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Rays From the Rose Cross Magazine

Elf-child's Adventure by Dagmar Frahme

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Once, upon an ear of corn
An Elf-child sat, alone, forlorn.
His face was marked with salty streaks
And tears rolled down his grubby checks.
He sucked his thumb and rubbed his eye,
And cared not who might see him cry,
But none came by to view his plight
Or speculate on that sad sight.
The hour was late, the weather chill,
The full Moon loomed atop the hill.
The Elf-child's friends were all at home.
No Salamander, Sylph, or Gnome
Was near to cheer the weeping waif
Or lead him where 'twas warm and safe.
The Elf, if truth be told, was lost.

That morn, while he the meadow crossed
To take his place with a brigade
Of workers in the Fairy glade,
He stopped to greet a noble steed
Who, in his turn, had paused to feed.
He begged the stallion for a ride.
The horse responded, with some pride,
That he had duties far away
And could not waste his time in play.
He tossed his head and shook his mane
And galloped forth across the plain.
The child was left alone to brood.
He yearned to travel and include
Far distant shores within his ken,
And learn more of the haunts of men.
His Elfin friends had work to do
And, going, soon were lost from view.
The child sat still, and thought and
thought,
And soon determined that he ought
To set off then and there to view
The places that explorers do.
He packed no bag, he took no coat,
He did not have a thing to tote.
In carefree spirit he set out.
No word of what he was about
Did he address to kin or friend.

Of time to play there seemed no end.
The Sun was warm, the weather mild,
And soon that heedless Elfin child
Was far from home along a road
Where fields of flax were newly hoed
And string beans grew to giant size
And sunflowers sketched up to the skies.
The grazing cattle stopped and stared
Upon the minute Elf who dared
Invade the boundaries of a land
Belonging to a rival band.
But Elfin Child, all unaware,
Continued on without a care.
He wandered through thick clover beds
And under daisies' nodding heads,
And crossed a brook on stepping-stones
And knocked around some old pine cones,
And never gave it any mind
That home had been left far behind.
He balanced on a railroad track,
Explored a woodsman's empty shack,
Played hide-and-seek with a young fox
And chased a hare through farm phlox.
At last, when on a woodland walk,
He heard some words of human talk;
Although the sounds were harsh and
strange

It was not too hard to arrange
Them into meaning and good sense.
Two boys were going to climb a fence
And find a cow to milk it, that
They'd have some food for an old cat.
The cat was lost and cold and sick
And seemed to need milk, rich and thick.
And so the Elf ran back and found
A cow that he had seen around,
And led it over to a tree
Where both boys saw it instantly.
The cow was milked; the cat was fed
And placed into a grassy bed.
The children never saw the Elf,
And he was rather pleased with self;
He'd found the cow and done his share
To help a creature in despair,
And though he was but very small
He didn't feel a child at all.
He turned, and went along his way,
Thinking he might like to stay,
But knowing that this could not be
If he was going to get to see
All the sights that lay ahead.
And so he hurried on instead.
The Sun was high; he had a hunch
That it was almost time for lunch.

And then he came to be upset
That he had let himself forget
To bring along a bite to eat.
He also text his aching feet.
He passed a barn and climbed a ridge
Of stone, and then he crossed a bridge
On which hinge trucks and cars whizzed
by,
And smoking fumes got in his eye.
And then a motorbike's loud noise
Did hurt his ear and mar his poise.
And all at once the garden plots
Were replaced by factory lots,
Where chimneys belched forth smoke and
grime
To make the air far from sublime.
People hurried to and fro;
Everyone was on the go.
Brakes were screeched and horns were
blown;
Every noise the world has known
Seemed to concentrate itself
In the ears of that poor Elf.
He turned down that street and down this,
Hoping maybe he could miss
Some of the traffic and the sound
That everywhere seemed to abound.

But such good luck was not to be.
Quite as far as he could see
Stretched a chain of truck and car.
Tops of trees were seen afar,
But at his feet was only stone.
Grass and flowers were unknown.
The Elf, afraid, began to cry.
He was used to clear, blue sky
And woodland beauty everywhere.
Never did he have to share
A forest path with teeming throngs
Of folk, as does one who belongs
In a steel and concrete town.
Then, as if to fully crown
His woes, there was a fearful blast -
Just backfire — but the Elf was past
Caring that he once did yearn
To see the world. A swift return
To hearth and home was all that he
Could think of, and he longed to be
Safely with his Elfin group,
Working with the friendly troop
That daily went out on the land
To lend a ready, helping hand
To trees and flowers, shrubs and grass—
But such was not the case. Alas!
The Elf was in a concrete maze

Unknown to him through all his days.
It such, then, were the haunts of men,
He vowed he would not come again.
But there remained the thankless chore
Of finding his way home once more.
He had no notion whence he'd come
Or what main road he'd wandered from.
He had no clue at all of where
Home was, nor had he nerve to dare
To ask the frenzied passers-by
Who saw him not. The buildings high
Concealed the Sun, which hovered low
With a reddish, evening glow.
And so, although he did his best,
He could not tell the east from west.
He wandered, frantic, here and there,
Sobbing, and he gasped for air,
But no matter where he went
His only path was cold cement.
Then, at last, he made a turn
And, looking, thought he could discern
The bridge on which he'd lately come
When he'd still felt adventuresome.
The lights were glaring now from cars
And trucks, and blotted out the stars.
The Elf, though blinded, hurried on
Into the glare and, thereupon,

Sure enough, he found that he,
If he went on that way, would be
Headed in the right direction.
With a bit of circumspection
And the will to renewed mettle,
He might soon find he could settle
Safely in his bed at last.
Meantime, though, his day-long fast
Was a burden to his tummy.
How he yearned for something yummy
To silence all its hungry growls!
He crossed the bridge, and heard some
owls
Just waking in the woods near by.
He tried to get them to reply
To his sad calls, but they, intent
On their own breakfast, never sent
An answering "hoot." Therefore
The Elf-child, aching to the core,
Continued slowly all alone.
The darkness hid the way he'd known,
And though the stars seemed brighter now
The woods were black and strange,
somehow.
The Elf was used to daylight hours
When he could see the trees and flowers.
Now the friendly woods looked weird.

Elf-child, not knowing what he feared
Grew nonetheless more terrified
With every step. Again he cried,
But neither Spirit, sprite, nor beast
Seemed to care the very least
That one young Elf, too small to roam,
Had lost completely his way home.
For lost he was, and unaware
That he had turned a corner where
He should have kept on going straight.
Now, of course, it was too late.
He ran and, running ever faster,
As if escaping some disaster,
He staggered, stumbled, tripped, and fell
And tumbled down a hill, pell-mell.
He skinned his knee and bruised his head
And lay there wishing he were dead.
Long he lay there, small and still.
It seemed that he had lost the will
To forge ahead, or even move.
Quite sure his lot would not improve
He closed his eyes and didn't care
Who might find him sprawled out there.
An hour passed, and then the chill
Wind blew; he could no more lie still.
He shivered, and although he tried
To push into the ground and hide,

It grew so cold he had to go
So that he would not shiver so.
Reluctantly he rose, and then
Started on his way again.
His head ached, and a lump appeared,
And in the darkness all he'd feared
Before seemed twice as scary now.
He felt attacked by every bough.
Through the blackened woods he sped,
Filled with an ever-growing dread;
On and on he ran without
Knowing what he was about,
Until, at once, the forest ceased.
From the undergrowth released
The Elf-child saw that he was near
A field where tall corn grew. One ear
Seemed especially made for him
To sit on. So he grabbed the rim
Of a leaf and, with a groan,
Because he hurt in every bone,
He heaved himself up to the top.
And there did his adventure stop.
There the Elf-child sat and sobbed
While his head and skinned knee throbbed
There he sucked his thumb and cried
In attitude undignified.
Anyone who saw him thus

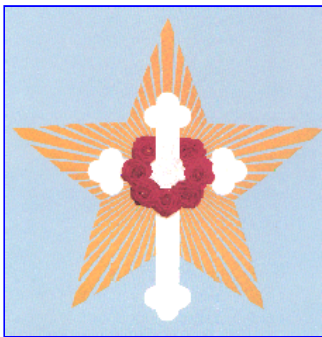
Would have been incredulous
To know that this pathetic knave
Had once been an explorer brave.

Just before the break of day
The Elf-king chanced to come that way.
He stared, astonished, at the sight
Of Elf-child, wretched and contrite,
Clinging to that ear of corn,
Without a hope of coming morn.
Then, compassion lit his face
And, folding in a warm embrace
The hapless child, he bade him smile;
All would be well in just a while.
The King bore Elf-child in his arms
Back to his village. There alarms
Had been spread round the countryside,
For, since the boy did not confide
His travel plans to anyone,
They knew not whither he had run.
The child was hailed with cries of joy;
The King had saved their precious boy.
And, bathed at last in warmth of home,
Elf-child munched a honey-comb,
And promised he would never stray
Again, unless he knew the way.

—*Rays from the Rose Cross Magazine, June, 1975, p. 284-287*

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