

Drawings by N. Karzakova P.L. TRAVERS MARY POPPINS PART I



EAST WIND



In the middle of Cherry-Tree Lane the houses run down one side and the Park runs down the other and the cherry-trees go dancing right down the middle.



Number Seventeen is the smallest house in the Lane, the only one that needs a coat of paint.



Mr. and Mrs. Banks who own it decided that they would rather have four children than a comfortable house. But not both for they couldn't afford it.



One day Mr. Banks must be off. He popped his head out of the window to know which way the wind was blowing.

-Ha! This is East Wind. I shall wear two overcoats because there is frost in my bones.



He went off, and Mrs. Banks all day long was writing letters to the papers and begging them to send some nurses to her children.



And upstairs in the nursery, Jane and Michael watched at the window and wondered who would come. Twins John and Barbara slept in their cots.



The sound of the East Wind blew through the naked branches of the cherry- trees. When the afternoon began to die away a woman appeared against the window.



The children saw a curious thing. The wind flung the woman and threw her and her baggage at the front door.



The newcomer was thin, with large feet and hands, shiny black hair and rather peering blue eyes. -This is your new nurse, Mary Poppins,-said Mother.



-How did you come ?- Jane asked .- It looked just as if the wind blew you here.

-It did,-said Mary Poppins and opened her bag.



-What a funny bag! But there is nothing in it.

-Nothing in it, did you say?

And Mary Poppins began to take out from the empty bag many different things.



Then she took out a large bottle labelled 'One Tea-Spoon to be Taken at Bed-Time'.

-Is that your medicine ?- asked Michael.

-No, yours.



-I don't want it. I won't!

But suddenly Michael discovered that he could not look at Mary Poppins and disobey her.



The boy shut his eyes and gulped. A happy smile ran round his face.

-Strawberry ice !- he said happily.



-Lime-juice,-Jane said dreamingly.



Then Mary Poppins took another dose herself.

-Rum punch,-she said corking the bottle.



-Now go to bed,-said she.

In less than a minute they found themselves in beds.



-Mary Poppins, you'll never leave us, will you?

-I'll stay till the wind changes,-she said and blew out her candle.



And that is how Mary Poppins came to live at Number Seventeen, Cherry-Tree Lane. And everybody was glad of her arrival.



Miss Lark lived Next Door. All day long she called in a very loud voice:

-Andrew, where are you? Andrew, come to Mother!



Andrew was not a boy, he was a dog. His ordinary days were filled with the kind of things most people have only on birthdays.



But he wanted to be a common dog that made him choose common dogs for his friends. But he was never allowed outside the gate alone.



Imagine the surprise of Jane and Michael when they saw Andrew, all alone, in the Park.



He barked sharply to Mary Poppins and she told him something. Andrew ran away.



Children's eyes were round as saucers with surprise. Mary Poppins could talk to the animals!



Near their house loud cries came from Next Door. Miss Lark and two maids were rushing about her yard and calling 'Andrew! Andrew!'



Suddenly Michael exclaimed:

-Miss Lark, look!

Andrew was walking slowly. And beside him waltzed a huge dog.



They marched proudly up to the house.

-That dreadful dog !- said Miss Lark .- Go home! And you Andrew, come Indoors this minute!

Andrew barked lazily but did not move.



-He says,-put in Mary Poppins,-that he will not come in unless his friend comes too and lives with him. That's his last word.



Andrew barked and turned away. The other dog followed him.

-Oh, he does mean it !- cried Miss Lark .- Well, Andrew, this-this common dog can stay.



Two happy dogs waltzed side by side slowly up the garden path waving their tails like banners.



Edited by A.STAKHOVSKAYA The end