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The Princess and the Goblin—Chapter 24: Irene Behaves Like a Princess

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For the Easter season, I am posting some rather different things on this channel, in addition to my regular output, as a little gift to my followers and supporters. This is the second book I am reading through: 'The Princess and the Goblin', by George MacDonald. I hope that you all enjoy!

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You can also listen to the audio of these episodes on iTunes:

<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/alastairs-adversaria/id1416351035?mt=2>.

Transcript

Chapter 24, Irene Behaves Like a Princess. When the princess awoke from the sweetest of sleeps, she found her nurse bending over her, the housekeeper looking over the nurse's shoulder, and the laundry maid looking over the housekeeper's. The room was full of women servants, and the gentlemen at arms, with a long column of servants behind them, were peeping, or trying to peep, in at the door of the nursery.

Are those horrid creatures gone? asked the princess, remembering first what had terrified her in the morning. You naughty, naughty little princess, cried Lutie. Her face was very pale, with red streaks in it, and she looked as if she were going to shake her, but Irene said nothing, only waited to hear what should come next.

How could you get out under the clothes like that, and make us all fancy you were lost, and keep it up all day too? You are the most obstinate child. It's anything but fun to us, I can tell you. It was the only way the nurse could account for her disappearance.

I didn't do that, Lutie, said Irene, very quietly. Don't tell stories, cried her nurse quite rudely. I shall tell you nothing at all, said Irene.

That's just as bad, said the nurse. Just as bad to say nothing at all as to tell stories? exclaimed the princess. I will ask my papa about that.

He won't say so, and I don't think he will like you to say so. Tell me directly what you mean by it, screamed the nurse, half wild with anger at the princess, and fright at the possible consequences to herself. When I tell you the truth, Lutie, said the princess, who somehow did not feel at all angry, you say to me, don't tell stories.

It seems I must tell stories before you will believe me. You are very rude, princess, said the nurse. You are so rude, Lutie, that I will not speak to you again till you are sorry.

Why should I, when I know you will not believe me, returned the princess. For she did know perfectly well that if she were to tell Lutie what she had been about, the more she went on to tell her, the less she would believe her. You are the most provoking child, cried her nurse.

You deserve to be well punished for your wicked behavior. Please, Mrs. Housekeeper, said the princess, will you take me to your room and keep me till my King Papa comes? I will ask him to come as soon as he can. Everyone stared at these words.

Up to this moment, they had all regarded her as little more than a baby. But the housekeeper was afraid of the nurse and sought to patch matters up, saying, I'm sure princess, nurse did not mean to be rude to you. I do not think my Papa would wish me to have a nurse who spoke to me as Lutie does.

If she thinks I tell lies, she had better either say so to my Papa or go away. So Walter, will you take charge of me? With the greatest of pleasure, princess, answered the captain of the gentlemen at arms, walking with his great stride into the room. The crowd of servants made eager way for him and he bowed low before the little princess' bed.

I shall send my servant at once on the fastest horse in the stable to tell your King Papa that your Royal Highness desires his presence. When you have chosen one of these underservants to wait upon you, I shall order the room to be cleared. Thank you very much, Sir Walter, said the princess and her eye glanced towards a rosy cheeked girl who had lately come to the house as a scullery mate.

But when Lutie saw the eyes of her dear princess going in search of another instead of her, she fell upon her knees by the bedside and burst into a great cry of distress. I think, Sir Walter, said the princess, I will keep Lutie, but I put myself under your care and you need not trouble my King Papa until I speak to you again. Will you all please go away? I am quite safe and well and I did not hide myself for the sake either of amusing myself or of troubling my people.

Lutie, will you please to dress me?