

# Letters from the Beasts to Dina

*While she was ill with Scarlatina*

*FROM AUNTIE (An Introduction)*

**S**O, my poor dear darling Dina,  
You're in bed with scarlatina!  
Red all over I suppose,  
From your forehead to your toes.



Are you very tired of bed?  
Have you got an aching head?  
Still, things might be worse by far  
Than I think they really are.

For you might have twisted toes,  
And a blister on your nose;  
Or your teeth might always ache  
And your head go shaky-shake.

Don't you think you would feel better  
If every beast should write a letter—  
Scamp, Diogenes and Jan,  
And both Canaries, if they can?



If all your friends in fur and feather  
Join to comfort you together,  
I feel assured, my little Dina,  
You'll soon be rid of scarlatina!

*FROM SCAMP (The Dog)*

DINA, why don't you come and play?  
Or take me for a run?  
I'm waiting for you every day  
And longing for some fun;  
The hours drag by so dull and same  
When no one's ready for a game.

## THE DREAM GARDEN

I've left my playthings strewn about—  
 Two bits of well-gnawed leather,  
 A shell of cocoanut cleared out—  
 (Let's have a game together!)  
 I'll bring you, too, a fine clean bone,  
 But I don't care to play alone.

I saw my mistress ride away,  
 While I was left behind.  
 I may not go to town to-day—  
 The world seems all unkind.  
 The garden's dull, the skies are grey,  
 There's no one here who cares to play.

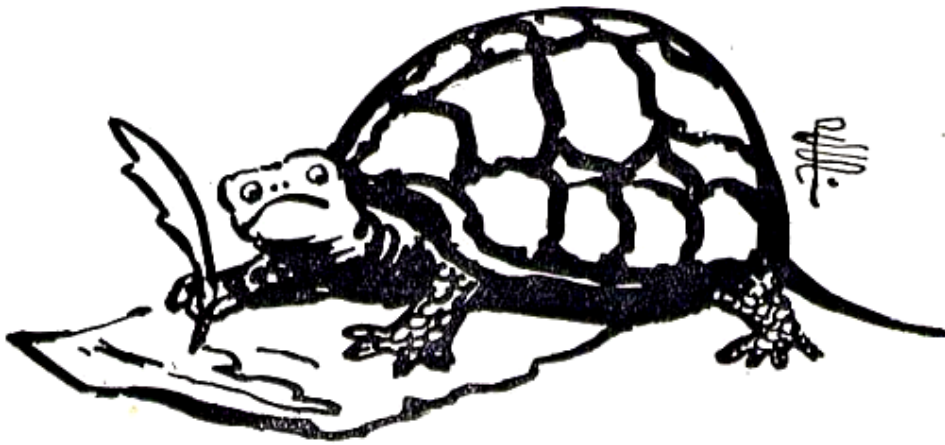
So here I lie on Grannie's bed,  
 And doze and dream and snore;  
 I'd like to run about instead,  
 And hedge and field explore.  
 Especially, my dear, if you  
 Would join me as you used to do.

*FROM DIOGENES (The Tortoise)*

THE rain at last has ceased to fall,  
 The sun is strong and bright;  
 It's warm beneath the garden wall,  
 And warmth is my delight.  
 It's pleasant now to crawl around  
 And see what dainties may be found.

The clover leaves among the grass  
 Are juicy now, and sweet,  
 From leaf to leaf I slowly pass,  
 Enjoying what I eat.  
 Don't copy me, 'twould be a pity;  
 My way of eating is not pretty,

Observe, I beg, my scaly feet,  
My body tipped from side to side;  
The pattern of my clothes is neat,  
And I am snug inside;  
Legs, tail and head, and skinny throat,  
Inside my stony petticoat.



My mouth is rather like a beak,  
I know I shut it very tight;  
I never open it to speak,  
Only, in fact, to bite.  
I'm quite unlike some folks, I know,  
Whose tongues are always on the go.

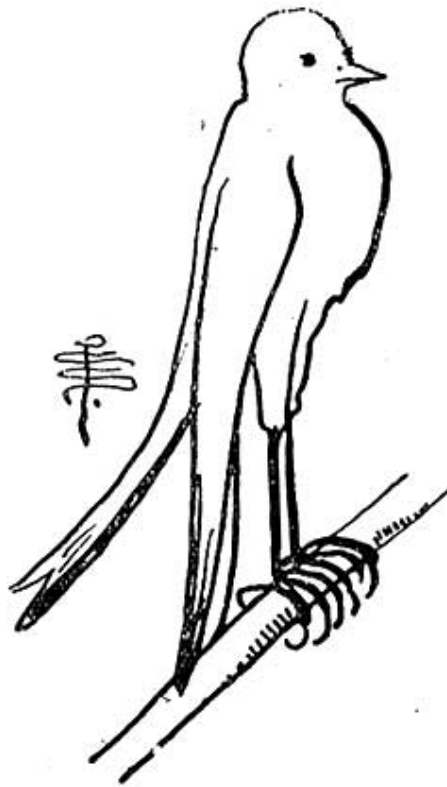
I fear you think my letter slow,  
It's taken me an age to write;  
I was not meant for speed, although  
I've done my best to-night.  
Send me a message, Dina, please,  
And now good-bye. DIOGENES.

## THE DREAM GARDEN

*FROM BUBBLES (One Canary)*

My name it is Bubbles  
And I have no troubles;  
Quite different from Dina  
Who has scarlatina.  
My coat is bright yellow,  
I'm a gay little fellow.  
From morning to night  
I sing with delight;  
Be the skies blue or grey  
I am happy all day.  
While you are still sleeping  
My bright eyes are peeping;  
I chirp and I chatter  
And my water I spatter.  
When my mistress awakes  
Off my curtain she takes,  
Then I see the bright sun  
And my new day 's begun.  
Or if it be raining,  
Instead of complaining  
I keep time with the drops  
In my gay little hops.  
And just now and then  
(I hope soon again !)  
I am let out to fly,  
Then happy am I !  
I perch on a chair  
And sing while I'm there ;  
I hop on the table,  
And just where I'm able.  
Then I take a long flight  
And lastly alight

On the broad window ledge ;  
Or cling to the edge  
Of the looking-glass bright  
And chirp at the sight



Of another wee fellow  
Just as gay and as yellow.  
Then as soon as I need  
Some water or seed,  
I hop through my door  
And am shut in once more.  
Now, Dina, I'm sure

## THE DREAM GARDEN

That I wish I could cure  
 All the pains you endure;  
 For I feel for your troubles,  
 And here's love from Bubbles.

*FROM JAN (The Cat)*

I CANNOT write a letter!  
 Any mouse could do it better,  
 I'd rather far lie dozing at my ease.  
 But my mistress she has caught me,  
 And upstairs sternly brought me,  
 And means to make me write it by degrees.

I feel much inclined for sulking,  
 For I'm eager to be skulking  
 Among the currant bushes, black or red;  
 So my tail I am a-shaking  
 And big blots I'll soon be making,  
 And I've only one idea in my head.

For I'm plotting and contriving,  
 And with all my might I'm striving  
 How to win outside, before it's time for bed;  
 Though if my mistress knew it  
 I should very quickly rue it,  
 For she'd lock me up, as many times she's said.

The daylight's so annoying!  
 All my chances it's destroying,  
 For the dicky-birds can see me move a hair.  
 But when it's dark and quiet,  
 And Scamp has ceased his riot,  
 I know I could surprise them anywhere.

One evening I was clever!  
I sha'n't forget it ever.  
For I slipped outside when no one was about.  
Though I heard them calling, calling,  
And the noise was most appalling,  
I lay low until they went, and left me out!



Then you should have seen me prancing  
And among the bushes dancing,  
And for half-an-hour at least I chased my tail;  
How I sang and swung and snortled,  
And at my gay doings chortled,  
Till I saw the moon and stars were growing pale.

Then homeward I went creeping,  
And quite inclined for sleeping,  
I let your Auntie take me up to bed,  
And I was, oh! so purry,  
And my coat so soft and furry,  
That nothing very bad to me she said!



## THE DREAM GARDEN

*PATSY-DICK (Another Canary)*

I'm sorry it should so fall out that I'm the last to write,  
But you know the least disturbance always drives me wild  
with fright.

You often see me flutter if you pass me in a hurry,  
And I'm sometimes blamed for temper, when it's really  
only flurry.

Then listen, Dina, while I tell a truly dreadful tale,  
Tho' even while I think of it, I feel my courage fail;  
Again, I feel the surging blood go throbbing thro' my head;  
Again, I feel my limbs grow numb, and I am nearly dead.

It happened but the other night, as I remember well,  
While I was stirring sleepily, I caught my foot and fell,  
And there I hung quite up-side down, one curly claw was  
caught.

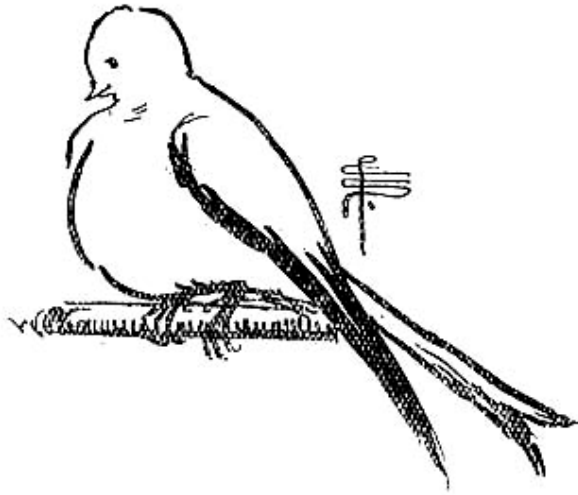
(I never had my toe-nails cut, because I kicked and fought!)  
My wings were dragging in the sand, my head just cleared  
the ground,

Now do imagine how I longed that I might soon be found.  
I flapped my wings, I tried to fly, I tried to loose my claws;  
But soon I felt so faint and sick I was obliged to pause.  
I cried to Bubbles loud and shrill, and Bubbles cried to me.  
Would no one come to help me, would no one set me free?  
Alas! there was no ear to hear, there was no eye to see.  
Just as my eyes were growing dim, I heard a welcome  
tread—

Your Auntie lifted down the cage to bear me up to bed.  
Then "Oh!" she cried, "poor Patsy-Dick is hanging by his  
leg!

I fear he must be nearly gone. Oh! help me now, I beg."  
And then I felt her fingers near, and I was in her hand.  
My claw was loose, and down I dropt, I was too weak to  
stand.

My poor leg stuck out straight and stiff, I crouched upon  
the floor,  
Resolving in my little heart that never, never more  
My claws should grow so long and curled as they had been  
before.  
But I would screw my courage up, and sit exceeding still  
To have them cut the proper length, and so indeed I will.



Take warning by me, Dina, dear, and when on Saturday  
Your Mother tries to cut your nails, don't jump about and  
play,  
Lest some fine day your nails should catch, and you at last  
be found,  
Your toes among the curtain rings, your nose just off the  
ground.

## THE DREAM GARDEN

*FROM ALL BEASTS**Scamp:*

I've saved my very biggest bone,  
It's safely buried underground,  
It is for you, for you alone,  
I'll show you where it may be found.

*Chorus of all Beasts:*

Hip! hip! hurray! Three cheers for little Dina!  
Who's quite recovered now, from scarlatina.

*Jan:*

I hope to catch a fine, fat mouse,  
Or else, perhaps, a dicky-bird;  
I'll bring it to you in the house  
Or any other place preferred.

*Chorus:*

Hip! hip! hurray! Here's thirty cheers for Dina!  
Who's quite recovered now, from scarlatina.

*Diogenes:*

I've picked a bunch of clover sweet  
And one big yellow dandelion;  
I think you'll find them good to eat,  
You know my taste you may rely on.

*Chorus:*

Hip! hip! hurray! Three hundred cheers for Dina!  
Who's quite recovered now, from scarlatina.

*Bubbles:*

I'll give my very nicest seed  
And drinking water cool and clear,  
The song I'll sing you while you feed  
Will warm your heart, my little dear.

*Chorus:*

Hip! hip! hurray! Three thousand cheers for Dina!  
Who's quite recovered now, from scarlatina.

*Patsy-Dick:*

I mean to save my longest feather,  
Fit to adorn your Sunday hat;  
Bubbles and I will sing together—  
I think you will be pleased by that.

*Chorus:*

Hip! hip! hurray! Three million cheers for Dina!  
Who's quite recovered now, from scarlatina.

*All Beasts:*

We'll bark and purr and hiss and sing  
To welcome back our little Dina,  
And when you see the gifts we bring  
Then say "good-bye" to scarlatina!

*Chorus:*

Hip! hip! hurray! Cheers upon cheers for Dina.  
She's turned her back at last on scarlatina.

EDITH M. THEOBALD