



Nancy and Plum

Betty MacDonald

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"Nancy and Plum" is a children's book written by the world famous author Betty McDonald, who wrote four popular "Mrs. Piggie Wiggle" children's books, and also the adult books, "The Egg & I", "Anybody Can Do Anything" and "Onion in the Stew".

"Nancy and Plum" was first published in 1952. It is a story Betty told her daughters, Joan and Anne, each night at bedtime, making it up as she went along. It is a delightful old fashioned Christmas story about two sisters, Nancy, 10 and Plum, 8, whose parents died in an accident. Their surviving relative is Uncle John, a wealthy bachelor with little patience or time for children. He puts the girls in Mrs. Monday's Boarding School in Heavenly Valley, persuaded by Mrs. Monday's promises and unctuous manner.

But Mrs. Monday is an ogre who pampers her niece, Maribelle, and persecutes the other girls in her custody.

Of the two sisters, Plum is the spunky one, leading Nancy on forays for food and initiating their running away. Plum like that more famous orphan, Annie, is brave, innovative and energetic.

There are lovely characters who are sympathetic and help the girls: Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, who find the girls on their farm and rescue them; Miss Waverly, the school teacher; Miss Appleby, the librarian and Old Tom, the caretaker at the orphanage. For contrast there is Miss Gronk the Sunday school teacher, who shares the role of villainess with Mrs. Monday.

"Nancy and Plum" and "Mrs. Piggie Wiggle" were made into plays by the Seattle Children's Theater which were done exactly the way Betty would have wanted. They appealed to adults as well as children and are now being performed by other children's theaters throughout the United States.

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