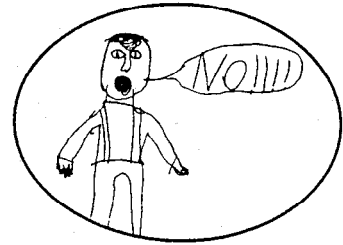


The No Monster,

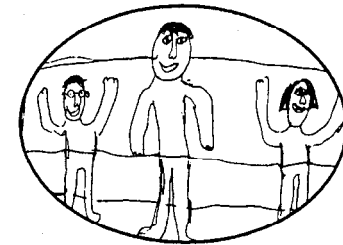


The Please Police



And

The Big Tickle.



Written by Stuart Baum

Illustrated by Molly Baum

**For
Molly
And
Hal**

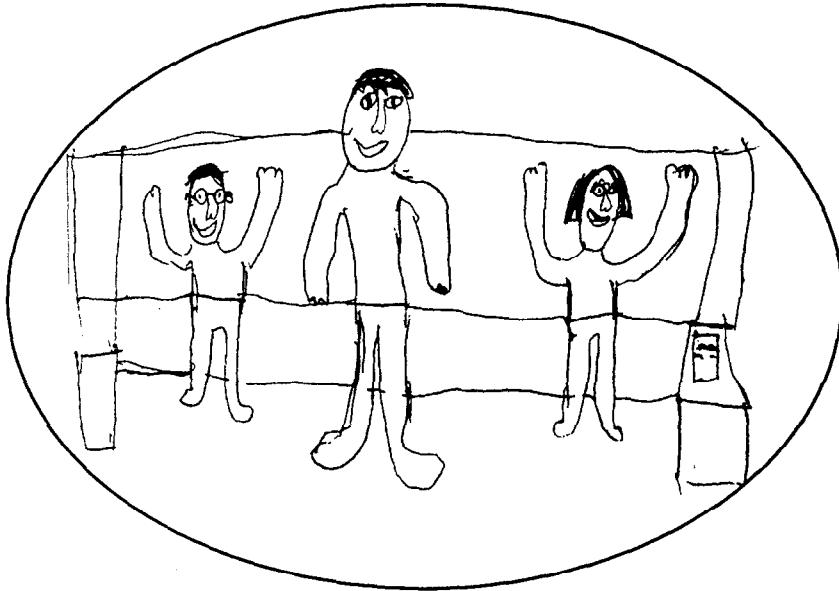
"I'm tired of that story," said Elizabeth pointing to the worn, red book that her Father was holding.

"Me, too," said Joey. "We heard that one gazillions of times."

"We want a new story," demanded Elizabeth.

"A story about a little boy," added Joey.

"Okay," said their Father. He put the worn, red book onto the arm of the sofa and said, "This is the story of The No Monster."



The No Monster.

Once upon a time, there was a little boy who always said, "No!" His mother asked him to go brush his teeth and he said, "No!" His father asked him to clean up his room and he said, "No!" His sister-

"That's me!" said Elizabeth.

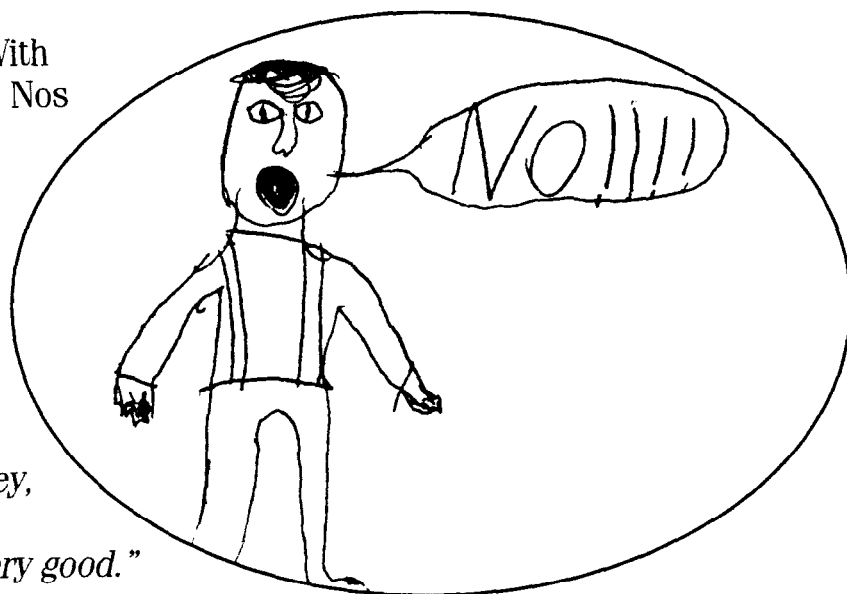
"Yes," said the Father, "that's you. Now back to the story."

His sister asked him to help her play Barbies and he said, "No!" The little boy even said "No!" to questions that weren't yes or no questions.

His friends at school asked him what he had in his lunch bag and he said, "No!" The teacher asked him what time it was and he said, "No!"

This little boy was the No Monster. No matter what you said or asked, he would respond, "No!"

He lived in No Man's Land. With Nobody. He knew Nothing. But he Nos Everything."



"Get it?" asked the Father.

Elizabeth nodded. "N-O, as in says 'No!' to everything and K-N-O-W as in 'understands' everything. Know and No are homonyms."

"Hommy-nims," repeated Joey, wanting to get back to the story.

"Right," said the Father. "Very good."

Millions of miles away, up in the tallest tree in the biggest forest lives the queen of the fairies. It is her job to rid the world of No Monsters. But she was busy that day, so she told the youngest, newest fairy to go to the little boy's house and make him stop saying "No!" to everything.

"But I don't know how!" said the smallest fairy.

The fairy queen said gently, "You're a smart little fairy. You will figure it out soon enough. Now go."

So the smallest fairy flew all the way to the No Monster's house and did her best to try to get the No Monster to say "yes."

"I am a fairy," said the fairy.

"No!" said the No Monster.

"I'll play a game with you, if you like," said the fairy sweetly.

"No!" said the No Monster.

"I'll sing a song for you or do dance for you," said the smallest fairy.

"No!" said the No Monster.

The fairy couldn't think of any way to get the No Monster to stop saying "No!" She almost gave up, but then she had an idea.

When the little boy was eating dinner, she started making a fairy cake. And if you have never eaten a slice of fairy cake, then you have never had the sweetest, airiest dessert in the world. It's pure white on top and chocolate inside. Unless you don't like chocolate, then it isn't. In fact, every bite tastes different and is always exactly what you want to taste next. But most importantly, the fairy cake looks as good as it tastes.



All through dinner, the little boy watched the fairy make the fairy cake. He watched her drop candy sparkles all over the top, wrap candy ribbons all around the edges, and sprinkle fairy sugar over everything. His mouth watered when he thought how wonderful the amazing fairy cake might taste.

Then, when the little boy was done with dinner and had put his plate into the dishwasher, the fairy asked him,

"Would you like a piece of my fairy cake?"

For a moment the boy said nothing and it looked like the No Monster would win, but then the boy smiled as sweetly as he had ever smiled before in his life and said in a very small voice, "Yes, please."

And that was the end of the No Monster.

The two children clapped.

"Did you like the story?" asked the Father.

"Yes," said Elizabeth quickly.

Joey wrinkled his nose, smiled a devilish smile, and yelled loudly, "No!"

They all laughed.

"Now tell us a story about a little girl," said Elizabeth.

"How do you ask for something?" chided the Father.

"Please!" said both the children quickly.

"Yes," said the Father. "And that is what this story is about. It's called The Please Police."

"Ha, ha!" chuckled Elizabeth and then looked at her brother. "Get it?" she asked. She explained slowly, "The pah-leeeee pah-leeeeece."

Joey nodded, wanting the story to start.

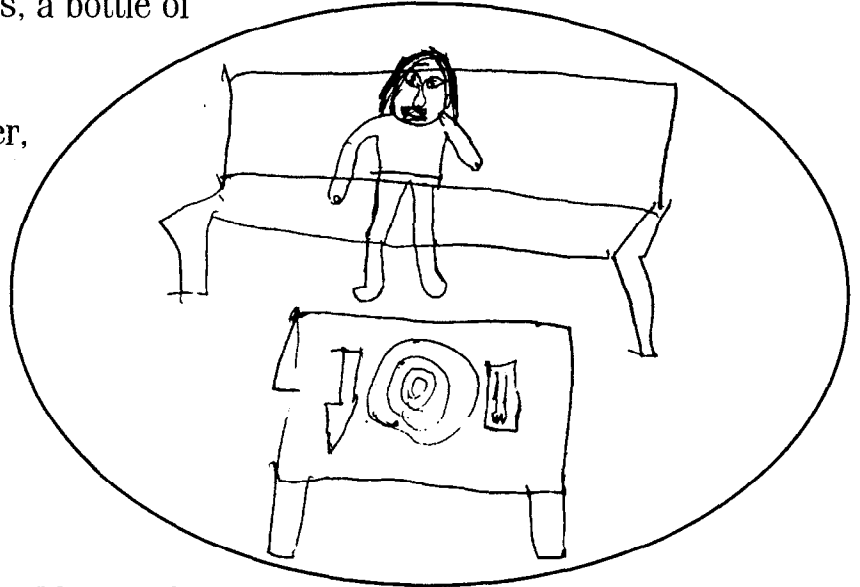
The Please Police.

It was a Saturday morning. The little girl woke up early to watch cartoons. After a little while, her Mother came into the television room and asked her if she wanted pancakes for breakfast. The little girl simply nodded.

Soon, her Mother came back in the room and put down a steaming plate of pancakes, a bottle of syrup, a fork and a napkin.

"Drink," said the little girl.

"In a second," said her Mother, as she left the room. Maybe the Mother was sleepy that Saturday morning. Maybe the little girl was caught up in the cartoon. But either way, the little girl had done something wrong and her Mother did not correct her.



"She didn't say 'Please,'" explained Joey.

"Uh oh!" said Elizabeth. "Now I know what's going to happen next!"

As soon as the Mother set down the glass of orange juice, the siren started. It was very soft at first. *Weee-yeee-yeeee.*

The little girl watched her cartoon carefully to see if the siren was coming from the television. It wasn't. The siren got a little louder. *Weee-Yeeee-Yeee.*

The little girl listened as the siren got closer and closer, louder and louder. *Weeee-yeeee! WEE-eeee-YEE-eeee!*

The little girl looked out the window to watch the police car or fire truck or ambulance go by. But even though the siren got closer and closer – *WEeEe-YEeEe! WEeEe-YEeEe!* – she didn't see anything coming up the street.

It sounded as though the siren were right on top of her and yet she still saw nothing in the street. *WEEEE-YEEEE! WEEEE-YEEEE!*

She heard a squeal of tires and when she turned around she saw a tiny blue and white car, about the size of a small toy box, pull up right behind her.

A man, dressed in what looked like a police outfit, stepped out of the car. He was the size of a Barbie or a GI Joe.

"Please put your hands where I can see them!" he said in a squeaky voice.

The little girl looked at her hands, then, confused, showed her hands to the little man. Finally, she asked, "Who are you?"

"I'm a Please Officer. Part of the Please Patrol. Whenever a child forgets to say 'please,' it's our job to see that they are punished."

"Punished?" asked the little girl.

"I'm afraid so," said the Please Officer. "Please drop and give me ten."

"Ten *push-ups*?" asked the girl.

"No. Ten *pleases*."

The little girl shrugged, sat on the carpet and, counting each one out on here fingers, said, "Please, please, please, please, please. Please, please, please, please, please."

"Now," said the Please Officer, "please tell me what you say when you want something?"

"Please," said the little girl.

"That's precisely right," said the Please Officer.

"But why?" asked the little girl.

"Why what?" asked the Please Officer.

"Why do I have to say 'Please' for something like orange juice. I don't even really like orange juice."

The Please Officer didn't even blink before answering. "It's not for you. It's for the person who gets you something. Because it was nice of your Mother to get you the orange juice. And if you want her to get you more things in the future, you should be as polite as possible."

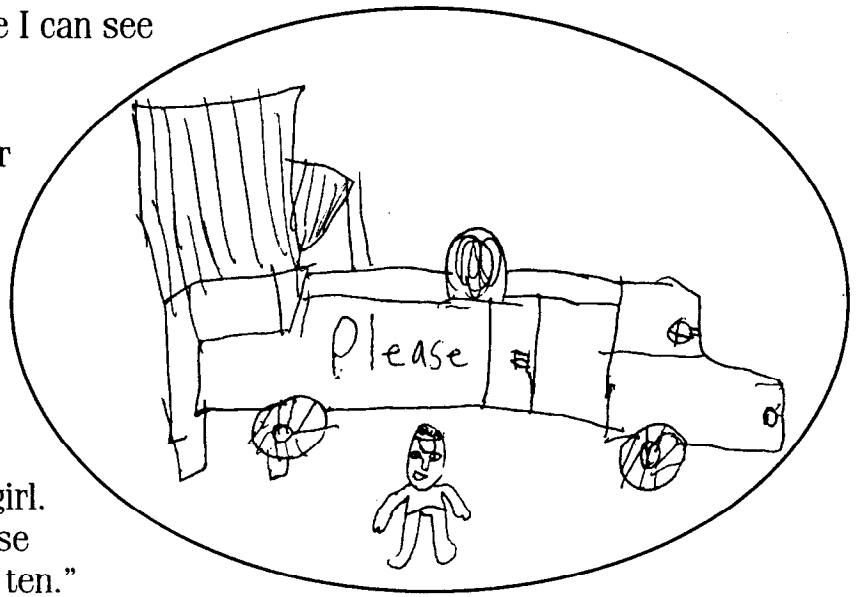
The little girl hung her head. "I'm sorry," she said softly.

"Don't tell *me*," said the Please Officer. "I'm just doing my job." With that, the Please Officer jumped back into the tiny Please Car and sped away.

The little girl finished her pancakes and orange juice and took her plate and glass into the kitchen where her Mother was reading the paper.

"Mom," said the little girl.

"Yes dear?"



"Thanks for the pancakes and the orange juice. Can I *pleeeeeeeeeaaaaaasssse* have some more?"

And to this day, the Please Police have never had to visit that little girl's house again.

"Yay!" yelled the two children together.

—

"Can we have another story?" asked Joey. And then he quickly added, "Please?"

"Sure," said the Father.

"About a little girl and a little boy this time, please?" asked Elizabeth.

"Sure," said their Father again. "This one is called the Big Tickle."

The Big Tickle.

Once upon the time there was a little boy and a little girl. They were sitting on the couch listening to their Father read bedtime stories, when—

"Oh, Nooo!" screamed Elizabeth as she jumped up off the couch. "I know how this story ends!" Elizabeth ran to her bed, jumped in and hid under the covers.

The Father looked over to Joey, who suddenly understood why his sister ran away and he, too, jumped off the couch, and ran out of the room yelling, "No tickling! No tickling!" Joey got into his bed and hid under his covers.

The Father smiled to himself, yawned softly, stretched, and slowly got up off the couch. Then he kissed both of his children good night and wished them, "Sweet dreams."

The End.

