

A MONDAY SURPRISE!

by Gael R. Shults

Early one Monday morning, Mother got up to start the week's laundry. Sally got up early too. She wanted to help. Mother was very busy. Sally was very busy too.

"Oh dear, Sally, I do not have any time to play today."

"But I am working!"

"Well, if you really want to do work today, maybe you could take care of Patsy for me? That would be such a huge help."

Sally had wanted to wash clothes like Mother, but she also wanted to be a good helper. Patsy was still sound asleep, so Sally began picking up toys from the floor of their room.

"Hmmm..." While putting things away she got a thought.

"Patsy, wake up! I have a BIG idea! Guess what we're going to do!"

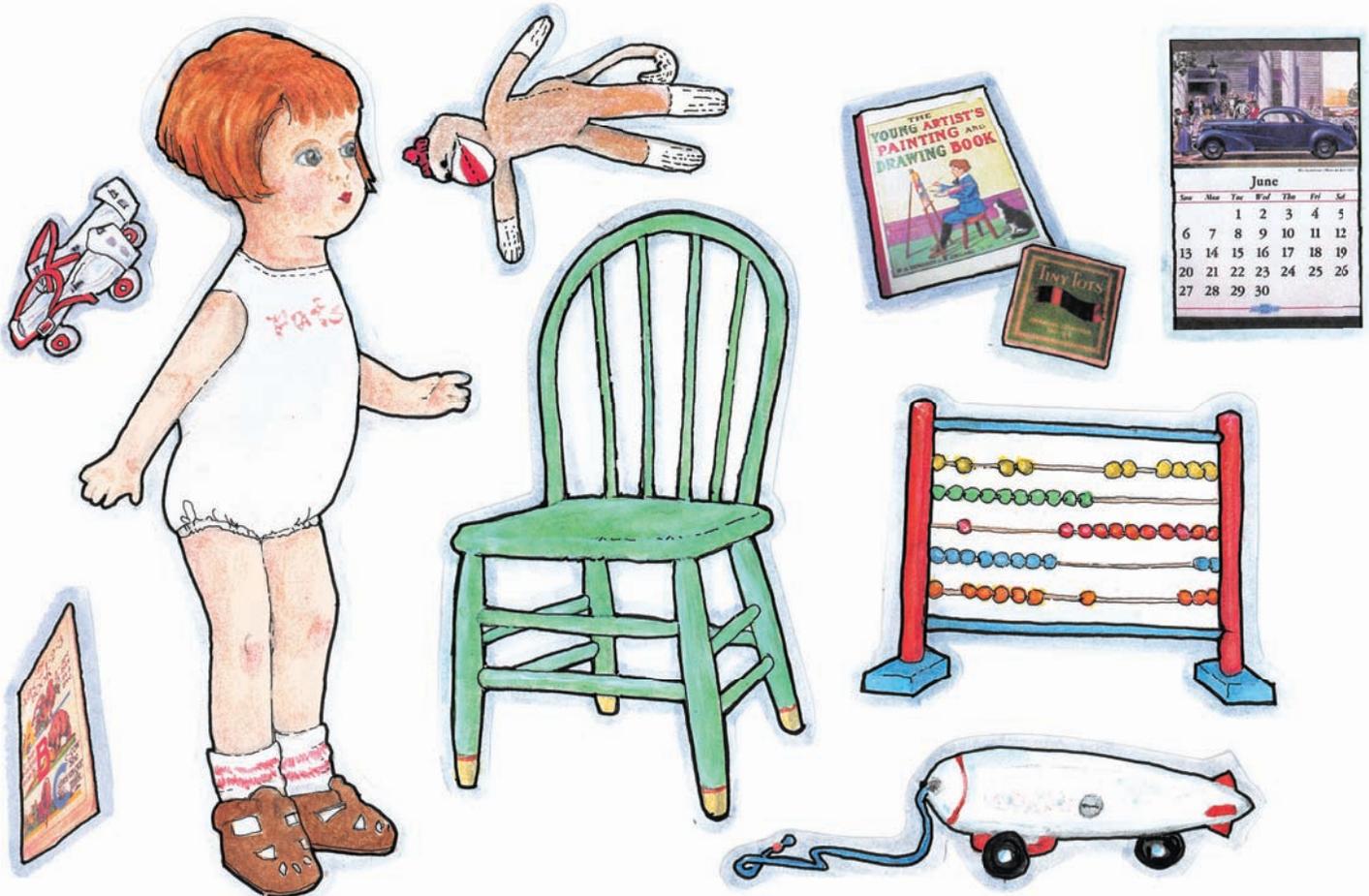
But Patsy wouldn't budge. "I guess I know what might get her to wake up." She ran through the house and opened the back screen door.

"Here, boy! Come here Corky," Sally called, "Let's go wake up Patsy!"

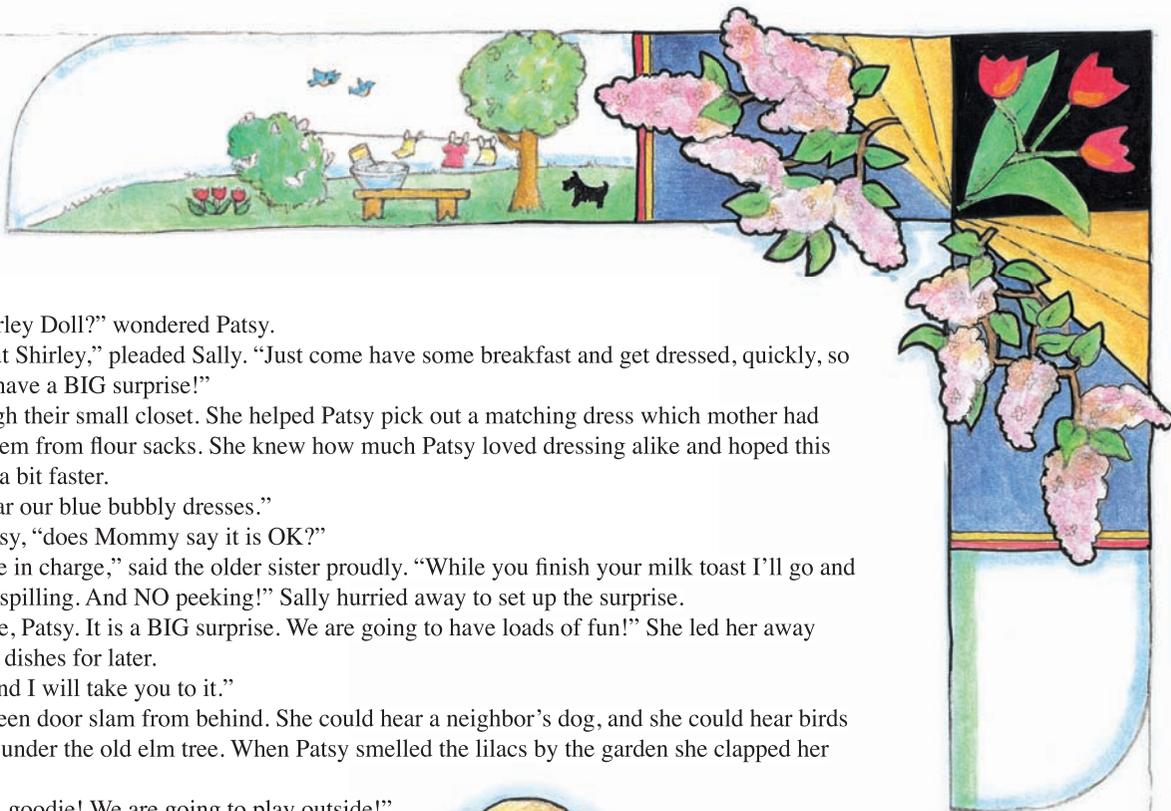
Before long a sleepy eyed girl was sitting up in bed, hugging the fluffy black dog as he licked her face.

"Oh Corky," yawned Patsy, "I do love your good-morning kisses!"

Sally helped her up while Patsy reached for her Sock Monkey.



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"Hey, where is Shirley Doll?" wondered Patsy.

"Don't bother about Shirley," pleaded Sally. "Just come have some breakfast and get dressed, quickly, so we can go have fun. I have a BIG surprise!"

Sally looked through their small closet. She helped Patsy pick out a matching dress which mother had beautifully sewn for them from flour sacks. She knew how much Patsy loved dressing alike and hoped this might get her to move a bit faster.

"Look, we will wear our blue bubbly dresses."

"Ooooo," cried Patsy, "does Mommy say it is OK?"

"Mother has put me in charge," said the older sister proudly. "While you finish your milk toast I'll go and get our toys ready. No spilling. And NO peeking!" Sally hurried away to set up the surprise.

"Now come and see, Patsy. It is a BIG surprise. We are going to have loads of fun!" She led her away from the table, leaving dishes for later.

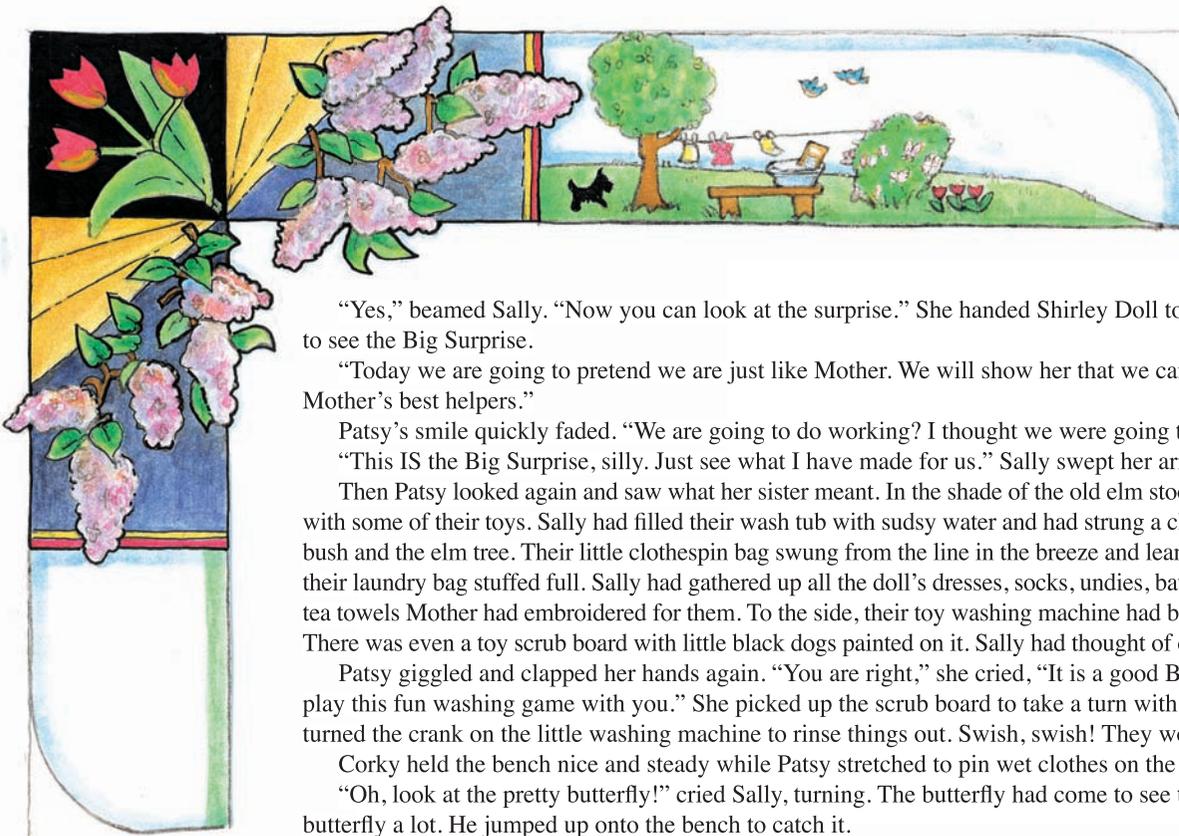
"Close your eyes and I will take you to it."

Patsy heard the screen door slam from behind. She could hear a neighbor's dog, and she could hear birds singing as they passed under the old elm tree. When Patsy smelled the lilacs by the garden she clapped her little hands.

"Oh Sally! Goodie, goodie! We are going to play outside!"



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“Yes,” beamed Sally. “Now you can look at the surprise.” She handed Shirley Doll to Patsy who opened her eyes to see the Big Surprise.

“Today we are going to pretend we are just like Mother. We will show her that we can do good work. We can be Mother’s best helpers.”

Patsy’s smile quickly faded. “We are going to do working? I thought we were going to play with a big surprise.”

“This IS the Big Surprise, silly. Just see what I have made for us.” Sally swept her arm toward the scene.

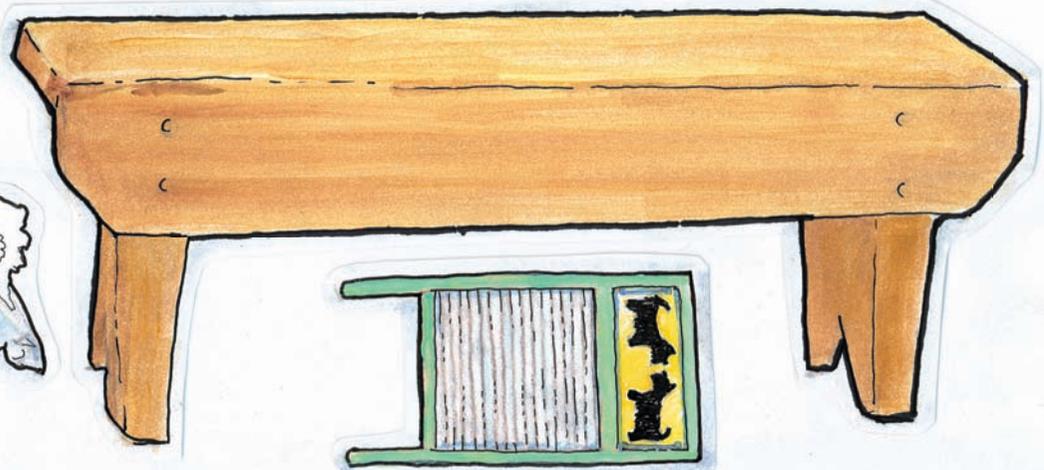
Then Patsy looked again and saw what her sister meant. In the shade of the old elm stood a long, low bench set up with some of their toys. Sally had filled their wash tub with sudsy water and had strung a clothesline between the lilac bush and the elm tree. Their little clothespin bag swung from the line in the breeze and leaning by the bench Patsy saw their laundry bag stuffed full. Sally had gathered up all the doll’s dresses, socks, undies, bath towels, and even the little tea towels Mother had embroidered for them. To the side, their toy washing machine had been filled with clear water. There was even a toy scrub board with little black dogs painted on it. Sally had thought of everything.

Patsy giggled and clapped her hands again. “You are right,” she cried, “It is a good BIG surprise! I do want to play this fun washing game with you.” She picked up the scrub board to take a turn with the sudsy tub while Sally turned the crank on the little washing machine to rinse things out. Swish, swish! They worked for a very long time.

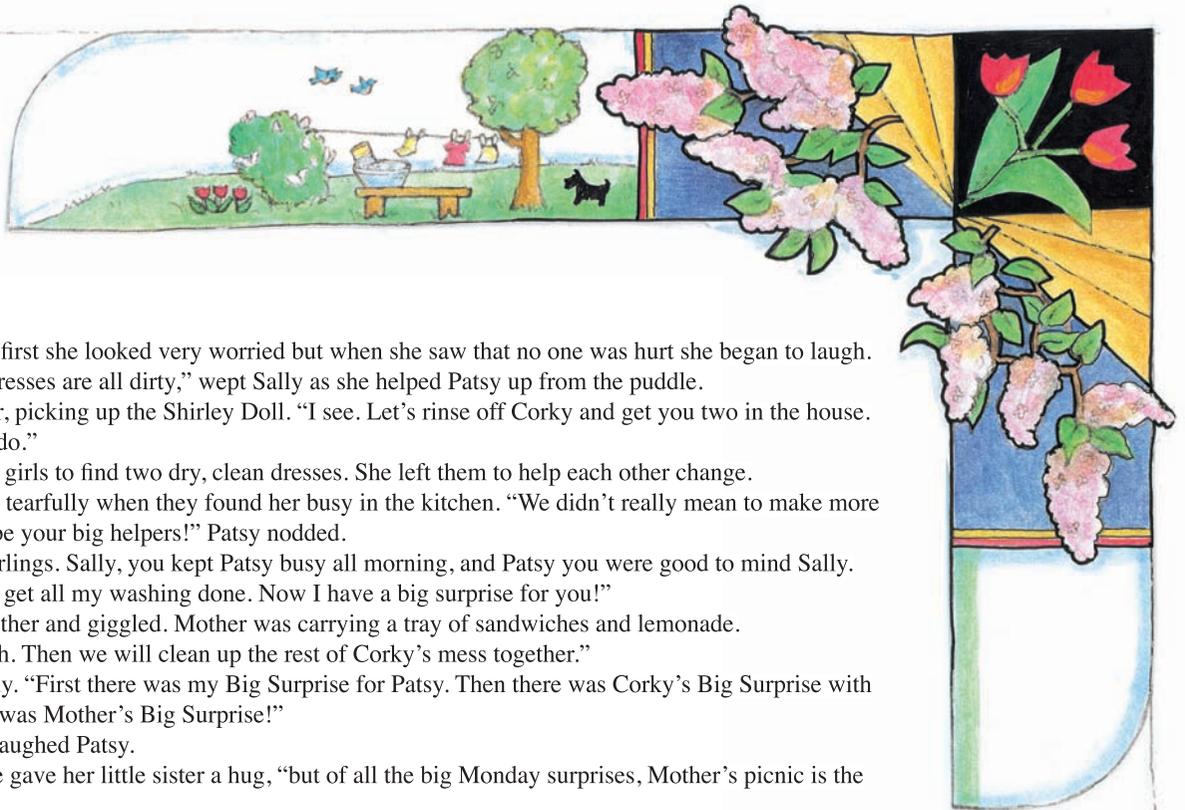
Corky held the bench nice and steady while Patsy stretched to pin wet clothes on the line above her.

“Oh, look at the pretty butterfly!” cried Sally, turning. The butterfly had come to see the bubbles. Corky liked the butterfly a lot. He jumped up onto the bench to catch it.

“No, NO, Corky!” exclaimed the two girls at once. Sally reached out to catch the tub and Patsy reached up to catch the line but it was too late. All three of them fell down in a muddy mess!



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“Help!” cried Sally.

“Mommy!” cried Patsy.

“Arf!” cried Corky.

Mother came running. At first she looked very worried but when she saw that no one was hurt she began to laugh.

“But Mother, our pretty dresses are all dirty,” wept Sally as she helped Patsy up from the puddle.

“Yes, yes,” sighed Mother, picking up the Shirley Doll. “I see. Let’s rinse off Corky and get you two in the house. Then we will decide what to do.”

Mother took her wet little girls to find two dry, clean dresses. She left them to help each other change.

“Oh, Mother,” cried Sally tearfully when they found her busy in the kitchen. “We didn’t really mean to make more work for you. We wanted to be your big helpers!” Patsy nodded.

“And so you were, my darlings. Sally, you kept Patsy busy all morning, and Patsy you were good to mind Sally. Because of this, I was able to get all my washing done. Now I have a big surprise for you!”

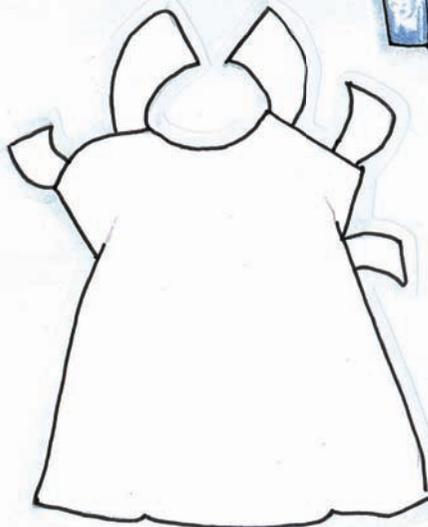
The girls looked at each other and giggled. Mother was carrying a tray of sandwiches and lemonade.

“Let’s go outside for lunch. Then we will clean up the rest of Corky’s mess together.”

“Hooray!” exclaimed Sally. “First there was my Big Surprise for Patsy. Then there was Corky’s Big Surprise with the washing. Then last, there was Mother’s Big Surprise!”

“Lots of Big Surprises!” laughed Patsy.

“Yes,” agreed Sally as she gave her little sister a hug, “but of all the big Monday surprises, Mother’s picnic is the biggest Big Surprise of all!”



Now let’s make Patsy and Sally more clean dresses! Using these pattern pieces as a guide, you may cut dresses from scraps of printed papers such as wrapping, scrapbook or wall papers.

A sampler of original 1930s feedsack fabrics can be printed off at www.ufdc.org.

Or maybe you would like to draw your own fabric designs on these pattern pieces?

Once your dresses are cut out, try adding collars and trims, using our finished paper doll and the sewn dresses for ideas. Fold along the tabs and your dresses are ready to be tried on. Sally and Patsy are likely to need LOTS of new dresses, especially if they keep playing with Corky!



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