America and so they were able to have long chats together about Darkest Peru while sitting in their deck-chairs on the pavement. Paddington always looked forward to seeing Mr Gruber and he often lent a paw around the shop.

Most of the shops in the Portobello Road were interesting, but Mr Gruber's was the best of all. It was like going into Aladdin's cave. There were swords and old suits of armour hanging on the walls, gleaming copper and brass pots and pans stacked on the floor, pictures, china ornaments, pieces of furniture and pottery piled up to the ceiling; in fact, there was very little one way and another that Mr Gruber didn't sell, and people came from far and wide to seek his advice.

Mr Gruber also kept a huge library of second-hand books in the back of his shop which he let Paddington consult whenever any problems cropped up. Paddington found this most useful as the Public Library didn't have a bear's department and the assistants usually looked at him suspiciously when he peered through the window at them.

After Paddington had explained to Mr Gruber all about his trip on the river they fell silent for a moment while they ate their buns and drank their cocoa.

It was while he was sitting back in his deck-chair admiring the view and watching the passers-by that Paddington noticed Mr Gruber's shop window for the first time that morning. To his surprise it looked unusually empty.

"Ah," said Mr Gruber, following his glance. "I had a very busy day yesterday, Mr Brown. While you were having high jinks on the river a big party of American visitors came round and they bought all kinds of things.

"As a matter of fact," he continued, "I did so well I have to go to an auction sale this afternoon to pick up some more antiques."

"An auction sale?" said Paddington, looking most interested, "What does it look like, Mr Gruber?" Mr Gruber thought for a moment. "Well," he began, "it's a place where they sell things to the

highest bidder, Mr Brown. All kinds of things. But it's very difficult to explain without actually showing you."

Mr Gruber rubbed his glasses and coughed. "Er... I suppose, Mr Brown, it wouldn't be possible for you to come along with me this afternoon, would it? Then you could see for yourself."

"Oooh, yes, please, Mr Gruber," exclaimed Paddington, his eyes gleaming with excitement at the thought. "I should like that very much indeed."

Although they met most days, Mr Gruber was usually busy in his shop and they seldom had the opportunity of actually going out together.

At that moment a customer entered the shop and so, having arranged to meet Mr Gruber after lunch, Paddington raised his hat and hurried back home to tell the others.

"Hmm," said Mrs Bird, when she heard all about it over lunch. "I pity the poor auctioneer who tries to sell anything when Paddington's there. That bear'll knock anyone down to half-price."

"Oh, I'm not *buying* anything, Mrs Bird," said Paddington, as he reached out a paw for a second helping of treacle tart. "I'm only going to watch."

All the same, when he left the house after lunch, Mrs Bird noticed he was carrying his old leather suitcase in which he kept all his money.

"It's all right, Mrs Bird," said Paddington, as he waved goodbye with his paw. "It's only in case of an emergency."

"Just so long as he doesn't come home with a suite of furniture," said Mrs Bird as she closed the door. "If he does it'll have to go in the garden."

Paddington felt very excited as he entered the auction rooms. Mr Gruber had put on his best suit for the occasion and a number of people turned to stare at them as they came through the door.

Having bought two catalogues, Mr Gruber pushed his way to the front so that Paddington would have a good view. On the way he introduced him to several of the other dealers as "Mr Brown – a young bear friend of mine from Darkest Peru who's interested in antiques."

They all shook Paddington's paw and whispered that they were very pleased to meet him.

It was all much different to what Paddington had expected. It was really like a very big antique shop, with boxes and tables loaded with china and silver round the walls. There was a large crowd of people standing in the middle of the room facing a man on a platform who appeared to be waving a hammer in the air.

"That's the auctioneer," whispered Mr Gruber. "He's the man you want to watch. He's most important."

Paddington raised his hat politely to the auctioneer and then settled down on his suitcase and carefully looked around.

After a moment he decided he liked auction sales. Everyone seemed so friendly. In fact, he had hardly made himself comfortable before a man on the other side of the room waved his hand in their direction. Paddington stood up, raised his hat and waved a friendly paw back.



No sooner had he sat down than the man waved again. Being a polite bear, Paddington stood up and once more waved his paw.

To his surprise the man stopped waving almost immediately and glared at him instead. Paddington gave him a hard stare and then settled down to watch the man on the platform who appeared to be doing something with his hammer again.

“Going...” the man shouted, hitting the table. “Going... gone! Sold to the young bear gentleman in the hat for three pounds fifty!”

“Oh dear,” said Mr Gruber, looking most upset. “I’m afraid you’ve just bought a set of carpentry tools, Mr Brown.”

“*What!*” repeated Paddington, nearly falling off his suitcase with surprise. “*I’ve bought a set of carpentry tools?*”

“Come along,” said the auctioneer sternly. “You’re holding up the proceedings. Pay at the desk, please.”

“A set of carpentry tools,” exclaimed Paddington, jumping up and waving his paws in the air. “But I didn’t even say anything!”

Mr Gruber looked most embarrassed. “I’m afraid it’s all my fault, Mr Brown,” he said. “I should have explained auction sales to you before we came in. I think perhaps *I’d* better pay for them as it wasn’t really your fault.

“You see,” he continued, when he returned from the desk, “you have to be very careful at a sale, Mr Brown.”

Mr Gruber went on to explain how the auctioneer offered each item for sale, and how, after one person had made a bid for something, it was up to anyone else who wanted it to make a better offer.

“If you nod your head, Mr Brown,” he said, “or even scratch your nose, they think it’s a sign you want to buy something. I expect the auctioneer saw you raise your hat just now and thought you were bidding.”

Paddington wasn’t at all sure what Mr Gruber meant, but having carefully made sure the auctioneer wasn’t looking, he quickly nodded and then sat very still while he watched the proceedings.

Although he didn’t say anything to Mr Gruber, he was beginning to wish he hadn’t come to the auction. The room was hot and crowded and he wanted to take his hat off. Apart from that he was sitting on the handle of his suitcase, which was most uncomfortable.

He closed his eyes and was just about to try and go to sleep when Mr Gruber nudged his paw and

pointed to the catalogue.

“I say, Mr Brown,” he said. “The next item is very interesting. It’s an old pistol – the sort highwaymen used. They’re quite popular just now. I think I shall try bidding for it.”

Paddington sat up and watched excitedly as the auctioneer held the pistol in the air for everyone to see. “Lot thirty-four,” he shouted. “What am I bid for this genuine antique pistol?”

“Twenty pounds,” came a voice from the back of the room.

“Twenty pounds fifty,” called Mr Gruber, waving his catalogue.

“Twenty-two pounds,” came another voice.

“Oh dear,” said Mr Gruber, making some calculations on the side of his catalogue. “Twenty-two pounds fifty pence.”

“Twenty-three pounds,” came the same voice again.

Paddington stood on his case and stared across the room. “That’s the man who made me buy the carpentry tools by mistake,” he whispered, tapping Mr Gruber excitedly.

“Well, we mustn’t let *him* have it whatever we do,” exclaimed Mr Gruber. “Twenty-three pounds fifty!”

“Twenty-four pounds,” cried Paddington wildly.

“Ahem,” said Mr Gruber tactfully, not wishing to offend Paddington. “I think we’re bidding against each other, Mr Brown.”

“Any advance on twenty-four pounds?” shouted the auctioneer, looking most pleased.

As there was no reply he raised his hammer. “Going... going...” he called. “Gone!” He brought the hammer down with a loud crash. “Sold to the young bear gentleman in the front row for twenty-four pounds.”

Mr Gruber felt in his wallet for the money. Taking Paddington to an auction sale was becoming rather expensive.

“I’m sorry about that, Mr Gruber,” said Paddington guiltily, when he returned. “I’m afraid I got rather excited.”

“That’s all right,” said Mr Gruber. “It was still a very good bargain, Mr Brown – and I did want it. I shall put it in my window tomorrow.”

“I think perhaps I’d better not do any more bidding,” said Paddington, looking very crestfallen. “I don’t think bears are very good at it.”

“Nonsense,” said Mr Gruber. “You’ve been doing very well for a first time.”

All the same, Paddington decided to keep quiet for a while and watch Mr Gruber. It was all very complicated and not a bit like shopping in the market, where he was allowed to test everything with his paws first before arguing over the price.



Mr Gruber pointed out several items in the catalogue to Paddington and gave him a pencil so that he could mark off the ones he had bought and how much had been paid for them.

The list of items Mr Gruber bought grew and grew until Paddington felt quite dizzy with writing down all the figures and he was pleased when at last he announced that he had finished buying for the day.

“A very good day’s work indeed, Mr Brown,” he said, as he checked Paddington’s figures. “And thank you very much for all your help. I don’t know what I would have done without you.”

Paddington looked up from his own catalogue which he had been studying earnestly. “That’s all right, Mr Gruber,” he said vaguely. “Excuse me, but what is a preserves stand?”

“A preserves stand?” said Mr Gruber. “Well, it’s a thing for holding jam or marmalade.”

Paddington’s eyes gleamed as he started to unlock his suitcase. “I think I shall bid for that, Mr Gruber,” he said excitedly, as he peered inside the secret compartment to see how much money he had. “It’s the next item in the catalogue. I think I should like a preserves stand for my marmalade.”

Mr Gruber looked at him rather nervously. “I should be careful if I were you, Mr Brown,” he said. “It may be an antique one. If it is it’s probably worth a lot of money.”

But before he had time to explain to Paddington just how much it might cost him the auctioneer rapped on his table for silence.

“Lot 99,” he shouted, as he held up a piece of shining silver to the light. “A very unusual kind of preserves stand. What am I bid for this valuable piece of antique silver?”

“Ten pence!” cried Paddington.

A hush fell over the room. “Ten pence?” echoed the auctioneer, hardly able to believe his ears. “Did I hear someone say *ten pence*?”

“I did,” called Paddington, waving his catalogue in the air. “I want it to keep my marmalade in. Mrs Bird’s always grumbling because my jars get sticky.”



“Your *jars* get sticky?” repeated the auctioneer, passing a hand over his forehead. It really was a most unusual day. Things hadn’t gone at all according to plan. Some items had been sold for far more than he had ever expected. Others – like the preserves stand – were fetching nothing at all. He had a nasty feeling it had something to do with the young bear in the front row. He seemed to have a very powerful stare and he’d done his best up to now to avoid catching Paddington’s eye.

“Come, come,” he said, giving a high-pitched laugh. “I’m sure we all enjoy a little joke. Let’s start again. Now – what am I bid for this valuable item?”

“Nine pence,” said a voice at the back of the hall amid laughter.

“Ten pence,” said Paddington firmly.

The laughter died down and there was silence. “If you ask me,” whispered a voice behind Paddington, “that young bear knows something.”

“It’s probably a fake,” whispered another voice. “After all – it’s not the first thing he’s bought this afternoon.”

“He’s with old Mr Gruber, too,” whispered the first voice. “And he said he was interested in antiques when he came in. I wouldn’t touch it if I were you.”

The auctioneer shuddered as he gazed at the preserves stand in his hand. “Any advance on ten pence?” he cried.

There was another long silence. “Going...” he shouted, raising his hammer and looking around hopefully. “Going...” Still no one spoke. “Gone!”

He brought his hammer down on the desk with a crash. “Sold to the young bear gentleman in the front row for tenpence.”

“Thank you very much,” said Paddington, as he hurried up to the table. “I hope you don’t mind if I pay you in pennies but I’ve been saving up in case of an emergency.”

“Pennies?” said the man. He mopped his brow with a spotted handkerchief. “I don’t know,” he said, turning to his assistant. “I must be getting old. Letting young bears get the better of me at my time of life.”

“A very good bargain indeed,” said Mr Gruber admiringly, when they were outside the saleroom. He turned Paddington’s preserves stand over in his hands. “I should say it’s worth every penny of fifty pounds.”

“Fifty pounds?” exclaimed Paddington, staring at Mr Gruber. “Fifty pounds for a marmalade stand?”

“At least that,” said Mr Gruber. “I’ll put it in my window for you if you like, Mr Brown.”

Paddington thought hard for a moment. “I think I would like you to have it as a present, Mr Gruber,”

he said at last. "I don't expect you'd have bought the carpentry tools if I hadn't been at the auction sale."

Mr Gruber looked most affected by Paddington's offer. "That's very kind of you, Mr Brown," he said. "Very kind of you indeed. But I know how fond you are of marmalade and I'd much rather you had it. Besides," he added, "I've had a very good day and I think it was worth the price of the carpentry tools just to see the expression on the auctioneer's face when you offered him ten pence for the preserves stand."

Mr Gruber chuckled at the thought. "I don't think he's had many dealings with young bears before," he said.

"I've said it before," remarked Mrs Bird, later that evening, "and I'll say it again. That bear's got an eye for a bargain."

The Browns were having a late supper before going to bed. Paddington's 'antique' stood in the centre of the table in a place of honour. He had spent most of the evening polishing it until he could see his whiskers in the side and Mrs Bird had opened a new jar of his favourite marmalade especially for the occasion.

There was a blissful expression on Paddington's face – that part of it which could be seen behind bread and butter crumbs and smears of marmalade.

"I think," he announced, amid general agreement, "preserves taste even nicer when they come out of an antique.

"Especially," he added, as he dipped his paw into the marmalade, "a ten-penny one!"



Chapter Three

PADDINGTON AND 'DO IT YOURSELF'

Paddington sat up in bed late that night writing his memories. He had a large leather-bound scrapbook given to him by Mr Gruber in which he kept a record of all his adventures, together with any interesting pictures, and he carefully pasted in the receipt for his ten pence which the auctioneer had given him.

"When he did eventually fall asleep it was only to dream he was at the auction sale again. He was standing in the middle of the auction rooms waving his paws and bidding for everything that was offered for sale. The pile of things he'd bought got bigger and bigger as they were placed around him until he could hardly see out. Several of the larger items were sticking in his side.

When he woke he was very relieved to find he was still in his own room and that the banging of the auctioneer's hammer was really only someone knocking at his door.

As he sat up in bed rubbing his eyes Paddington also found to his surprise that the marmalade dish was in bed with him and he had, in fact, been lying on it.

"Paddington!" exclaimed Mrs Brown, as she entered carrying the breakfast things. "What on earth's the matter? I kept hearing a lot of banging and shouting coming from your room in the night."

"I expect it was the noise of the furniture, Mrs Brown," explained Paddington, hastily drawing the sheets up round his ears so that she wouldn't see the marmalade stains.

"The furniture?" exclaimed Mrs Brown, as she put the tray down on the bed. "What furniture?"

"The furniture I bought in my dream," said Paddington patiently.

Mrs Brown sighed. Sometimes she couldn't make head or tail of what Paddington was talking about. "I've brought you your breakfast in bed," she said, "because Mrs Bird and I have to go out this morning. We're taking Jonathan and Judy to the dentist and we thought perhaps you wouldn't mind being left on your own. Unless," she added, "you'd like to come too?"

"Oh, no," said Paddington hastily. "I don't think I should like to go the dentist, thank you very much. I'd much rather stay at home."

"There's a big box arrived from Mr Gruber," continued Mrs Brown. "I think it's the carpentry tools you bought in the sale yesterday. I've had them put in the shed."

"Thank you, Mrs Brown," said Paddington, hoping she would soon go as it was getting very hot under the blankets and the marmalade dish was sticking in his side again.

Mrs Brown paused in the doorway. "We shan't be any longer than we can help. You're sure you'll be all right?"

"I expect I shall find *something* to do," said Paddington vaguely.

Mrs Brown hesitated before shutting the door. She would have liked to ask Paddington a few more

questions. He had a far-away look in his eyes which she didn't like the look of at all. But she was already late for the appointment, and conversation with Paddington, particularly in the early morning, was liable to become complicated.

When Mrs Bird heard all about Paddington's strange behaviour she hurried upstairs to see what was going on, but she arrived back a few moments later with the news that he was sitting up in bed eating his breakfast and reading a catalogue.

"Oh, well," said Mrs Brown, looking most relieved. "He can't come to much harm doing that."

In recent weeks Paddington had begun to collect catalogues and whenever he saw an interesting one advertised in the newspapers he usually sent away for it. In fact, hardly a day went by without the postman calling at least once with a letter addressed to "P. Brown, Esq."

Some of the catalogues were very good value indeed, full of pictures and drawings, and with quite a lot to read considering they were free and that Mrs Bird usually paid for the stamp.

Paddington kept them all in a cupboard beside his bed. There were a number on foreign travel – with pictures of far-away places in several colours; two or three on food; and one or two from some big London stores.

But the one which interested Paddington at the moment, and which was his favourite, showed a work-bench on the front cover and was headed DO IT YOURSELF. He became so absorbed in the booklet, which was a thick one full of diagrams, that he suddenly found to his surprise that he had put the pepper and salt into his cup of tea and the sugar into his boiled egg. But it made quite an interesting taste so he didn't really mind and he concentrated on reading the catalogue over his toast and marmalade.



There was a particularly interesting section which caught his eye. It was headed DELIGHT YOUR FAMILY AND SURPRISE YOUR FRIENDS, and it was all about making a newspaper and magazine rack.

"All you need," it said, "is a sheet of plywood, some nails and a kitchen table."

Paddington wasn't at all sure about using Mrs Bird's kitchen table, but the night before, Mr Brown had rashly promised him a sheet of plywood that was standing in the shed, as well as some old nails in a jam-jar. And Mr Brown was always grumbling about not being able to find his newspapers; Paddington felt sure he would be very pleased if he had a rack for them.

He examined the drawings and pictures carefully and consulted the instructions several times. It didn't say anything about bears in particular doing it themselves, but it did say it was suitable for anyone with a set of carpentry tools.

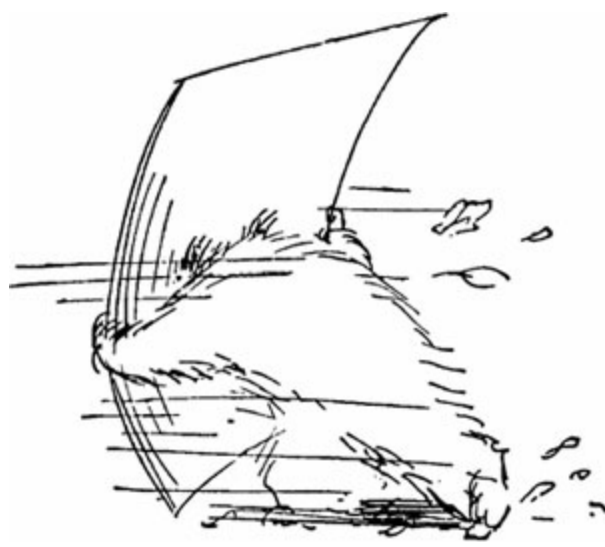


Paddington came to a decision. He hastily wrapped the remains of his breakfast in a handkerchief in case the sawing made him hungry. Then, having marked the chapter on magazine racks in his catalogue with a piece of marmalade peel, he hurried along to the bathroom for a quick wash.



Paddington wasn't the sort of bear who believed in doing things unnecessarily and it wasn't worth having a proper wash if he was going to get dirty again. After passing the face flannel over his whiskers a couple of times he made his way downstairs and went out into the garden.

The box of carpentry tools was standing in the middle of Mr Brown's shed and Paddington spent several minutes investigating it. Although all the tools seemed rather large for a bear he soon decided he was very pleased with them. There was a hammer, a plane, three chisels, a large saw and a number of other things which he didn't immediately recognise but which looked very interesting. The box was heavy and it took him some while to drag it outside into the garden. He had even more trouble with Mr Brown's plywood, for it was a large sheet and there was a wind blowing. Each time he picked it up a gust of wind caught it and carried him farther and farther down the garden.



It was while he was trying to drag it back up again with the aid of a piece of rope that he heard a familiar voice calling his name. He looked round and saw Mr Curry, the Brown's next-door neighbour, watching him over the fence. Mr Curry didn't approve of bears and he usually viewed Paddington's 'goings on' with suspicion.

"What are you doing, bear?" he growled.

"Do it yourself, Mr Curry," said Paddington, peering out from behind the sheet of wood.

"What?" bellowed Mr Curry. "Don't be impertinent, bear!"

"Oh, no," said Paddington hastily, nearly dropping the sheet of plywood in his fright at the expression on Mr Curry's face. "I didn't mean you were to do it *yourself*, Mr Curry. I meant I'm going to do it *myself*. I'm making a magazine rack for Mr Brown."

"A magazine rack?" repeated Mr Curry.

"Yes," said Paddington importantly, and he began explaining to Mr Curry all about his new carpentry set.

As he listened to Paddington the expression on Mr Curry's face gradually changed. Mr Curry had a reputation in the neighbourhood for meanness and he was always on the look-out in the hope of getting something for nothing. He was very keen on doing things himself, too, in order to save money, and he cast several envious glances at Paddington's tool set.

"Hmm," he said, when Paddington had finished. "And where are you going to make this magazine rack, bear? On the lawn?"

"Well," said Paddington doubtfully, "It's a bit difficult. It says in the instructions I'm supposed to have a kitchen table and Mrs Bird's is full up."

"Hmm," said Mr Curry once again. "If I let you make me a magazine rack, bear, you can use *my* kitchen table."

"Thank you very much, Mr Curry," said Paddington. But he wasn't sure whether it was a good idea or not and he looked at Mr Curry rather doubtfully. "That's most kind of you."

"I have to go out this morning," said Mr Curry. "So you can have it ready for me when I get back."

"Mind you," he added, as he reached over the fence to give Paddington a hand with the plywood, "I'm not having any sawdust over the kitchen floor. And mind you don't scratch anything."

The more he listened to Mr Curry talking the longer Paddington's face grew and he was glad when at last he left to do his shopping.

But as Paddington set to work he soon forgot all about Mr Curry's list of 'don't's, for there were a

number of important things to be done. First of all he took a pencil and ruler and carefully marked out the shape of the magazine rack on the sheet of plywood. Then he placed this on top of the kitchen table, ready to be sawn in two.

Paddington had never actually sawn anything before, but he'd often watched Mr Brown cutting up logs for the fire. From a safe distance it had always looked easy – but Paddington soon found it wasn't easy at all. To start with, the plywood was bigger than the top of Mr Curry's table. Being small, Paddington had to climb on top of it and several times it nearly tipped over when he stood too near the edge. Then he found that the saw, although it was nice and sharp, was so large he had to use both paws, which made things even more difficult. For the first few strokes it went through the wood like a knife through butter, but for some reason or other it gradually became harder and harder to use.

After sitting down for a short rest Paddington decided to try starting from the other end. But once again, for some strange reason, he found it much easier at the beginning. However, as he gave the last saw cut and scrambled clear he was pleased to see the two saw cuts met in the middle, dividing the sheet of plywood neatly in half.

It was then, as he reached up to take the newly sawn pieces of plywood down, that Paddington had his first shock of the morning.

There was a loud splintering noise and he dodged back just in time to avoid being hit by Mr Curry's table as it suddenly parted in the middle and fell with a crash to the floor.



Paddington sat in the middle of the kitchen floor with a mournful expression on his face for quite some time, surveying the wreckage and trying to think of a good reason why Mr Curry would like two small tables with only two legs each instead of one big one with four legs.

He consulted the instructions in his catalogue hopefully several times, but there didn't seem to be anything about mending tables which had accidentally been sawn in half. In all the pictures the people seemed to be happy and smiling and their kitchens were as shiny as a new pin. Whereas, looking unhappily around Mr Curry's kitchen, even Paddington had to admit it was in a bit of a mess.

He tried propping the two pieces of table up on some old cardboard boxes, but there was still a nasty sag in the middle, and even with the curtains drawn and the light out it was obvious something was wrong.

Paddington was a hopeful bear in many ways and he suddenly remembered seeing a large tube of glue in his carpentry set. If he spread some of the glue along the two edges and nailed them together for good measure, perhaps even Mr Curry might not notice anything was wrong. He worked hard for some minutes and by the time he had finished he felt quite pleased with himself. Admittedly the table had a funny tilt to one side and seemed a trifle wobbly, but it was definitely in one piece again. He

spread some flour over the join and then stood back to admire his handiwork.

Having carefully examined it from all angles, he decided he might be able to improve matters still further by sawing a piece off one of the legs. But when he had done that the table seemed to lean the opposite way – which meant he had to saw a piece off one of the other legs as well. Then, when he had done that, he discovered the table was leaning the other way again.

Paddington gave a deep sigh. Carpentry was much more difficult than it looked. He was sure the man in the catalogue didn't have so much trouble.

It was after he had been at work for some time that he stood up and received his second shock of the morning.

When he had first started sawing the legs, Mr Curry's table had been as tall as he was. Now he found he was looking down at it. In fact, he didn't remember ever having seen such a short table before and his eyes nearly popped out with astonishment.

He sat down on the pile of sawn-off table legs and consulted his catalogue once again.

"Delight your family and surprise your friends!" he said bitterly, to the world in general. He was quite sure Mr Curry would be surprised when he saw his kitchen table, but as for anyone being delighted by their magazine racks – he hadn't even started work on those yet.



Mrs Brown looked anxiously at the dining-room clock. "I wonder where on earth Paddington can have got to," she said. "It's almost lunch time and it's most unlike him to be late for a meal."

"Perhaps he's doing a job somewhere," said Jonathan. "I looked in the shed just now and that new tool box of his has disappeared."

"*And* that sheet of plywood Daddy gave him," said Judy.

"Oh dear," said Mrs Brown. "I do hope he hasn't built himself in anywhere and can't get out. You know what he's like."

"I don't know about Paddington building himself in," exclaimed Mrs Bird, as she entered carrying a trayload of plates. "I think Mr Curry must be having his house pulled down. I've never heard so much noise. Banging and sawing coming from the kitchen. It's been going on ever since we got back and it's only just this minute stopped."

Jonathan and Judy exchanged glances. Now that Mrs Bird mentioned it, there had been a lot of noise coming from Mr Curry's house.

"I wonder..." said Judy.

Jonathan opened his mouth, but before he had time to say anything the door burst open and

Paddington entered dragging something large and heavy behind him.

“Well,” said Mrs Bird, voicing all their thoughts. “And what have you been up to now?”

“What have I been *up* to, Mrs Bird?” exclaimed Paddington, looking most offended. “I’ve been making Mr Brown a magazine rack.”

“A magazine rack?” said Mrs Brown, as Paddington stepped to one side. “What a lovely idea.”

“It was meant to be a surprise,” said Paddington modestly. “I made it all with my own paws.”

“Gosh! It’s super,” said Jonathan, as the Browns all crowded round to admire Paddington’s handiwork. “Fancy you doing it all by yourself.”

“I should be careful,” warned Paddington. “I’ve only just varnished it and it’s still a bit sticky. I think some of it has come off on my paws already.”

“Most sensible,” said Mrs Bird approvingly. “Mentioning no names – it’s about time some people in this house had a place for their newspapers. Now perhaps they won’t keep losing them.”

“But you’ve made two,” said Judy. “Whose is the other one?”

A guilty expression came over Paddington’s face. “It’s really for Mr Curry,” he said. “But I thought perhaps I’d better leave it on his doorstep after dark – just in case.”

Mrs Bird looked at Paddington suspiciously. Her ears had caught the sound of violent banging coming from the house next door and she had a nasty feeling in the back of her mind that it had something to do with Paddington.

“Just in case?” she repeated. “What do you mean?”

But before Paddington had time to explain exactly what he did mean, Mrs Brown pointed to the window in astonishment.

“Good gracious,” she cried. “There is Mr Curry. Whatever’s the matter with him? He’s running around the garden waving a kitchen table in the air.” She peered through the glass. “And it doesn’t seem to have any legs, either. How very odd!”



“Gosh!” cried Jonathan excitedly. “Now it’s broken in two!”

The Browns stared through the window at the strange sight of Mr Curry dancing round his pond waving the two halves of a table. “Bear!” he shouted. “Where are you, bear?”

“Oh dear,” said Paddington, as everyone turned away from the window and looked at him accusingly. “I’m in trouble again.”

“Well, if you ask me,” said Mrs Bird, after he had explained everything to them, “the best thing you can do is offer Mr Curry your carpentry set as a present. Then, perhaps, he’ll forget all about his kitchen table. And if he doesn’t, just you tell him to come and see me.”

Mrs Bird held very strong views about people who tried to take advantage of others and she usually

took Paddington's side in anything to do with Mr Curry.

"Anyway," she concluded, in a voice which left no room for argument, "I'm certainly not having the lunch spoiled by Mr Curry or anyone else, so just you all sit down while I fetch it."

With that argument the Browns had to agree and they meekly arranged themselves round the table.

Paddington in particular thought it was a very good idea. He was a bit fed up with carpentry. Sawing was hard work – especially for a small bear – and even more so when it was sawing through a kitchen table. Besides, he was hungry after his morning's work and he didn't want to offend Mrs Bird by not eating her lunch down to the very last mouthful.



Chapter Four

A VISIT TO THE CINEMA

“I’m afraid,” said the lady in the cash desk at the Podium Super Cinema, “you can’t come in. It’s an ‘A’ film.”

“I beg your pardon?” said Paddington, looking puzzled.

“‘A’,” said the lady.

“Eh?” repeated Paddington, looking even more puzzled. “But that’s what I said.”

“Not ‘eh’,” said the lady impatiently. “‘A’. That means bears under sixteen aren’t allowed in unaccompanied.”

“Sixteen!” exclaimed Paddington, hardly able to believe his ears. “*Sixteen!* But I’m only two. That’s another fourteen years. I might not even want to come then.”

“Well, that’s the law,” said the lady sternly. She looked down with some distaste at the top of Paddington’s hat. It still had one or two pieces of river weed sticking to it and the warmth of the cinema was bringing out the smell. “Now, come along, please,” she said hastily. “You’re holding up the queue.”

“And no coming back later on wearing long trousers,” she called as Paddington turned to go. “I know all the tricks.”

Paddington felt most disappointed as he made his way slowly across the foyer. There was a nice warm feeling about the cinema and he particularly liked the way his feet sank into the thick pile of the carpet. After staring hungrily at the sweet counter for a few moments he made his way towards the entrance, giving the attendant a hard stare as the man held the door open for him.

Paddington had never been to the pictures before. In fact he wasn’t at all sure what they were. But he enjoyed anything new and for some weeks he had been saving hard out of the one pound a week bun money Mr Brown gave him, in case an interesting programme came along.

Paddington was a bear who liked getting his money’s worth and he’d carefully studied the advertisements outside the Podium until this week, when there was a ‘Super Double Feature’ programme showing—with two long films, a cartoon and a newsreel. Not only that, but a notice outside said there was a special added attraction that evening when Reginald Clove would be playing the theatre organ during the intervals.



Paddington hung about outside the cinema for several minutes breathing heavily on the glass until he caught sight of a policeman watching him suspiciously and then he hurried home. It was all most disappointing and his carefully saved coins were burning a hole in his duffle coat pocket.

“Do you mean to say you’ve never been to the pictures, Paddington?” said Mr Brown over tea that afternoon.

“*Never*,” said Paddington firmly, as he helped himself to a crumpet. “And now I can’t go for another fourteen years unless I’m accompanied.”

Mr Brown looked at his wife. “It’s a long time since we all went to the pictures, Mary,” he said. “And it’s still quite early. Shall we go?”

“Gosh, Dad – let’s!” exclaimed Jonathan and Judy together.

“Do you think it’s a good programme, Paddington?” asked Mrs Brown.

“Very good, Mrs Brown,” said Paddington knowledgeably. “There’s a cowboy film and a cartoon and an ‘I beg your pardon film’ as well.”

“A *what* film?” exclaimed Mr Brown.

“An ‘I beg your pardon film’,” repeated Paddington. “That means bears under sixteen aren’t allowed in by themselves.”

“Oh, you mean an ‘A’ film,” said Jonathan.

“That’s right,” agreed Paddington. “That’s what I said.”

The Browns looked at one another. Sometimes it was a bit difficult explaining things to Paddington.

“*And* there’s a man playing the organ,” continued Paddington. “It’s a special attraction – so I think it’s a good bargain, Mr Brown.”

“That settles it,” said Mr Brown, looking at his watch. “It all sounds much too good to miss.”

Immediately the whole house was in an uproar. Paddington was sent upstairs by Mrs Bird to wash the crumpet stains off his whiskers while the rest of the family hurried off to their respective rooms to change.

Paddington felt very superior some half an hour later when they all trooped into the Podium Cinema. He raised his hat to the doorkeeper and then led Mr Brown in the direction of the cash desk.

"I'm accompanied now," he called out to the lady in charge.

The lady stared at Mr Brown. "I beg your pardon?" she exclaimed. She sniffed and gave him a very strange look. It was most odd but she could distinctly smell fish again.

"What did you say?" she repeated.

"Nothing," said Mr Brown hastily. "Er... I'd like three and three halves for the front row of the circle, please."

"Hurry up, Dad," called Jonathan. "I think the other programme's nearly finished."

Leaving the lady in the cash desk looking most upset, Mr Brown gathered up a long string of tickets and joined the rest of the family as they hurried up the stairs leading to the circle.

They went up and up and Paddington soon lost count of the number of steps. In fact there were so many he almost wished they had gone downstairs instead. Not only that, but as he followed the Browns through the entrance to the circle he discovered it was all dark inside.

"This way, please," said the usherette, as she led the way down some stairs and shone her torch along a row of seats in the front row. "You're lucky. There are just six left together."

"Thank you very much," said Mrs Brown, as she made her way along the row. "Excuse me, please. Excuse me. Thank you very much."

She sat down and arranged herself comfortably as the others joined her.

"That's a bit of luck," whispered Mr Brown. "Finding six together."

"Seven," said Mrs Brown. "There's still another one between us."

"So there is!" whispered Mr Brown, groping in the dark. "That's odd. The girl said there were only six." He looked along the row. "Where's Paddington?"

"Paddington?" exclaimed Mrs Brown. "Isn't he with you, Henry?"

"No," replied Mr Brown. "I thought *you* had him."

"Oh, crumbs," groaned Judy. "Trust Paddington to get lost."

"Where on earth can he have got to?" grumbled Mr Brown as he struck a match and began looking under the seats.

"Here I am, Mr Brown," called Paddington from the end of the row. "I went all the way along by mistake."

"Sssh!" said a nasty-sounding voice from the row behind.

"It's all dark and I can't see," exclaimed Paddington as he was passed back along the row.

"Are you all right now, dear?" whispered Mrs Brown, as Paddington sat down beside her.

"I think so," said Paddington, peering at the screen.

"Oi!" said the nasty voice from behind again. "'Ow about taking yer titfer off?"

Paddington turned and stared in the direction of the speaker. "My titfer?" he exclaimed. "Take my titfer off?"

"That's right," said the voice. "Your tit for tat."

"I think he means your hat, dear," explained Mrs Brown. "It's probably getting in the way of the screen."

Paddington thought for a moment. He wasn't at all keen on taking his hat off in case it got lost in the dark. "I'll turn it round if you like," he said generously. "Then you can look through one of the holes."

Having solved the problem of the man behind, Paddington gave his attention to the screen. It was all

very interesting, with people dashing about all over the place and with music that got louder and louder, but Paddington found it difficult to understand what it was all about. To his surprise, after only a few minutes the music suddenly ended and all the lights in the cinema came on.

“Well,” he exclaimed, looking most disappointed. “I didn’t think much of that!”

“It’s all right, Paddington,” explained Judy. “That’s what’s showing *next* week. That was only the trailer.”

But her words fell on empty ears for Paddington was staring at the screen again and licking his whiskers.

“Oh dear,” groaned Mr Brown, as he followed Paddington’s gaze. “They *would* have to advertise ice-cream. They must have known he was coming.” He felt in his pocket. “You’d better get six tubs, and some nougat or something for the big picture, Jonathan.”

“I think I’m going to enjoy myself,” announced Paddington a few minutes later as Mr Brown handed him the refreshments.

He dipped his spoon into the ice-cream tub and stared excitedly at the screen as the lights went down again to herald the start of the cowboy film.

Paddington enjoyed the cowboy film much more than the trailer, and he soon became quite lost in the story. He stood up on his seat with his paws on the balcony and his eyes glued to the screen. Every now and then he automatically dipped his spoon into the ice-cream tub and several times a lump fell off the spoon before it had even reached his mouth, which was most unusual.

It was all very complicated at first. Everyone seemed to be shooting at everyone else and Paddington got very worried in case there was no one left and they had to stop the film.

Each time the villain, who wore a black mask and a black hat, came on to the screen he booed, and when the hero appeared, riding a white horse, he cheered and waved his hat in the air until Mrs Brown became quite embarrassed. She wasn’t at all sorry when at long last the hero rode off into the setting sun and the film came to an end.

“Most enjoyable,” said Mrs Bird, rather surprisingly. The Browns had somehow never thought of Mrs Bird liking cowboy films. “Did you like it, Paddington?”

Paddington nodded his head vigorously. “I enjoyed it very much, thank you, Mrs Bird,” he said. “Except I can’t find my nougat anywhere.”

“Never mind, Paddington,” said Mr Brown, after they had all searched in vain for it. “I’ll buy you some more in a minute. *After* we’ve heard the organ.”

He sat back heavily in his seat and then turned to see Paddington. “If you watch,” he explained, “you’ll see it come up through the floor in a moment.”

“Come up through the floor, Mr Brown?” exclaimed Paddington. “I don’t think I’ve ever seen an organ come up through the floor before.”



“Oh dear,” said Mrs Bird. “And it doesn’t look as if you’re going to now. Look!”

She pointed to the screen where an announcement had just been flashed on to say that Mr Reginald Clove was indisposed.

“What!” cried Paddington hotly as the words sank in. “Reginald Clove indisposed!”

“That means he’s ill, dear,” explained Mrs Brown. “So he won’t be playing after all.”

“How very disappointing,” said Mr Brown. “It’s a long time since I heard an organ. I was really looking forward to it.”

While the rest of the Browns watched the advertisements on the screen Paddington sank back into his seat and listened to Mr Brown explaining what the organ would have looked like had it come up through the floor. Mr Brown liked organs and he went on for a long time about it.

“Henry,” said Mrs Brown when he had finished. “Where’s Paddington?”

“Paddington?” exclaimed Mr Brown. “Don’t tell me he’s disappeared *again*. He was here a moment ago.”

“I do hope he isn’t long wherever he’s got to,” said Mrs Brown. “We shall never hear the last of it if he misses the start of the big picture.”



But Paddington was already almost out of sight. He was hurrying up the aisle and out through the door marked EXIT. There was a purposeful expression on his face, one which the Browns would have recognised at once had they been able to see him.

Paddington wasn’t the only one with a purposeful expression on his face at that moment. As he hurried down the stairs on one side of the cinema the manager of the Podium strode up the stairs leading to the projection box on the other.

There was something unusual going on in his theatre and he intended finding out what it was. He prided himself that the Podium was normally a very well run cinema but on this particular evening things had gone wrong from the beginning.

First of all the lady in the cash desk -usually a most reliable person – had complained of a fishy smell and mysterious voices saying they were accompanied coming from underneath her counter. Then Reginald Clove had caught his hand in a swing door and had announced the fact that he couldn’t play the organ. Something to do with his not being able to work the stops and turn the music with only one hand.

As if that wasn't enough there had come news of 'goings on' in the circle. It was most unusual to have 'goings on' in the circle. Occasionally he had a spot of bother in the cheaper seats downstairs – but never in the circle.

There had been complaints of bear's boos coming from the front row during the cowboy film, and as he'd passed through the stalls he'd also noticed several people immediately underneath the balcony with ice-cream stains on their hats. It was all very disturbing and he wasn't in the best of moods as he burst into the projection room waving a piece of paper.

"I want this notice flashed on the screen," he said crossly. "At once!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mrs Brown a few moments later. "What on earth can that mean?"

Mr Brown adjusted his glasses and stared at the screen, "WILL THE OWNER OF THE YOUNG BEAR IN THE CIRCLE KINDLY REPORT TO THE MANAGER'S OFFICE IMMEDIATELY," he read.

"I don't know, Mary," he said, as he made to get to his feet, "but I'm certainly going to find out."

"Owner indeed!" snorted Mrs Bird. "As if anyone *owned* Paddington."

"The boot's on the other paw, if you ask me," began Mr Brown. "Paddington owns us." As he was speaking, a strange expression came over his face.

"Well, Henry," said Mrs Brown, staring at her husband, "aren't you going to do something about it?"

"I... I... can't get up," exclaimed Mr Brown, feeling his seat. "I seem to be stuck to something... Nougat!" he said bitterly. "Paddington's nougat! No wonder the manager wants to see me in his office."

Unaware of all the excitement that was going on, Paddington pushed open a door and made his way down the aisle of the stalls until he came across a girl selling ice-cream.

"Excuse me," he said, climbing up on to a seat and tapping her on the shoulder, "can you tell me where the indisposed man is?"

"The *indisposed* man?" repeated the girl.

"That's right," said Paddington patiently. "The one who's supposed to come up through the floor."

"Oh, you mean the organist," said the girl. "Mr Reginald Clove. He's through that little door there. The one under the stage."

Before she could explain that no one was allowed through it without permission Paddington had disappeared again.

Mr Reginald Clove looked quite startled when Paddington came through the door. He had been expecting someone to come, but he certainly hadn't expected it to be a bear.

"Are you from the first aid?" he asked, looking at Paddington rather doubtfully.

"Oh, no," said Paddington, politely raising his hat. "I'm from number thirty-two Windsor Gardens and I've come about the organ."

Mr Clove stepped back a pace. "You've come about the organ?" he repeated, trying to humour Paddington.

"Yes," said Paddington. "I wanted to see it come up through the floor."

"Oh!" Mr Clove's face cleared. "Is that all?"

"All!" exclaimed Paddington hotly. "It's very important. Mr Brown was looking forward to it."

"Oh dear," said Mr Clove, idly sorting through a pile of music with his good hand. "I'm so sorry. I

wish I could oblige. But I've hurt my hand, you see, and I've no one to turn the music for me, and..." He looked thoughtfully at Paddington. "Do you like music, bear?" he asked suddenly.

"Oh, yes," replied Paddington. "But I don't really play anything except the comb and paper and I'm not very good at that because I get my whiskers caught in the comb."

"Do you think you could turn the music for me?" asked Mr Clove.

"Well," said Paddington doubtfully, "it's a bit difficult for bears because of their paws, but if you could tell me when to do it I could try."

Mr Clove came to a decision. "You'll do," he said briskly. "Come with me."

"*Goings on!*" exclaimed Mrs Bird, waving her handbag at the manager. "They weren't 'goings on'. He was only enjoying himself."

"Bear's boos," said the manager sternly. "In the Podium circle. And nougat on one of my best seats."

"Then you shouldn't sell it," replied Mrs Bird. "It's asking for trouble."

"Well, where is he now?" demanded the manager. "Tell me that. I want to start the big picture. We're five minutes late already."

The Browns exchanged anxious glances. Knowing Paddington, he might be anywhere, but before they had time to reply they were all startled into silence by a loud rumbling from the front of the cinema which grew and grew in volume until the whole place began to shake.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the manager as a burst of applause swept through the audience. "It's Reginald Clove playing 'Rule Britannia!' And with one hand, too!"

They all stared over the balcony as the lights dimmed and the organ rose into view bathed in a pink spotlight.

"Mercy me," cried Mrs Bird, clutching her seat. "And there's that bear—what on earth is he doing now?"

Paddington felt most important as he rode up on the organ and he wished he could turn and wave to the Browns to let them know where he was, but he was much too busy carrying out Mr Clove's instructions.

Even so, there was one nasty moment when, in his excitement, he turned over two pages of music at once by mistake. Mr Clove looked most surprised when he suddenly found himself playing a selection from *The Gondoliers* instead of 'Rule Britannia' but he quickly recovered and in the general excitement no one seemed to notice.

The audience applauded all the items and Paddington felt quite sorry when Mr Clove at last pressed a button by his side and the organ began to sink back through the floor. But as it finally disappeared from view and the last notes of the music died away a loud cheer went up from the audience and several voices were heard shouting for more.

Afterwards everyone agreed that good though the big picture was, the organ had been the high spot of the evening. Even the manager of the Podium seemed very pleased and he took the Browns on a tour behind the scenes before they left.

"I don't suppose," said Paddington thoughtfully, as they made their way home, "there are many bears who've been for a ride on an organ. Especially one that comes up through the floor."

"And I don't suppose," said Mr Brown, as he turned and looked hard at Paddington, "that there are

many people who've been stuck to their seat by a piece of bear's nougat."

But Paddington had his eyes closed. He wasn't exactly asleep, but he had a lot of things to write in his scrapbook that night when he went to bed. He'd enjoyed his visit to the pictures and it needed a lot of careful thought to put it all into words.





Chapter Five
SOMETHING NASTY IN THE KITCHEN

“Two days!” exclaimed Mrs Brown, staring at Doctor MacAndrew in horror. “Do you mean to say we’ve to stay in bed for two whole days?”

“Aye,” said Doctor MacAndrew, “there’s a nasty wee bug going the rounds and if ye don’t I’ll no’ be responsible for the consequences.”

“But Mrs Bird’s away until tomorrow,” said Mrs Brown. “And so are Jonathan and Judy... and... and that only leaves Paddington.”

“Two days,” repeated Doctor MacAndrew as he snapped his bag shut. “And not a moment less. The house’ll no’ fall down in that time.

“There’s one thing,” he added, as he paused at the door and stared at Mr and Mrs Brown with a twinkle in his eye. “Whatever else happens you’ll no’ die of starvation. Yon wee bear’s verra fond of his inside!”

With that he went downstairs to tell Paddington the news.

“Oh dear,” groaned Mr Brown, as the door closed behind the doctor. “I think I feel worse already.”

Paddington felt most important as he listened to what Doctor MacAndrew had to say and he carefully wrote down all the instructions. After he had shown him to the door and waved goodbye he hurried back into the kitchen to collect his shopping basket on wheels.

Usually with Paddington, shopping in the market was a very leisurely affair. He liked to stop and have a chat with the various traders in the Portobello Road where he was a well-known figure. To have Paddington’s custom was considered to be something of an honour as he had a very good eye for a bargain. But on this particular morning he hardly had time even to call in at the baker’s for his morning supply of buns.

It was early and Mr Gruber hadn’t yet opened his shutters, so Paddington wrapped one of the hot buns in a piece of paper, wrote a message on the outside saying who it was from and explaining that he wouldn’t be along for ‘elevenses’ that morning, and then pushed it through the letterbox.

Having finished the shopping and been to the chemist with Doctor MacAndrew’s prescription, Paddington made his way quickly back to number thirty-two Windsor Gardens.

It wasn’t often Paddington had a chance to lend a paw around the house, let alone cook the dinner, and he was looking forward to it. In particular, there was a new feather duster of Mrs Bird’s he’d had his eye on for several days and which he was anxious to test.

“I must say Paddington looks very professional in that old apron of Mrs Bird’s,” said Mrs Brown later that morning. She sat up in bed holding a cup and saucer. “And it was kind of him to bring us up a cup of coffee.”

“Very kind,” agreed Mr Brown. “But I rather wish he hadn’t brought all these sandwiches as well.”

“They *are* rather thick,” agreed Mrs Brown, looking at one doubtfully. “He said they were emergency ones. I’m not quite sure what he meant by that. I do hope nothing’s wrong.”

“I don’t like the sound of it,” said Mr Brown. “There’ve been several nasty silences this morning – as if something was going on.” He sniffed. “And there seems to be a strong smell of burnt feathers coming from somewhere.”

“Well, you’d better eat them, Henry,” warned Mrs Brown. “He’s used some of his special marmalade from the cut-price grocer and I’m sure they’re meant to be a treat. You’ll never hear the last of it if you leave any.”

“Yes, but *six!*” grumbled Mr Brown. “I’m not even very keen on marmalade. And at twelve o’clock in the morning! I shan’t want any lunch.” He looked thoughtfully at the window and then at the plate of sandwiches again.

“No, Henry,” said Mrs Brown, reading his thoughts. “You’re not giving any to the birds. I don’t suppose they like marmalade.

“Anyway,” she added, “Paddington did say something about lunch being late, so you may be glad of them.”

She looked wistfully at the door. “All the same, I wish I could see what’s going on. It’s not knowing that’s the worst part. He had flour all over his whiskers when he came up just now.”

“If you ask me,” said Mr Brown, “you’re probably much better off being in the dark.” He took a long drink from his cup and then jumped up in bed, spluttering.

“Henry, dear,” exclaimed Mrs Brown. “Do be careful. You’ll have coffee all over the sheets.”

“Coffee!” yelled Mr Brown. “Did you say this was coffee?”

“*I* didn’t, dear,” said Mrs Brown mildly. “Paddington did.” She took a sip from her own cup and then made a wry face. “It *has* got rather an unusual taste.”

“Unusual!” exclaimed Mr Brown. “It tastes like nothing on earth.” He glared at his cup and then poked at it gingerly with a spoon. “It’s got some funny green things floating in it too!” he exclaimed.

“Have a marmalade sandwich,” said Mrs Brown. “It’ll help take the taste away.”

Mr Brown gave his wife an expressive look. “Two days!” he said, sinking back into the bed. “Two whole days!”

Downstairs, Paddington was in a bit of a mess. So, for that matter was the kitchen, the hall, the dining-room and the stairs.

Things hadn’t really gone right since he’d lifted up a corner of the dining-room carpet in order to sweep some dust underneath and had discovered a number of very interesting old newspapers. Paddington sighed. Perhaps if he hadn’t spent so much time reading the newspapers he might not have hurried quite so much over the rest of the dusting. Then he might have been more careful when he shook Mrs Bird’s feather duster over the boiler.



And if he hadn't set fire to Mrs Bird's feather duster he might have been able to take more time over the coffee.

Paddington felt very guilty about the coffee and he rather wished he had tested it before taking it upstairs to Mr and Mrs Brown. He was very glad he'd decided to make cocoa for himself instead.

Quite early in the morning Paddington had run out of saucepans. It was the first big meal he had ever cooked and he wanted it to be something special. Having carefully consulted Mrs Bird's cookery book he'd drawn out a special menu in red ink with a bit of everything on it.

But by the time he had put the stew to boil in one big saucepan, the potatoes in another saucepan, the peas in a third, the Brussels sprouts in yet another, and used at least four more for mixing operations, there was really only the electric kettle left in which to put the cabbage. Unfortunately, in his haste to make the coffee, Paddington had completely forgotten to take the cabbage out again.

Now he was having trouble with the dumplings!

Paddington was very keen on stew, especially when it was served with dumplings, but he was beginning to wish he had decided to cook something else for lunch.

Even now he wasn't quite sure what had gone wrong. He'd looked up the chapter on dumplings in Mrs Bird's cookery book and followed the instructions most carefully; putting two parts of flour to one of suet and then adding milk before stirring the whole lot together. But somehow, instead of the mixture turning into neat balls as it showed in the coloured picture, it had all gone runny. Then, when he'd added more flour and suet, it had gone lumpy instead and stuck to his fur, so that he'd had to add more milk and then more flour and suet, until he had a huge mountain of dumpling mixture in the middle of the kitchen table.



All in all, he decided, it just wasn't his day. He wiped his paws carefully on Mrs Bird's apron and, after looking around in vain for a large enough bowl, scraped the dumpling mixture into his hat.

It was a lot heavier than he had expected and he had a job lifting it up on to the stove. It was even more difficult putting the mixture into the stew as it kept sticking to his paws and as fast as he got it off one paw it stuck to the other. In the end he had to sit on the draining board and use the broom handle.

Paddington wasn't very impressed with Mrs Bird's cookery book. The instructions seemed all wrong. Not only had the dumplings been difficult to make, but the ones they showed in the picture were much too small. They weren't a bit like the ones Mrs Bird usually served. Even Paddington rarely managed more than two of Mrs Bird's dumplings.

Having scraped the last of the mixture off his paws Paddington pushed the saucepan lid hard down and scrambled clear. The steam from the saucepan had made his fur go soggy and he sat in the middle of the floor for several minutes getting his breath back and mopping his brow with an old dish-cloth.

It was while he was sitting there, scraping the remains of the dumplings out of his hat and licking the spoon, that he felt something move behind him. Not only that, but out of the corner of his eye he could see a shadow on the floor which definitely hadn't been there a moment before.



Paddington sat very still, holding his breath and listening. It wasn't so much a noise as a feeling, and it seemed to be creeping nearer and nearer, making a soft swishing noise as it came. Paddington

felt his fur begin to stand on end as there came the sound of a slow plop... plop... plop across the kitchen floor. And then, just as he was summoning up enough courage to look over his shoulder, there was a loud crash from the direction of the stove. Without waiting to see what it was Paddington pulled his hat down over his head and ran, slamming the door behind him.



He arrived in the hall just as there was a loud knock on the front door. To his relief he heard a familiar voice call his name through the letterbox.

“I got your message, Mr Brown—about not being able to come for elevenses this morning,” began Mr Gruber, as Paddington opened the door, “and I just thought I would call round to see if there was anything I could do...” His voice trailed away as he stared at Paddington.

“Why, Mr Brown,” he exclaimed. “You’re all white! Is anything the matter?”

“Don’t worry, Mr Gruber,” cried Paddington, waving his paws in the air. “It’s only some of Mrs Bird’s flour. I’m afraid I can’t raise my hat because it’s stuck down with dumpling mixture – but I’m very glad you’ve come because there’s something nasty in the kitchen!”



“Something nasty in the kitchen?” echoed Mr Gruber. “What sort of thing?”

“I don’t know,” said Paddington, struggling with his hat. “But it’s got a shadow and it’s making a funny noise.”

Mr Gruber looked around nervously for something to defend himself with. “We’ll soon see about that,” he said, taking a warming pan off the wall.

Paddington led the way back to the kitchen and then stood to one side by the door. “After you, Mr Gruber,” he said politely.

“Er... thank you, Mr Brown,” said Mr Gruber doubtfully.

He grasped the warming pan firmly in both hands and then kicked open the door. “Come out!” he cried. “Whoever you are!”

“I don’t think it’s a who, Mr Gruber,” said Paddington, peering round the door. “It’s a *what!*”

“Good heavens!” exclaimed Mr Gruber, staring at the sight which met his eyes. “What *has* been going on?”

Over most of the kitchen there was a thin film of flour. There was flour on the table, in the sink, on the floor; in fact, over practically everything. But it wasn’t the general state of the room which made Mr Gruber cry out with surprise – it was the sight of something large and white hanging over the side of the stove.

He stared at it for a moment and then advanced cautiously across the kitchen and poked it with the handle of the warming pan. There was a loud squelching noise and Mr Gruber jumped back as part of it broke away and fell with a plop to the floor.

“Good heavens!” he exclaimed again. “I do believe it’s some kind of dumpling, Mr Brown. I’ve never seen quite such a big one before,” he went on as Paddington joined him. “It’s grown right out of the saucepan and pushed the lid on to the floor. No wonder it made you jump.”

Mr Gruber mopped his brow and opened the window. It was very warm in the kitchen. “How ever did it get to be that size?”

“I don’t really know, Mr Gruber,” said Paddington, looking puzzled. “It’s one of mine and it didn’t start off that way. I think something must have gone wrong in the saucepan.”

“I should think it has,” said Mr Gruber. “If I were you, Mr Brown, I think I’d turn the cooker off before it catches fire and does any more damage. There’s no knowing what might happen once it gets out of control.

“Perhaps, if you’ll allow me,” he continued tactfully, “I can give you a hand. It must be very difficult cooking for so many people.”

“It is when you only have paws, Mr Gruber,” said Paddington gratefully.

Mr Gruber sniffed. “I must say it all smells very nice. If we make some more dumplings quickly everything else should be just about ready.”

As he handed Paddington the flour and suet Mr Gruber explained how dumplings became very much larger when they were cooked and that it really needed only a small amount of mixture to make quite large ones.

“No wonder yours were so big, Mr Brown,” he said, as he lifted Paddington’s old dumpling into the washing-up bowl. “You must have used almost a bag of flour.”

“Two bags,” said Paddington, looking over his shoulder. “I don’t know what Mrs Bird will say when she hears about it.”

“Perhaps, if we buy her some more,” said Mr Gruber, as he staggered into the garden with the bowl, “she won’t mind quite so much.”

“That’s odd,” said Mr Brown, as he stared out of the bedroom window. “There’s a big white thing suddenly appeared in the garden. Just behind the nasturtiums.”

“Nonsense, Henry,” said Mrs Brown. “You must be seeing things.”

“I’m not,” said Mr Brown, rubbing his glasses and taking another look. “It’s all white and shapeless and it looks horrible. Mr Curry’s seen it too – he’s peering over the fence at it now. Do you know what it is, Paddington?”

“A big white thing, Mr Brown?” repeated Paddington vaguely, joining him at the window. “Perhaps it’s a snowball.”

“In summer?” said Mr Brown suspiciously.

“Henry,” said Mrs Brown. “Do come away from there and decide what you’re having for lunch. Paddington’s gone to a lot of trouble writing out a menu for us.”

Mr Brown took a large sheet of drawing paper from his wife and his face brightened as he studied it. It said:

MENUE

SOOP

FISH

OMMLETs

ROWST BEEF

Stew with Dumplings – Potatoes

Brussle Sprowts Pees

Cabbidge – Greyvy

MARMALADE AND CUSTERD

COFFEY

“How nice!” exclaimed Mr Brown, when he had finished reading it. “And what a good idea putting pieces of vegetable on the side as illustrations. I’ve never seen that done before.”

“They’re not really meant to be there, Mr Brown,” said Paddington. “I’m afraid they came off my paws.”

“Oh,” said Mr Brown, brushing his moustache thoughtfully. “Hmm. Well, you know, I rather fancy some soup and fish myself.”

“I’m afraid they’re off,” said Paddington hastily, remembering a time when he’d once been taken out to lunch and they had arrived late.

“Off?” said Mr Brown. “But they can’t be. No one’s ordered anything yet.”

Mrs Brown drew him to one side. “I think we’re meant to have the stew and dumplings, Henry,” she whispered. “They’re underlined.”

“What’s that, Mary?” asked Mr Brown, who was a bit slow to grasp things at times. “Oh! Oh, I see... er... on second thoughts, Paddington, I think perhaps I’ll have the stew.”

“That’s good,” said Paddington, “because I’ve got it on a tray outside all ready”

“By Jove,” said Mr Brown, as Paddington staggered in breathing heavily and carrying first one plate and then another piled high with stew. “I must say I didn’t expect anything like this.”

“Did you cook it all by yourself, Paddington?” asked Mrs Brown.

“Well... almost all,” replied Paddington truthfully. “I had a bit of an accident with the dumplings and so Mr Gruber helped me make some more.”

“You’re sure you have enough for your own lunch?” said Mrs Brown anxiously.

“Oh, yes,” said Paddington, trying hard not to picture the kitchen, “there’s enough to last for days and days.”

“Well, I think you should be congratulated,” said Mr Brown. “I’m enjoying it no end. I bet there aren’t many bears who can say they’ve cooked a meal like this. It’s fit for a queen.”

Paddington’s eyes lit up with pleasure as he listened to Mr and Mrs Brown. It had been a lot of hard work but he was glad it had all been worth while—even if there was a lot of mess to clear up.

“You know, Henry,” said Mrs Brown, as Paddington hurried off downstairs to see Mr Gruber, “we ought to think ourselves very lucky having a bear like Paddington about the house in an emergency.”



Mr Brown lay back on his pillow and surveyed the mountain of food on his plate. “Doctor MacAndrew was right about one thing,” he said. “While Paddington’s looking after us, whatever else happens we certainly shan’t starve.”



Chapter Six

TROUBLE AT THE LAUNDRETTE

The green front door of number thirty-two Windsor Gardens slowly opened and some whiskers and two black ears poked out through the gap. They turned first to the right, then to the left, and then suddenly disappeared from view again.

A few seconds later the quiet of the morning was broken by a strange trundling noise followed by a series of loud bumps as Paddington lowered Mr Brown's wheelbarrow down the steps and on to the pavement. He peered up and down the street once more and then hurried back indoors.

Paddington made a number of journeys back and forth between the house and the wheelbarrow and each time he came through the front door he was carrying a large pile of things in his paws.

There were clothes, sheets, pillow-cases, towels, several tablecloths, not to mention a number of old jerseys belonging to Mr Curry, all of which he carefully placed in the barrow.



Paddington was pleased there was no one about. He felt sure that neither the Browns nor Mr Curry would approve if they knew he was taking their washing to the launderette in a wheelbarrow. But an emergency had arisen and Paddington wasn't the sort of bear who allowed himself to be beaten by trifles.

Paddington had had a busy time what with one thing and another. Mrs Bird was due back shortly

before lunch and there had been a lot of clearing up to do. He had spent most of the early part of the morning going round the house with what was left of her feather duster, getting rid of flour stains from the previous day's cooking and generally making everything neat and tidy.

It was while he had been dusting the mantelpiece in the dining-room that he'd suddenly come across a small pile of money and one of Mrs Bird's notes. Mrs Bird often left notes about the house reminding people to do certain things. This one was headed LAUNDRY and it was heavily underlined.

Not only did it say that the Browns' laundry was due to be collected that very day, but it also had a postscript on the end saying that Mr Curry had arranged to send some things as well and would they please be collected.

Paddington hurried around as fast as he could but it still took him some while to gather together all the Browns' washing, and having to fetch Mr Curry's had delayed things even more. He'd been so busy making out a list of all the things that he'd quite failed to hear the knock at the front door and had arrived there just in time to see the laundry van disappearing down the road. Paddington had run after it shouting and waving his paws but either the driver hadn't seen him, or he hadn't wanted to, for the van had turned a corner before he was even halfway down Windsor Gardens.



It was while he was sitting on the pile of washing in the hall, trying to decide what to do next and how to explain it all to Mrs Bird, that the idea of the launderette had entered Paddington's mind.

In the past Mr Gruber had often spoken to him on the subject of launderettes. Mr Gruber took his own washing along to one every Wednesday evening when they stayed open late.

"And very good it is, too, Mr Brown," he was fond of saying. "You simply put the clothes into a big machine and then sit back while it does all the work for you. You meet some interesting people as well. I've had many a nice chat. And if you don't want to chat you can always watch the washing going round and round inside the machine."

Mr Gruber always made it sound most interesting and Paddington had often wanted to investigate the matter. The only difficulty as far as he could see was getting all the laundry there in the first place. The Browns always had a lot of washing, far too much to go into his shopping basket on wheels, and the launderette was some way away at the top of a hill.

In the end Mr Brown's wheelbarrow had seemed the only answer to the problem. But now that he had finished loading it and was about to set off Paddington looked at it rather doubtfully. He could only just reach the handles with his paws and when he tried to lift the barrow it was much heavier

than he had expected. Added to that, there was such a pile of washing on board he couldn't see round the sides let alone over the top, which made pushing most difficult.

To be on the safe side he tied a handkerchief to the end of an old broomstick which he stuck in the front of the barrow to let people know he was coming. Paddington had often seen the same thing done on lorries when they had a heavy load, and he didn't believe in taking any chances.

Quite a number of people turned to watch Paddington's progress as he made his way slowly up the long hill. Several times he got the wheel caught in a drain and had to be helped out by a kindly passer-by, and at one point, when he had to cross a busy street, a policeman held up all the traffic for him.

Paddington thanked him very much and raised his hat to all the waiting cars and buses, which tooted their horns in reply.

It was a hot day and more than once he had to stop and mop his brow with a pillowcase, so that he wasn't at all sorry when he rounded a corner and found himself outside the launderette.

He sat down on the edge of the pavement for a few minutes in order to get his breath back and when he got up again he was surprised to find a rusty old bicycle wheel lying on top of the washing.

"I expect someone thought you were a rag-and-bone bear," said the stout, motherly lady in charge of the launderette, who came outside to see what was going on.

"A rag-and-bone bear?" exclaimed Paddington hotly. He looked most offended. "I'm not a rag-and-bone bear. I'm a laundry bear."

The lady listened while Paddington explained what he had come for and at once called out for one of the other assistants to give him a hand up the steps with his barrow.

"I suppose you're doing it for the whole street?" she asked, as she viewed the mountain of washing.

"Oh, no," said Paddington, waving his paw vaguely in the direction of Windsor Gardens. "It's for Mrs Bird."

"Mrs Bird?" repeated the stout lady, looking at Mr Curry's jerseys and some old gardening socks of Mr Brown's which were lying on top of the pile. She opened her mouth as if she were about to say something but closed it again hurriedly when she saw Paddington staring at her.

"I'm afraid you'll need four machines for all this lot," she said briskly, as she went behind the counter. "It's a good job it's not one of our busy mornings. I'll put you in the ones at the end – eleven, twelve, thirteen and fourteen – then you'll be out of the way." She looked at Paddington. "You do know how to work them?"

"I think so," said Paddington, trying hard to remember all that Mr Gruber had told him.

"Well, if you get into any trouble the instructions are on the wall." The lady handed Paddington eight little plastic tubs full of powder. "Here's the soap powder," she continued. "That's two tubs for each machine. You tip one tubful in a hole in the top each time a red light comes on. That'll be four pounds, please."

Paddington counted out Mrs Bird's money and after thanking the lady, began trundling his barrow along to the other end of the room.

As he steered his barrow in and out of people's feet he looked around the launderette with interest. It was exactly as Mr Gruber had described it to him. The washing machines, all white and gleaming, were in a line round the walls and in the middle of the room were two long rows of chairs. The machines had glass portholes in their doors and Paddington peered through several of them as he went past and watched the washing going round and round in a flurry of soapy water.

By the time he reached the end of the room he felt quite excited and he was looking forward to having a go with the Browns' washing.



Having climbed up on one of the chairs and examined the instructions on the wall, Paddington tipped his laundry out on to the floor and began sorting it into four piles putting all Mr Curry's jerseys into one machine and all the Browns' washing into the other three.

But although he had read the instructions most carefully Paddington soon began to wish Mr Gruber was there to advise him. First of all there was the matter of a knob on the front of each machine. It was marked 'Hot Wash' and 'Warm Wash,' and Paddington wasn't at all sure about it. But being a bear who believed in getting his money's worth he decided to turn them all to 'Hot'.



And then there was the question of the soap. Having four machines to look after made things very difficult, especially as he had to climb up on a chair each time in order to put it in. No sooner had a red light gone out on one machine than another lit up and Paddington spent the first ten minutes rushing between the four machines pouring soap through the holes in the top as fast as he could. There was a nasty moment when he accidentally poured some soap into number ten by mistake and all the water bubbled over the side, but the lady whose machine it was was very nice about it and explained that she'd already put two lots in. Paddington was glad when at long last all the red lights went out and he was able to sit back on one of the seats and rest his paws.

He sat there for some while watching the washing being gently tossed round and round, but it was

such a nice soothing motion and he felt so tired after his labours that in no time at all he dropped off to sleep. Suddenly he was brought back to life by the sound of a commotion and by someone poking him.

It was the stout lady in charge and she was staring at one of Paddington's machines. "What have you got in number fourteen?" she demanded.

"Number fourteen?" Paddington thought for a moment and then consulted his laundry list. "I think I put some jerseys in there," he said.

The stout lady raised her hands in horror. "Oh, Else," she cried, calling to one of her assistants. "There's a young bear here put 'is jerseys in number fourteen by mistake!"

"What!" cried Paddington. "I didn't put them in by mistake – I did it on purpose. Besides," he added, looking most worried at the expression on the lady's face, "they're not my jerseys – they're Mr Curry's."

"Well, whoever they belong to," said the lady, as she hurriedly switched off the machine, "I hope he's long and thin."

"Oh dear," said Paddington, getting more and more worried. "I'm afraid Mr Curry's rather short."

"That's a pity," said the lady sympathetically, "because he's got some long, thin jerseys now. You had the machine switched to 'Hot Wash' and you should never do that with woollens. There's a special notice about that."

Paddington gazed in horror as the lady withdrew a dripping mass of wool from the machine and placed it in his barrow.

"Mr Curry's jerseys!" he said bitterly to the world in general as he sank back in his chair.

Paddington had been a bit worried about Mr Curry's jerseys right from the start. After the episode of the kitchen table he hadn't been very keen on meeting Mr Curry and he'd had to lie in wait until the coast was clear before slipping into his kitchen. He'd found the jerseys in a pile by the sink but there had been nothing to say whether they were meant to be washed or not. Paddington had a nasty feeling in the back of his mind that the answer was 'not', and now he was sure of it.

Paddington often found that shocks came in twos and as he sat back in his chair he received his second shock of the morning.

His eyes nearly popped out of his head as one of the other machines containing the Browns' washing began making a very strange whirring noise. The whirring was followed by several loud clicks and Paddington stared at the machine in amazement as the washing inside began to spin round faster and faster until it suddenly disappeared leaving a gaping hole in the middle.

He jumped up and peered through the porthole at the empty space where, only a few moments before, his washing had been. Then he hurriedly began to undo the knob on the side of the machine. It was all very strange and it definitely needed investigating.

Paddington wasn't quite sure what happened next, but as he opened the door a stream of hot, soapy water shot out, nearly knocking his hat off, and as he fell over backwards on the floor most of Mrs Bird's washing seemed to land on top of his head.



Paddington lay on his back in a pool of water and listened to the shrieks and cries going on all around him. Then he closed his eyes, put his paws in his ears and waited for the worst to happen.

“I think they’ve been having trouble up at the launderette,” said Mrs Bird. “When I came past in the bus just now there was quite a crowd outside and water running out of the door – not to mention bubbles everywhere.”

“The launderette?” said Mrs Brown, looking rather worried.

“That’s right,” said Mrs Bird. “And Mr Curry’s had a burglary. Someone broke into his kitchen in broad daylight and took some jerseys he’d put out for mending.”

Mrs Bird had just arrived back from her holiday and she was exchanging all the news with Mrs Brown. “If I’d known what was going on,” she continued, “I wouldn’t have had a minute’s peace. Jonathan and Judy away and you and Mr Brown ill in bed!” She raised her hands in horror at the thought of it all.

“We’ve been doing very well,” said Mr Brown, as he sat up in bed. “Paddington’s been looking after us.”

“Hmmm,” said Mrs Bird. “That’s as may be.” Mrs Bird had made her way upstairs and she had also found the remains of her feather duster hidden in the hall-stand.

“Have you seen Paddington anywhere?” asked Mrs Brown. “He went out just now but he said he wouldn’t be very long.”

“No,” said Mrs Bird. “And that’s another thing. There are wheelbarrow trails right through the house. All the way up from the shed, through the kitchen and out through the front door.”

“*Wheelbarrow* trails?” repeated Mr Brown. “But we’ve been in bed for two days.”

“That,” said Mrs Bird sternly, “is exactly what I mean!”

While the Browns were trying to solve the mystery of the wheelbarrow trails Paddington was having an even more difficult time in the launderette.

“But I only opened the door to see where the washing had gone,” he explained. He was sitting on the counter wrapped in a blanket while the mess was being cleared up.

“But it hadn’t gone anywhere,” said the stout lady. “The things only *looked* as if they had disappeared because they were going round so fast. They always do that.” She sought for words to explain what she meant. “It’s a... it’s a sort of phenomenon.”

“A phen-omen-on?” repeated Paddington. “But it didn’t say anything about a phenomenon in the instructions.”

The lady sighed. Washing machines were rather difficult things to explain and she’d not had many dealings with bears before.

“Bubbles all over my machines!” she exclaimed. “Water all over the floor. I’ve never seen such a mess!”

“Oh dear,” said Paddington sadly. “I’m in trouble again.” He looked at the pile of half-washed clothes next to him. He didn’t know what Mrs Bird would say when she heard all about it, and as for Mr Curry...

“I tell you what,” said the stout lady as she caught sight of the expression on Paddington’s face. “Seeing it’s your first time here and we’re not so very busy, suppose we do it all again. It would never do to have a dissatisfied customer in a launderette.” She gave Paddington a wink. “Then we can put it all in the spin dryer and if I’ve got time I might even be able to iron it for you in the back room. After all, it’s not every day we have a bear’s washing to do.”

Mrs Bird surveyed the neat pile of newly ironed laundry and then turned to Mr and Mrs Brown who had just come downstairs for the first time. “Well,” she said approvingly, “I never expected to see this. I couldn’t have done it better myself.”

“I do hope it’s all right, Mrs Bird,” said Paddington anxiously. “I had a bit of a phenomenon in the launderette.”

“A phenomenon?” repeated Mrs Brown. “But you can’t have a phenomenon in a washing machine.”

“I did,” said Paddington firmly. “And all the water came out.”

“I think you must be mistaken, dear,” said Mrs Brown. “A phenomenon means something strange.”

“And talking of strange things,” said Mrs Bird, looking hard at Paddington, “Mr Curry knocked on the door a moment ago and left you a toffee. He says he’s very pleased with his jerseys. He doesn’t know what you’ve done to them but they fit him for the first time in years. They’ve always been too large up till now.”

“Perhaps,” said Mr Brown, “there was a phenomenon in the washing machine after all.”

Paddington felt very pleased with himself as he made his way upstairs to his room. He was glad it had turned out all right in the end. As he closed the dining-room door he just caught a remark of Mrs Bird’s.

“I think we’re very lucky indeed,” she said. “Looking after a big house like this for two days and doing all the washing into the bargain. That young bear’s one of the old school.”

Paddington puzzled over the remark for some time and in the end he went to consult his friend Mr Gruber on the subject.

When Mr Gruber explained to him that it meant he was very reliable, Paddington felt even more pleased. Compliments from Mrs Bird were very rare.

“But all the better for having when they come, Mr Brown,” said Mr Gruber. “All the better for

having when they come.”





Chapter Seven

PADDINGTON DINES OUT

“I vote,” said Mr Brown, “that we celebrate the occasion by visiting a restaurant. All those in favour say ‘aye’.”

Mr Brown’s suggestion had a mixed reception. Jonathan and Judy called out “aye” at once. Mrs Brown looked rather doubtful and Mrs Bird kept her eyes firmly on her knitting.

“Do you think it wise, Henry?” said Mrs Brown. “You know what Paddington’s like when we take him out. Things happen.”

“It *is* his birthday,” replied Mr Brown.

“And his anniversary,” said Judy. “Sort of.”

The Browns were holding a council of war. It was Paddington’s summer birthday. Being a bear, Paddington had two birthdays every year – one at Christmas and the other in mid-summer. That apart, he had now been with the Browns for a little over a year and it had been decided to celebrate the two occasions at the same time.

“After all, we ought to do *something*,” said Mr Brown, playing his trump card. “If we hadn’t seen him that day on Paddington station we might never have met him and goodness knows where he would have ended up.”

The Browns were silent for a moment as they considered the awful possibility of never having met Paddington.

“I must say,” remarked Mrs Bird, in a voice which really decided the matter, “the house wouldn’t be the same without him.”

“That settles it,” said Mr Brown. “I’ll ring the Porchester right away and reserve a table for tonight.”

“Oh, Henry,” exclaimed Mrs Brown. “Not the *Porchester*. That’s such an expensive place.”

Mr Brown waved his hand in the air. “Nothing but the best is good enough for Paddington,” he said generously. “We’ll invite Mr Gruber as well and make a real party of it.

“By the way,” he continued, “where *is* Paddington? I haven’t seen him for ages.”

“He was peering through the letterbox just now,” said Mrs Bird. “I think he was looking for the postman.”



Paddington liked birthdays. He didn't get many letters – only his catalogues and an occasional postcard from his Aunt Lucy in Peru – but today the mantelpiece in the dining-room was already filled to overflowing with cards and he was looking forward to some more arriving. There had been a card from each of the Browns, one from Mr Gruber, and quite a surprising number from various people who lived in the neighbourhood. There was even an old one from Mr Curry, which Mrs Bird recognised as one Paddington had sent him the year before, but she had wisely decided not to point this out.

Then there were all the parcels. Paddington was very keen on parcels – especially when they were well wrapped up with plenty of paper and string. In fact he had done extremely well for himself, and the news that they were all going out that evening as well came as a great surprise.

“Mind you,” said Mrs Brown, “you'll have to have a bath first.”

“A bath!” exclaimed Paddington. “On my birthday?”

Paddington looked most upset at the thought of having a bath on his birthday.

“The Porchester is a very famous restaurant,” explained Mrs Brown. “Only the best people go there.”

And, despite his protests, he was sent upstairs that afternoon with a bath cube and some soap and strict instructions not to come down again until he was clean.

Excitement in the Browns' house mounted during the afternoon and by the time Mr Gruber arrived, looking self-conscious in an evening-dress suit which he hadn't worn for many years, it had reached fever pitch.

“I don't think I've ever been to the Porchester before, Mr Brown,” he whispered to Paddington in the hall. “So that makes two of us. It'll be a nice change from cocoa and buns.”

Paddington became more and more excited on the journey to the restaurant. He always enjoyed seeing the lights of London and even though it was summer quite a few of them had already come on by the time they got there.



He followed Mr Brown up the steps of the restaurant and in through some large doors, giving the man who held them open a friendly wave of his paw.

In the distance there was the sound of music and as they all gathered inside the entrance in order to leave their coats at the cloakroom, Paddington looked around with interest at the chandeliers hanging from the ceiling and at the dozens of waiters gliding to and fro.

Here comes the head waiter," said Mr Brown, as a tall, superior-looking man approached. "We've booked a table near the orchestra," he called. "In the name of Brown."

The head waiter stared at Paddington. "Is the young... er... bear gentleman with you?" he asked, looking down his nose.

"With us?" said Mr Brown. "We're with *him*. It's his party."

"Oh," said the man disapprovingly. "Then I'm afraid you can't come in."

"What!" exclaimed Paddington amid a chorus of dismay. "But I went without a second helping at lunch specially."

"I'm afraid the young gentleman isn't wearing evening dress," explained the man. "Everyone at the Porchester has to wear evening dress."

Paddington could hardly believe his ears and he gave the man a hard stare.

"Bears don't have evening dress," said Judy, squeezing his paw. "They have evening fur – and Paddington's has been washed specially."

The head waiter looked at Paddington doubtfully. Paddington had a very persistent stare when he liked, and some of the special ones his Aunt Lucy had taught him were very powerful indeed. He coughed. "I daresay," he said, "we might make an exception – just this once."

He turned and led the way through the crowded restaurant, past tables covered with snowy white cloths and gleaming silver, towards a big round table near the orchestra. Paddington followed on close behind and by the time they reached it the man's neck had gone a funny shade of red.

When they were all seated the head waiter gave them each a huge card on which was printed a list of all the dishes. Paddington had to hold his with both paws and he stared at it in amazement.

"Well, Paddington," said Mr Brown. "What would you like to start with? Soup? *Hors d'œuvre*?"

Paddington looked at his menu in disgust. He didn't think much of it at all. "I don't know what I would like, Mr Brown," he said. "My programme's full of mistakes and I can't read it."

"*Mistakes!*" The head waiter raised one eyebrow to its full height and looked at Paddington severely. "There is never a mistake on a Porchester menu."

“Those aren’t mistakes, Paddington,” whispered Judy, as she looked over his shoulder. “It’s French.”

“French!” exclaimed Paddington. “Fancy printing a menu in French!”

Mr Brown hastily scanned his own card. “Er... have you anything suitable for a young bear’s treat?” he asked.

“A young bear’s treat?” repeated the head waiter haughtily. “We pride ourselves that there is nothing one cannot obtain at the Porchester.”

“In that case,” said Paddington, looking most relieved, “I think I’ll have a marmalade sandwich.”

Looking around, Paddington decided a place as important as the Porchester must serve very good marmalade sandwiches, and he was anxious to test one.

“I beg your pardon, sir?” exclaimed the waiter. “Did you say a marmalade sandwich?”

“Yes, please,” said Paddington. “With custard.”

“For dinner?” said the man.

“Yes,” said Paddington firmly. “I’m very fond of marmalade and you said there was nothing you don’t have.”

The man swallowed hard. In all his years at the Porchester he’d never been asked for a marmalade sandwich before, particularly by a bear. He beckoned to another waiter standing nearby. “A marmalade sandwich for the young bear gentleman,” he said. “With custard.”

“A marmalade sandwich for the young bear gentleman – with custard,” repeated the second waiter. He disappeared through a door leading to the kitchens as if in a dream and the Browns heard the order repeated several more times before it closed. They looked around uneasily while they gave another waiter their own orders.

There seemed to be some sort of commotion going on in the kitchen. Several times they heard raised voices and once the door opened and a man in a chef’s hat appeared round the corner and stared in their direction.

“Perhaps, sir,” said yet another waiter, as he wheeled a huge trolley laden with dishes towards the table, “you would care for some *hors d’œuvre* while you wait?”

“That’s a sort of salad,” Mr Brown explained to Paddington.

Paddington licked his whiskers. “It looks a very good bargain,” he said, staring at all the dishes. “I think perhaps I will.”

“Oh dear,” said Mrs Brown, as Paddington began helping himself. “You’re not supposed to eat it *from* the trolley, Paddington.”

Paddington looked most disappointed as he watched the waiter serve the *hors d’œuvre*. It wasn’t really quite such good value as he’d thought. But by the time the man had finished piling his plate with vegetables and pickles, salad, and a pile of interesting-looking little silver onions he began to change his mind again. Perhaps, he decided, he couldn’t have managed the whole trolleyful after all.

While Mr Brown gave the rest of the orders – soup for the others followed by fish and a special omelette for Mr Gruber – Paddington sat back and prepared to enjoy himself.

“Would you like anything to drink, Paddington?” asked Mr Brown.

“No, thank you, Mr Brown,” said Paddington. “I have a bowl of water.”

“I don’t think that’s drinking water, Mr Brown,” said Mr Gruber tactfully. “That’s to dip your paws in when they get sticky. That’s what’s known as a paw bowl.”

“A paw bowl?” exclaimed Paddington. “But I had a bath this afternoon.”

“Never mind,” said Mr Brown hastily. “I’ll send for the lemonade waiter – then you can have an orange squash or something.”

Paddington was getting more and more confused. It was all most complicated and he’d never seen so many waiters before. He decided to concentrate on eating for a bit.



“Most enjoyable,” said Mr Gruber a few minutes later when he had finished his soup. “I shall look forward to my omelette now.” He looked across the table at Paddington. “Are you enjoying your *hors d’œuvre*, Mr Brown?”

“It’s very nice, Mr Gruber,” said Paddington, staring down at his plate with a puzzled expression on his face. “But I think I’ve lost one of my onions.”

“You’ve what?” asked Mr Brown. It was difficult to hear what Paddington was saying for the noise the orchestra was making. It had been playing quite sweetly up until a moment ago but suddenly it had started making a dreadful row. It was something to do with one of the saxophone players in the front row. He kept shaking his instrument and then trying to blow it, and all the while the conductor was glaring at him.

“My onion!” exclaimed Paddington. “I had six just now and when I put my fork on one of them it suddenly disappeared. Now I’ve only got five.”

Mrs Brown began to look more and more embarrassed as Paddington got down off his seat and began peering under the tables. “I do hope he finds it soon,” she said. Everyone in the restaurant seemed to be looking in their direction and if they weren’t actually pointing she knew they were talking about them.

“Gosh!” exclaimed Jonathan suddenly. He pointed towards the orchestra. “*There’s* Paddington’s onion!”

The Browns turned and looked at the orchestra. The saxophone player seemed to be having an argument with the conductor.

“How can I be expected to play properly,” he said bitterly, “when I’ve got an onion in my instrument? And I’ve a good idea where it came from too!”

The conductor followed his gaze towards the Browns, who hurriedly looked the other way.

“For heaven’s sake don’t tell Paddington,” said Mrs Brown. “He’ll only want it back.”

“Never mind,” said Mr Gruber, as the door leading to the kitchen opened. “I think my omelette’s just coming.”

The Browns watched as a waiter entered bearing a silver dish which he placed on a small spirit stove near their table. Mr Gruber had ordered an omelette *flambée*, which meant it was set on fire

just before it was served. "I don't know when I had one of those last," he said. "I'm looking forward to it."

"I must say it looks very nice," said Mr Brown, twirling his moustache thoughtfully. "I rather wish I'd ordered one myself now."

"Come along, Paddington," he called, as the waiter set light to the pan. "Come and see Mr Gruber's omelette. It's on fire."

"What!" cried Paddington, poking his head out from beneath the table. "Mr Gruber's omelette's on fire?"

He stared in astonishment at the waiter as he bore the silver tray with its flaming omelette towards the table.

"It's all right, Mr Gruber," he called, waving his paws in the air. "I'm coming!"

Before the Browns could stop him, Paddington had grabbed his paw bowl and had thrown the contents over the tray. There was a loud hissing noise and before the astonished gaze of the waiter Mr Gruber's omelette slowly collapsed into a soggy mess in the bottom of the dish.

Several people near the Browns applauded. "What an unusual idea," said one of them. "Having the cabaret act sit at one of the tables just like anyone else."

One old gentleman in particular who was sitting by himself at the next table laughed no end. He had been watching Paddington intently for some time and now he began slapping his knee at each new happening.

"Crikey!" said Jonathan. "We're for it now." He pointed towards a party of very important-looking people, led by the head waiter, who were approaching the Browns' table.

They stopped a few feet away and the head waiter pointed at Paddington. "That's the one," he said. "The one with the whiskers!"

The most important-looking man stepped forward. "I'm the manager," he announced. "And I'm afraid I must ask you to leave. Throwing water over a waiter. Putting onions in a saxophone. Ordering marmalade sandwiches. You'll get the Porchester a bad name."

Mr and Mrs Brown exchanged glances. "I've never heard of such a thing," said Mrs Bird. "If that bear goes we all go."

"Hear! Hear!" echoed Mr Gruber.

"And if you go I shall go too," came a loud voice from the next table.

Everyone looked round as the old gentleman who had been watching the proceedings rose and waved a finger at the manager. "May I ask why this young bear's being asked to leave?" he boomed.

The manager began to look even more worried, for the old gentleman was one of his best customers and he didn't want to offend him. "It annoys the other diners," he said.

"Nonsense!" boomed the old gentleman. "I'm one of the other diners and I'm not annoyed. Best thing that's happened in years. Don't know when I've enjoyed myself so much." He looked down at Paddington. "I should like to shake you by the paw, bear. It's about time this place was livened up a bit."

"Thank you very much," said Paddington, holding out his paw. He was a bit overawed by the old gentleman and he wasn't at all sure what it was all about anyway.

The old gentleman waved the waiters and the manager to one side and then turned to Mr Brown. "I'd better introduce myself," he said. "I'm Sir Huntley Martin, the marmalade king."

"I've been in marmalade for fifty years," he boomed, "and been comin' here for thirty. Never heard

anyone ask for a marmalade sandwich before. Does me old heart good.”

Paddington looked most impressed. “Fancy being in marmalade for fifty years!” he exclaimed.

“I hope you’ll allow me to join you,” said Sir Huntley. “I’ve done a good many things in my life but I don’t think I’ve ever been to a bear’s birthday party before.”

The old gentleman’s presence seemed to have a magical effect on the manager of the Porchester, for he had a hurried conference with the head waiter and in no time at all a procession started from the kitchen headed by a waiter bearing a silver tray on which was another omelette for Mr Gruber.

Even the head waiter allowed himself a smile and he gave Paddington a special autographed menu to take away as a souvenir and promised that in future there would always be a special section for marmalade sandwiches.

It was a hilarious party of Browns who finally got up to go. Paddington was so full of good things he had a job to get up at all. He had a last lingering look at the remains of an ice-cream on his plate but decided that enough was as good as a feast. He’d enjoyed himself no end and after a great deal of thought he left a penny under his plate for the waiter.

Sir Huntley Martin seemed very sad that it had all come to an end. “Most enjoyable,” he kept booming as they left the table. “Most enjoyable. Perhaps,” he added hopefully to Paddington, “you’ll do me the honour of visiting my factory one of these days.”

“Oh, yes, please,” said Paddington. “I should like that very much.”

As they left the restaurant he waved goodbye with his paw to all the other diners, several of whom applauded when the orchestra struck up ‘Happy Birthday to You’.



Only Mrs Bird seemed less surprised than the others, for she had seen Sir Huntley slip something in the conductor’s hand.

It had become really dark outside while they had been eating their dinner and all the lights in the street were on. After they had said goodbye to Sir Huntley, and because it was a special occasion, Mr Brown drove round Piccadilly Circus so that Paddington could see all the coloured signs working.



Paddington peered out of the car window and his eyes grew larger and larger at the sight of all the red, green and blue lights flashing on and off and making patterns in the sky.

“Have you enjoyed yourself, Paddington?” asked Mr Brown as they went round for the second time.

“Yes, thank you very much, Mr Brown,” exclaimed Paddington.

Altogether Paddington thought it had been a wonderful day and he was looking forward to writing a letter to his Aunt Lucy telling her everything about it.

After giving a final wave of his paw to some passers-by, he raised his hat to a policeman who signalled them on, and then settled back in his seat to enjoy the journey home with Mr Gruber and the Browns.

“I think,” he announced sleepily, as he gave one final stare at the fast-disappearing lights, “I would like to have an anniversary every year!”

“And so say all of us, Mr Brown,” echoed Mr Gruber from the back of the car. “And so say all of us!”

About the Author

Michael Bond

Author of over one hundred books, Michael Bond was born in Newbury, Berkshire, in 1926 and grew up in Reading. On leaving school at the age of fourteen, he spent a year in a lawyers' office before joining the BBC as an engineer. During the war he served with both the RAF and the army, and it was in 1947, while stationed in Cairo, that he wrote his first short story. Its acceptance by London Opinion sowed the seeds of a future career, but before becoming a full-time writer he was to spend many happy and fruitful years as a BBC television cameraman.

The inspiration for his most famous creation came one snowy Christmas Eve. He was taking refuge in Selfridges when he came across a small toy bear, literally left on the shelf. It was to act as inspiration for *A Bear Called Paddington*, first published in 1958. Bears don't need much encouragement, and Paddington has since filled the pages of twelve novels, a variety of picture books, and many other projects written for the young at heart of all ages.

Michael has twice been recognised for his services to children's literature: in 1997 he was awarded an OBE and in 2002 he was honoured in an exhibition at The National Portrait Gallery in London, celebrating a century of children's authors. He lives in London.

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