

DUNNO'S ADVENTURES

Nikolai Nosov



14



A WALK ABOUT TOWN



KANOL PUBLISHING HOUSE (PVT) LTD.



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Illustrated by **BORIS KALAUSHIN**

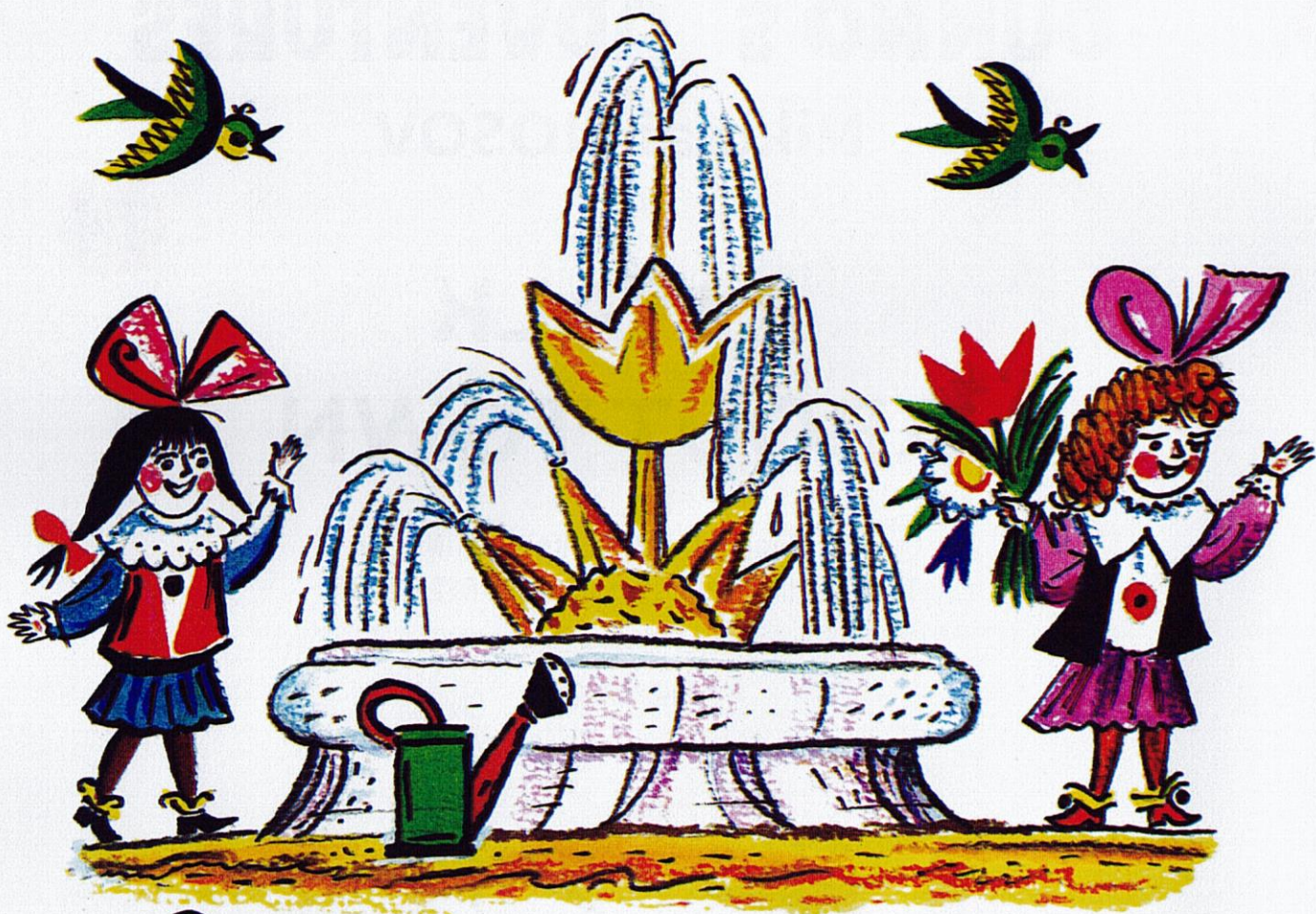
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First Print - 2026



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Snowdrop, Cornflower, and Dunno went out into a street that was lined by fences made of thin willow wands. Behind the fences could be seen pretty houses with red and green roofs. Above the houses towered enormous apple, pear, and plum trees. The trees grew out in the streets as well as in the gardens. There were so many trees and bushes that the town was called "Greenville".

Dunno glanced about him curiously. Everything was spotlessly clean. Girl-Mites could be seen at work in every garden. Some of them were cutting the grass, others were sweeping the pathways, and still others were beating the dust out of long runners made of carpet. These runners were laid not only on the floors of the

houses in Greenville, but on the pavements and streets as well. Some of the housewives were so afraid that passers-by would dirty their carpets that they stood at the fences and begged them not to walk on them, or if they did, to wipe their feet carefully first. Many of the front gardens had runners on the paths, and the outside of the houses were hung with bright rugs.

In Greenville the water-supply flowed through pipes made of reed. Reed, as everyone knows, is hollow, and so serves very well as pipes. They were not laid in the ground as you might think, but up above the ground, on wooden posts so that they would not rot. The Mites watched for leaks and tended them carefully, and so they lasted a long time. The main water-pipe had a branch leading into every house. Besides this, every house had a fountain in front of it. This was beneficial as well as beautiful, for the water that ran over the edge of the fountain was used to water the gardens. Every household had a kitchen garden with beets, carrots, turnips, radishes, and other vegetables growing in it.

Dunno saw some girls gathering vegetables in one of the gardens. First they dug the earth away from a turnip or a carrot, then they tied a rope to the top of it and pulled with all their might. When the turnip or carrot came out by the root, the girls dragged it home with much shouting and laughing.

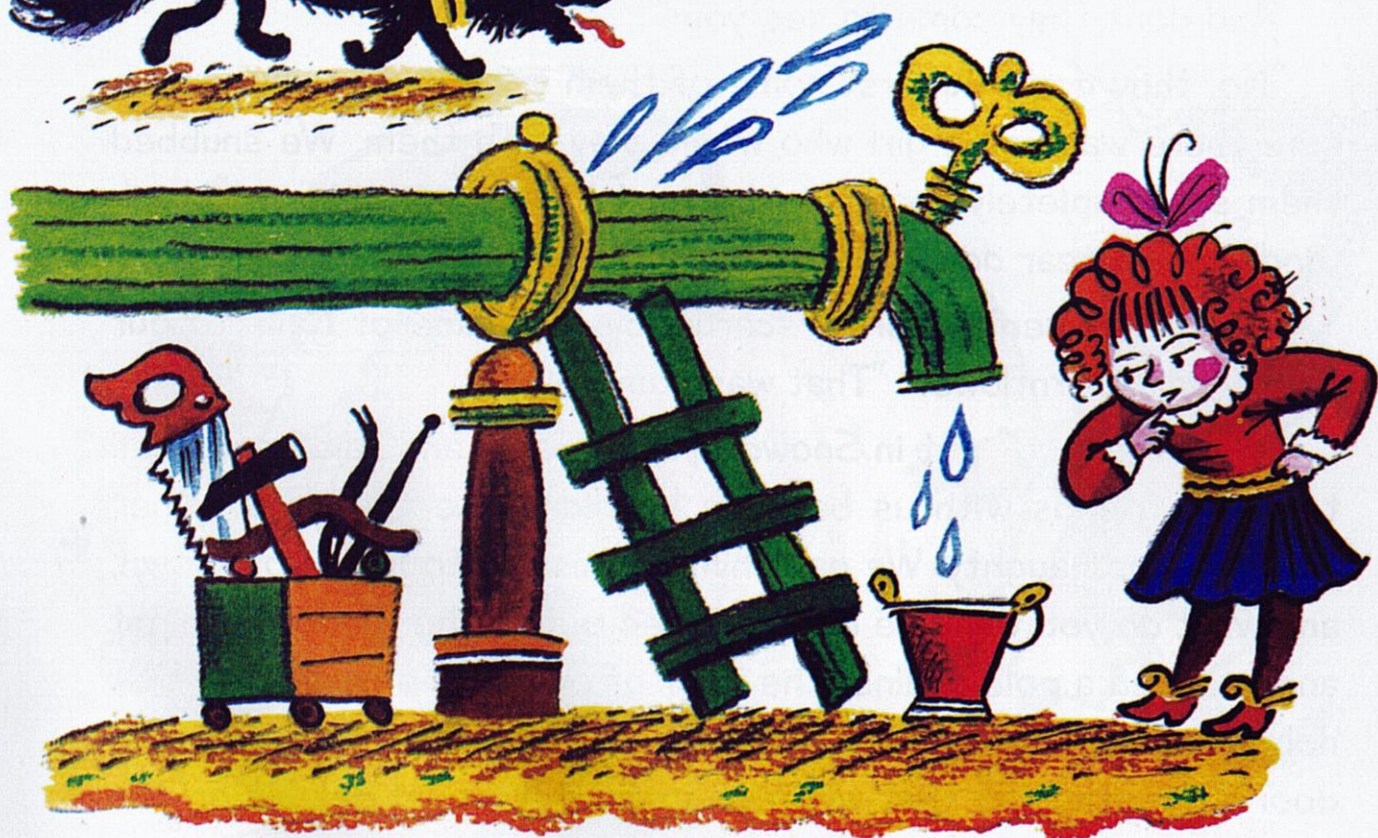
"How is it I see nothing but girls in your town? Aren't there any boys here?" asked Dunno.

"No, there aren't. All the boys have gone to live on the river-bank. They've built their own town called 'Kite Town'."

"Why have they done that?" asked Dunno.

"They like it better there. They spend the whole day lying in the sun and swimming in the summer, and skating on the ice in the winter. In spring they have lots of fun when the river rises and floods their town."

"What fun do they find in that?" asked the amazed Dunno.



"I don't know," said Snowdrop, "but our boy-Mites like it. They go about in boats saving each other. They're very fond of adventures."

"So am I," said Dunno. "Do you s'pose I could make the 'quaintance of your boy-Mites?"

"No, you couldn't," said Snowdrop. "First of all, it takes a whole hour to get to Kite Town; secondly, our boys will put bad ideas into your head; and thirdly, we aren't on speaking terms with them."

"Why is that?"

"There's a very good reason," said Cornflower. "Last winter they invited us to a New Year's party, saying there would be music and dancing, and when we got there, do you know what they did? Threw snowballs at us!"

"What of it?" said Dunno.

"What of it? We haven't spoken to them since. None of us ever goes to see them."

"And don't they come to see you?"

"No, they don't. At first some of them tried it, but you can be sure there was not a girl who would play with them. We snubbed them so completely that they began to make mischief — "break windows and tear down fences," said Snowdrop.

"Then they sent a harum-scarum by the name of Nails to our town," said Cornflower. "That was something!"

"Wasn't it just!" put in Snowdrop. "He came and said he wanted to make friends with us because he didn't like the boys either, they ere too naughty. We gave him permission to live in our town, and what do you think he did? Climbed out of the window at night and propped a pole against the door of one of the houses so that nobody could get out in the morning, hung a wooden block over the door of another so that whoever opened it would get hit on the head, tied a string across the doorstep of a third so that whoever

came out would stumble and fall down, took down the chimney of a fourth, broke the windows of a fifth...."

Dunno nearly burst with laughter as he listened to all this.

"You think it's funny," said Cornflower, "but you should have seen how many girls had bumps on their noses! One fell off the roof when she climbed up to repair her chimney and nearly broke her leg."

"I'm not laughing at the girls," said Dunno. "I'm laughing at that fellow Nails."

"You oughtn't to laugh at him, you ought to punish him, so that he'd never want to do such wicked things again," said Snowdrop.



At that moment they were walking past an apple-tree that grew in the middle of the street. All of its branches were loaded with ripe red apples. A wooden ladder had been placed against it, but it only reached halfway up the trunk. Rope ladders hung from the top branches. Two girls were up in the tree. One of them was sawing through the stem of an apple, the other was holding her so that she didn't fall off.





"Be careful," Cornflower warned Dunno. "An apple may drop on your head and kill you."

"Not me!" said Dunno boastfully. "I've got a thick skull!"

"The boys think they're terribly brave, but we're quite as brave as they are," said Snowdrop. "Just see how high those two girls have climbed."



"But girls don't go up in balloons and ride round in motor cars," said Dunno.

"Oh, don't they?" said Snowdrop, "Lots of our girls know how to drive."

"Why, do you have a car?"

"We do. But it's out of order now. We don't know how to repair it. Perhaps you'll help us?"

"Indeed I will," said Dunno. "I know a thing or two about cars. As soon as Bendum and Twistum get out of the hospital I'll have them repair it for you."

"Oh, thank you!" said Snowdrop, clapping Tier hands.

At this moment Dunno's eyes lighted on a marvel he had never seen before. In the middle of the street lay great green balls as big as a two-or even a three-storey house.

"Are they balloons, too?" he asked.

Snowdrop and Cornflower laughed.

"They're water-melons," they said. "Haven't you ever seen a water-melon before?"

"Never," admitted Dunno. "Water-melons don't grow where I come from. What are they for?"

"A boy that doesn't know what a water-melon's for!" laughed Snowdrop. "In a minute you'll be asking me what apples and pears are for."

"Do you mean to say you eat them?" asked the astonished Dunno. "It would take a year to eat anything that size."

"We don't eat them," said Cornflower. "We drain the juice out of them. It's like syrup. If you make a hole in the bottom of a water-melon, you can get several barrels of syrup from single melon."

"Who ever thought of planting them?" said Dunno.





"A very clever little girl named Thistle," said Cornflower. "She adores raising fruit and Vegetables and getting new sorts. We never used to have water-melons, but one day somebody said she had seen wild water-melons growing in the woods. That autumn Thistle headed an expedition which searched the woods until they found the wild watermelons. They brought back the seeds, and the next spring Thistle planted them. The melons from these seeds were very big, but the juice was sour. Thistle worked day and night, tasting all the melons until she found one whose juice was not so sour. The next year she planted the seeds of this melon. The new fruit had sweeter juice. Again Thistle selected the sweetest of all and planted seeds from this melon the next year. She kept on doing this year after year until she got water-melons as sweet as honey."

"Now everybody praises Thistle, but they used to scold her," said Snowdrop.

"What did they scold her for?" asked Dunno.

"Nobody believed any good would come of those melons. And besides, the whole town was full of them — you could hardly walk down the street for the water-melons. Often they grew next to houses. That didn't matter so long as they were small, but when they got big they threatened to push down the walls. One house really did cave in because of a water-melon. Some of our girls wanted to forbid the planting of water-melons but others stood up for Thistle and helped her in her work."

By this time they had come to the edge of the river.

"This is called Water-Melon River," said Snowdrop. "See how many melons are growing along the bank."



A narrow bridge that looked very much like a strip of carpet was thrown from one bank to the other. It was made of very thick and strong stuff.

"We built it," said Cornflower. "It took us a month to weave the stuff, then the boys helped to stretch it across the river."

"That was great fun!" said Snowdrop. "One of them fell in the water and was almost drowned, but somebody pulled him out."

Cornflower walked boldly up on the bridge and crossed to the other side. Dunno walked up just as boldly but he stopped when he felt it sway.

"Why have you stopped?" asked Snowdrop. "Are you afraid?"



"Of course not. I was just thinking what a funny bridge it is."

He stooped down and held on to the sides, laughing to show that he was not afraid.

Snowdrop took one of his hands, Cornflower the other, and together they led him over the bridge. Both of them could see he was afraid, but they didn't laugh at him because they knew that boy-Mites couldn't bear to be laughed at. On reaching the other side, they went down the street until they came to a white house with a green roof.

"This is our hospital," said Cornflower.









You can read about more adventures of
Dunno and his friends from Flower Town in
**AT THE HOSPITAL
and THE CONCERT**



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📍 83/16/A, Hokandara East, Hokandara

ISBN 978-624-5937-60-8



9 786245 937608