

THE DUTCH TWINS



THE DUTCH TWINS

By Lucy Fitch Perkins

ILLUSTRATED BY THE AUTHOR



YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS

CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

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KIT AND KAT

THIS is a picture of Kit and Kat. They are Twins, and they live in Holland. Kit is the boy, and Kat is the girl.

Of course their real names are not Kit and Kat at all. Their real names are Christopher and Katrina. But you can see for yourself that such long names as that would never in the world fit such a short pair of Twins. So the Twins' Mother, Vrouw Vedder, said,

“They cannot be called Christopher and Katrina until they are four and a half feet high.”

Now it takes a long time to grow four and a half feet of Boy and Girl. You know, chickens and puppies and colts and kittens always grow up much faster than twins. Kit and Kat ate a great many breakfasts and dinners and suppers, and played a great many plays, and had a great many happy days while they were growing up to their names. I will tell you about some of them.



THE DAY THEY WENT FISHING

ONE summer morning, very early, Vrouw Vedder opened the door of her little Dutch kitchen and stepped out.

She looked across the road which ran by the house, across the canal on the other side, across the level green fields that lay beyond, clear to the blue rim of the world, where the sky touches the earth. The sky was very blue; and the great, round, shining face of the sun was just peering over the tops of the trees, as she looked out.

Vrouw Vedder listened. The roosters in the barnyard were crowing, the ducks in the canal were quacking, and all the little birds in the fields were singing for joy. Vrouw Vedder hummed a slow little tune of her own, as she went back into her kitchen.

Kit and Kat were still asleep in their little cupboard bed. She gave them each a kiss. The Twins opened their eyes and sat up.

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“O Kit and Kat,” said Vrouw Vedder, “the sun is up, the birds are all awake and singing, and Grandfather is going fishing to-day. If you will hurry, you may go with him! He is coming at six o’clock; so pop out of bed and get dressed. I will put some lunch for you in the yellow basket, and you may dig worms for bait in the garden. Only be sure not to step on the young cabbages that Father planted.”

Kit and Kat bounced out of bed in a minute. Their mother helped them put on their clothes and new wooden shoes. Then she gave them each a bowl of bread and milk for their breakfast. They ate it sitting on the kitchen doorstep.



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This is a picture of Kit and Kat digging worms. You see they did just as their mother said, and did not step on the young cabbages. They sat on them, instead. But that was an accident.

Kit dug the worms, and Kat put them into a basket, with some earth in it to make them feel at home.

When Grandfather came, he brought a large fishing-rod for himself and two little ones for the Twins. There was a little hook on the end of each line.

Vrouw Vedder kissed Kit and Kat goodbye.

“Mind Grandfather, and don’t fall into the water,” she said.

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THE DAY THEY WENT FISHING

Grandfather and the Twins started off together down the long road beside the canal.

The house where the Twins lived was right beside the canal. Their father was a gardener, and his beautiful rows of cabbages and beets and onions stretched in long lines across the level fields by the roadside.

Grandfather lived in a large town, a little way beyond the farm where the Twins lived. He did not often have a holiday, because he carried milk to the doors of the people in the town, every morning early. Sometime I will tell you how he did it; but I must not tell you now, because if I do, I can't tell you about their going fishing.

This morning, Grandfather carried his rod and the lunch-basket. Kit and Kat carried the basket of worms between them, and their rods over their shoulders, and they were all three very happy.

They walked along ever so far, beside the canal. Then they turned to the left and walked along a path that ran from the canal across the green fields to what looked like a hill.

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But it wasn't a hill at all, really, because there aren't any hills in Holland. It was a long, long wall of earth, very high—oh, as high as a house, or even higher! And it had sloping sides.

There is such a wall of earth all around the country of Holland, where the Twins live. There has to be a wall, because the sea is higher than the land. If there were no walls to shut out the sea, the whole country would be covered with water; and if that were so, then there wouldn't be any Holland, or any Holland Twins, or any story. So you see it was very lucky for the Twins that the wall was there. They called it a dyke.

Grandfather and Kit and Kat climbed the dyke. When they reached the top, they sat down a few minutes to rest and look at the great blue sea. Grandfather sat in the middle, with Kit on one side, and Kat on the other; and the basket of worms and the basket of lunch were there, too.

They saw a great ship sail slowly by, making a cloud of smoke.

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“Where do the ships go, Grandfather?” asked Kit.

“To America, and England, and China, and all over the world,” said Grandfather.

“Why?” asked Kat. Kat almost always said “Why?” and when she didn’t, Kit did.

“To take flax and linen from the mills of Holland to make dresses for little girls in other countries,” said Grandfather.

“Is that all?” asked Kit.

“They take cheese and herring, bulbs and butter, and lots of other things besides,

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and bring back to us wheat and meat and all sorts of good things from the lands across the sea.”

“I think I’ll be a sea captain when I’m big,” said Kit.

“So will I,” said Kat.

“Girls can’t,” said Kit.

But Grandfather shook his head and said:

“You can’t tell what a girl may be by the time she’s four feet and a half high and is called Katrina. There’s no telling what girls will do anyway. But, children, if we stay here we shall not catch any fish.”

So they went down the other side of the dyke and out onto a little pier that ran from the sandy beach into the water.

Grandfather showed them how to bait their hooks. Kit baited Kat’s for her, because Kat said it made her all wriggly inside to do it. She did not like it. Neither did the worm!

They all sat down on the end of the pier, Grandfather sat on the very end and let his

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wooden shoes hang down over the water; but he made Kit and Kat sit with their feet stuck straight out in front of them, so they just reached to the edge,—“So you can’t fall in,” said Grandfather.

They dropped their hooks into the water and sat very still, waiting for a bite. The sun climbed higher and higher in the sky, and it grew hotter and hotter on the pier. The flies tickled Kat’s nose and made her sneeze.

“Keep still, can’t you?” said Kit crossly. “You’ll scare the fish. Girls don’t know how to fish, anyway.” Pretty soon Kat felt a queer little jerk on her line. She was perfectly sure she did.

Kat squealed and jerked her rod. She jerked it so hard that one foot flew right up in the air, and one of her new wooden shoes went—splash—right into the water!

But that wasn’t the worst of it! Before you could say Jack Robinson, Kat’s hook flew around and caught in Kit’s clothes and pricked him.

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Kit jumped and said “Ow!” And then—no one could ever tell how it happened—there was Kit in the water, too, splashing like a young whale, with Kat’s hook still holding fast to his clothes in the back!

Grandfather jumped then, too, you may be sure. He caught hold of Kat’s rod and pulled hard and called out, “Steady there, steady!”

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And in one minute there was Kit in the shallow water beside the pier, puffing and blowing like a grampus!



Grandfather reached down and pulled him up.

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When Kit was safely on the pier, Kat threw her arms around his neck, though the water was running down in streams from his hair and eyes and ears.

“O Kit,” she said, “I truly thought it was a fish on my line when I jumped!”

“Just like a g-g-girl,” said Kit. “They don’t know how to f-f-fish.” You see his teeth were chattering, because the water was cold.

“Well, anyway,” said Kat, “I caught more than you did. I caught you!”

Then Kat thought of something else. She shook her finger at Kit.



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“O Kit,” she said, “Mother told you *not* to fall into the water!”

“T-t-twas all your fault,” roared Kit. “Y-y-you began it! Anyway, where is your new wooden shoe?”

“Where are both of yours?” screamed Kat.

Sure enough, where were they? No one had thought about shoes, because they were thinking so hard about Kit.

They ran to the end of the pier and looked. There was Kat’s shoe sailing away toward America like a little boat! Kit’s were still bobbing about in the water near the pier.

“Oh! Oh! Oh!” shrieked Kat; but the tide was going out and carrying her shoe farther away every minute. They could not get it; but Grandfather reached down with his rod and fished out both of Kit’s shoes. Then Kat took off her other one and her stockings, and they all three went back to the beach.

Grandfather and Kat covered Kit up with sand to keep him warm while his clothes were drying. Then Grandfather stuck the

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Twins' fish-poles up in the sand and tied the lines together for a clothes-line, and hung Kit's clothes up on it, and Kat put their three wooden shoes in a row beside Kit.

Then they ate their luncheon of bread and butter, cheese, and milk, with some radishes from Father's garden. It tasted very good, even if it was sandy. After lunch Grandfather said,

"It will never do to go home without any fish at all."

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So by and by he went back to the pier and caught one while the Twins played in the sand. He put it in the lunch-basket to carry home.

Kat brought shells and pebbles to Kit, because he had to stay covered up in the sand, and Kit built a play dyke all around himself with them, and Kat dug a canal outside the dyke. Then she made sand-pies in clam-shells and set them in a row in the sun to bake.

They played until the shadow of the dyke grew very long across the sandy beach, and then Grandfather said it was time to go home.

He helped Kit dress, but Kit's clothes were still a little wet in the thick parts. And Kat had to go barefooted and carry her one wooden shoe.

They climbed the dyke and crossed the fields, and walked along the road by the canal. The road shone, like a strip of yellow ribbon across the green field. They walked quite slowly, for they were tired and sleepy.

By and by Kit said, "I see our house"; and Kat said, "I see Mother at the gate."

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Grandfather gave the fish he caught to Kit and Kat, and Vrouw Vedder cooked it for their supper; and though it was not a very big fish, they all had some.

Grandfather must have told Vrouw Vedder something about what had happened; for that night, when she put Kit to bed, she felt of his clothes carefully—but she didn't say a word about their being damp. And she said to Kat: "To-morrow we will see the shoemaker and have him make you another shoe."

Then Kit and Kat hugged her and said good-night, and popped off to sleep before you could wink your eyes.

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MARKET DAY WITH FATHER

ONE afternoon Kit and Kat were playing around the kitchen doorstep, while their Mother sat on a bench by the door, peeling some onions for supper. It was not yet supper-time, but Vrouw Vedder was always ahead of the clock with the work.

Kit and Kat had a pan of water and were teaching their ducklings to swim. They each had one little fat duckling of their very own. The ducklings squawked when Kit lifted them over the edge of the pan into the water.

“Don’t do that, Kit,” said Kat. “The ducklings don’t like it. You didn’t like it when *you* fell into the water, did you?”

“But I’m not a duck,” said Kit.

“Well, anyway, they’re tired and want to go to their mother,” said Kat. “Let’s do something else! I’ll tell you what! Let’s go out to the garden and help Father get the boat loaded for market.”

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“All right,” said Kit. “May we, Mother?”

“Yes,” said Vrouw Vedder; “and you may ask Father if he will take you to market with him to-morrow if it’s fair. Tell him I said you could ask.”

“Oh, goody, goody!” said Kit and Kat, both at once; and they ran as fast as their wooden shoes would take them out into the garden.

They found their father cutting cabbages and gathering them into piles. He was stopping to light his pipe, when they reached him.

“O Father!” said Kit and Kat both together. “May we go on the boat to market with you to-morrow morning? Mother said we might ask!”

Father Vedder blew two puffs from his pipe without answering.

“We’ll help you load the boat,” said Kit.

“Yes,” said Kat, “I can carry a cabbage.”

“I can carry two,” said Kit. “We’ll both be good,” said Kat.

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“Very well,” said Father, at last. “We’ll see how you work! And to-morrow morning, if it’s fair, I’ll see! But you must go to bed early to-night, because you’ll have to get up very early in the morning, if you go with me! Now you each take a cabbage and run along.”

Father Vedder went back to his work.

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Kit and Kat ran to the cabbage-pile. Kat took one, and Kit took two—just to show that he could.

“When Father says ‘I’ll see,’ he always means ‘yes,’ ” Kat said to Kit.

Perhaps it seems queer to you that they should go to market in a boat, but it didn’t seem queer at all to the Twins.

You see, in Holland there are a great many canals. They cross the fields like roadways of water, and that is what they really are. Little canals open into big ones, and big ones go clear to the sea.

It is very easy for farmers to load their vegetables for market right on a boat. They can pull the boat out into the big canal, and then away they go to sell their produce in the town.

The canals flow through the towns, too, and make water streets, where boats go up and down as carriages go here.

The Twins and their father worked like beavers, washing the vegetables and packing them in baskets, until their good old boat was filled with cabbages and onions and beets and

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carrots and all sorts of good things to eat.

By that time it was nearly dark, and they were all three very hungry; so they went home.

They found that Mother Vedder had made buttermilk porridge for supper. The Twins loved buttermilk porridge. They each ate three bowls of it, and then their mother put them to bed.

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This is a picture of the bed! It opened like a cupboard right into the kitchen, and it was like going to bed on a shelf in the pantry.



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The very next thing the Twins knew, it was morning, and there was Vrouw Vedder calling to them.

“It’s market day, and the sun is almost up. Come Kit and Kat, if you want to go with Father,” she said. The Twins bounced out like two rubber balls. They ate some breakfast and then ran to the boat.

Father was there before them. He helped them into the boat and put them both on one seat, and told them to sit still. Then he got in and took the pole and pushed off.

Vrouw Vedder stood on the canal bank to see them pass.

“Be good children; mind Father, and don’t get lost,” she called after them.

Kit and Kat were very busy all the way to town, looking at the things to be seen on each side of the canal.

It was so early in the morning that the grass was all shiny with dew. Black and white cows were eating the rich green grass, and a few laborers were already in the fields.

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They passed little groups of farm buildings, their red-tiled roofs shining in the morning sun; and the windmills threw long, long shadows across the fields.

The blue blossoms of the flax nodded to them from the canal bank; and once they saw a stork fly over a mossy green roof, to her nest on the chimney, with a frog in her mouth.

They went under bridges and by little canals that opened into the main canal. They passed so close to some of the houses that Kit and Kat could see the white curtains blowing in the windows, and the pots of red geraniums

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standing on the sill. In one house the family waved their hands to Kit and Kat from the breakfast table, and a little farther on they passed a woman who was washing clothes in the canal. Other boats filled with vegetables and flowers of all colors passed them. And they were going to market too. Only no other boat had twins in it.

“Good day, neighbor Vedder,” one man called out. “Are you taking a pair of fat pigs to market?”

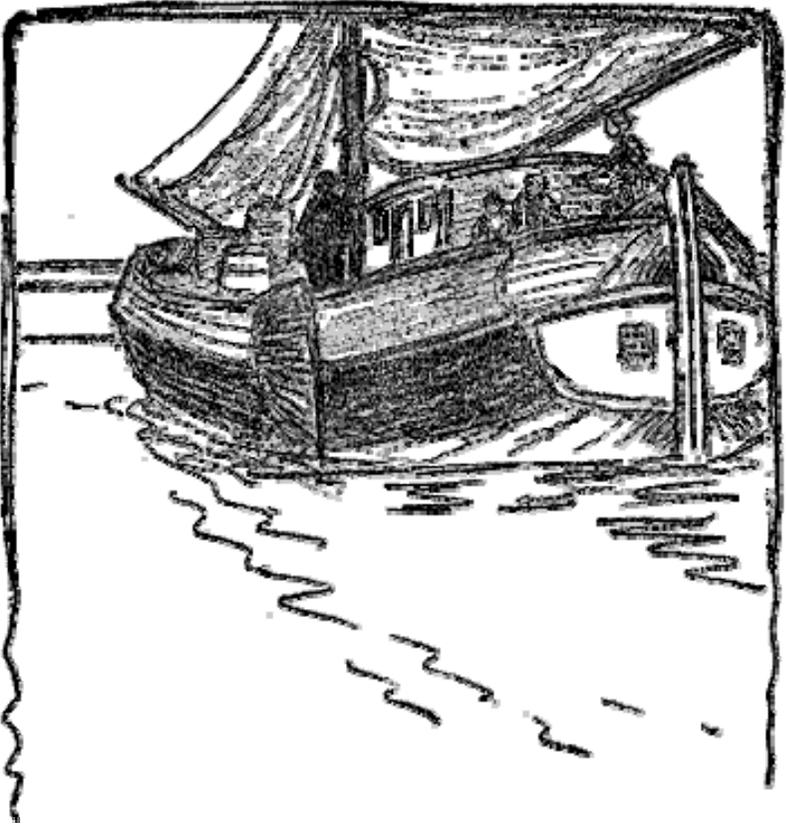
By and by they came to the town. There were a great many boats in the canal here, and people calling back and forth to each other from them.

Kit and Kat saw a boat that the Captain’s family lived in. It was like a floating house.

The Twins thought it must be grand to live on a boat like that, just going about from town to town, seeing new sights every day.

“We should never have to go to school at all,” said Kit.

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They wished their own boat were big enough to move about in; but Father told them they must sit very, very still all the time.

There were houses on each side of the canal, in the town, and people were clattering along over the pavement in their wooden shoes.

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The market-place was an open square in the middle of the town. It had little booths and stalls all about it. The farmers brought their fresh vegetables and flowers, or whatever they had to sell, into these stalls, and then sat there waiting for customers.

Kit and Kat helped their father to unload the boat. Then they sat down on a box, and Father gave them each some bread and cheese to eat; for they were hungry again. They put the cheese between slices of bread and took bites, while they looked about.



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Soon there were a good many people in the square. Most of them were women with market baskets on their arms. They went to the different stalls to see what they would buy for dinner.

A large woman with a big basket on her arm came along to the stall where Kit and Kat were sitting.

“Bless my heart!” she said. “Are you twins?”

“Yes, Ma’am,” said Kit and Kat. And Kat said, “We’re five years old.”

“O my soul!” said the large woman. “So you are! What are your names?”

“Christopher and Katrina, but they call us Kit and Kat for short.” It was Kat who said this. And Kit said,

“When we are four feet and a half high, we are going to be called Christopher and Katrina.”

“Well, well, well!” said the large woman. “So you are! Now my name is Vrouw Van der Kloot. Are you helping Father?”

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“Yes,” said the Twins. “We’re going to help him sell things.”

“Then you may sell me a cabbage and ten onions,” said Vrouw Van der Kloot.

Father Vedder’s eyes twinkled, and he smoked his pipe. Kit got a cabbage for the Vrouw.

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“You can get the ten onions,” he said to Kat. You see, really Kit couldn’t count ten and be sure of it. So he asked Kat to do it.

Kat wasn’t afraid. She took out a little pile of onions in a measure, and said to Vrouw Van der Kloot,

“Is that ten?”

Then Vrouw Van der Kloot counted them with Kat, very carefully. There were eleven, and so she gave back one. Then she gave Kat the money for the onions, and Kit the money for the cabbage.

Father Vedder said,

“Now Kit and Kat, by and by, when you get hungry again, you can go over to Vrouw Van der Kloot’s stall and buy something from her. She keeps the sweetie shop.”

“Oh! Oh!” cried Kit and Kat. “We’re hungry yet! Can’t we go now?”

“No, not now,” said Father. “We must do some work first.”

The Twins helped Father Vedder a long time. They learned to count ten and to do several other things. Then their father gave

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them the money for the cabbage and the ten onions they had sold to Vrouw Van der Kloot, and said,

“You may walk around the market and look in all the stalls, and buy the thing you like best that costs just two cents. Then come back here to me.”

Kit and Kat set forth on their travels, to see the world. They each held the money tightly shut in one hand, and with the other hand they held on to each other.



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“The world is very large,” said Kit and Kat.

They saw all sorts of strange things in the market. There were tables piled high with flowers. There was a stall full of birds in cages, singing away with all their might. One cage had five little birds in it, sitting in a row.

“O Kit,” cried Kat, “let’s buy the birds!”

They asked the woman if the birds cost two cents, and she said,

“No, my angels; they cost fifty cents.”

You see, now that the Twins could count ten, they knew they couldn’t get the birds for two cents when they cost fifty. So they went to the next place.

There, there were chickens and ducks for sale. But the Twins had plenty of those at home. There were stalls and stalls of vegetables just like Father’s, and there were booths where meat and fish and wood and peat were sold. But the Twins couldn’t find

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anything they wanted that cost exactly two cents.

At last, what should they see but Vrouw Van der Kloot's fat face smiling at them from a stall just full of cakes and cookies and bread, and chocolate, and honey cakes, and goodies of all kinds.

The Twins held up their money.

There on the counter was a whole row of St. Nicholas dolls with currant eyes, and they knew at once that there was nothing else in all the market they should like so much!

"Do these cost two cents apiece, dear Vrouw Van der Kloot?" asked Kat.

"No," said Vrouw Van der Kloot; "they cost one cent apiece."

The Twins were discouraged.

"I don't believe there's a single thing in this whole market that costs just two cents," said Kat.

"Keep still!" said Kit. "Let me think."

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They sat down on the curb. Kat kept still, and Kit took hold of his head with both hands and thought hard. He thought so hard that he scowled all over his forehead!

“I tell you what it is, Kat,” he said at last. “If those St. Nicholas dolls cost one cent a piece, I *think* we could get two of them for two cents.”

“O Kit,” said Kat, “how splendidly you can think! Does it hurt you much? Let’s ask Vrouw Van der Kloot.”

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They went back to the good Vrouw, who was selling some coffee bread to a woman with a basket.

“O Vrouw Van der Kloot,” said Kat, “Kit says that if those St. Nicholas dolls cost one cent a piece, he *thinks* we could get two for two cents. Do you think so?”

“Of course you can,” said Vrouw Van der Kloot; and she winked at the lady with the bread.

“But you’ve got two cents, and I’ve got two,” said Kat to Kit. “If you should get two St. Nicholas dolls, why, I should have my two cents left; shouldn’t I? Oh! dear, it won’t come out right anyway!”

“Let me think some more,” said Kit; and when he had thought some more, he said,

“I’ll tell you what let’s! You get two with your two cents, and I’ll get two with mine! And I’ll give my other one to Mother and you can give your other one to Father!”

“That’s just what we’ll do,” said Kat.

They went back to Vrouw Van der Kloot.

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“We’ll take *four* dolls,” said Kat.

“Well, well, well!” said the Vrouw. “So you’ve figured it all out, have you?” And she counted out the dolls—“One for Kit, and one for Kat, and one for Father, and one for Mother, and an extra one for good measure!”

“O Kit, she’s given us one more!” said Kat. “Let’s eat it right now! Thank you, dear Vrouw Van der Kloot.”

So they ate up the one more then and there, beginning with the feet. Kit bit one off, and Kat bit the other; and they took turns until the St. Nicholas doll was all gone.

Then they took the four others, said good-bye to the good Vrouw, and went back to Father’s stall. They found that Father had sold all his things and was ready to go home.

They carried their empty baskets back to the boat, and soon were on their way home. The Twins sat on one seat, holding tight to their dolls, which were growing rather sticky.

The boat was so light that they went home from market much more quickly than they had come, and it did not seem long

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before they saw their own house. There it was, with its mossy roof half hidden among the trees, and Vrouw Vedder waiting for them at the gate.

Dinner was all ready, and the Twins set the four St. Nicholas dolls in a row, in the middle of the table.

“There’s one for Father, and one for Mother, and one for Kat, and one for me,” said Kit.

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“O Mother,” said Kat, “Kit can think! He thought just how many dolls he could buy when they were one for one cent! Isn’t it fine that he can do that?”

“You’ve learned a great deal at the market,” said Vrouw Vedder. But Kit didn’t say a word. He just looked proud and pleased and put his hands in his pockets.

“By and by, when you are four and a half feet high and are called Christopher, you can go with Father every time,” said Vrouw Vedder.

“I can think a little bit, too,” said Kat. “Can’t I go?”

“No,” said Vrouw Vedder. “Girls shouldn’t think much. It isn’t good for them. Leave thinking to the men. You can stay at home and help me.”

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