

THE WISE GRAY CAT

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649248636

The Wise Gray Cat by Caroline Hofman

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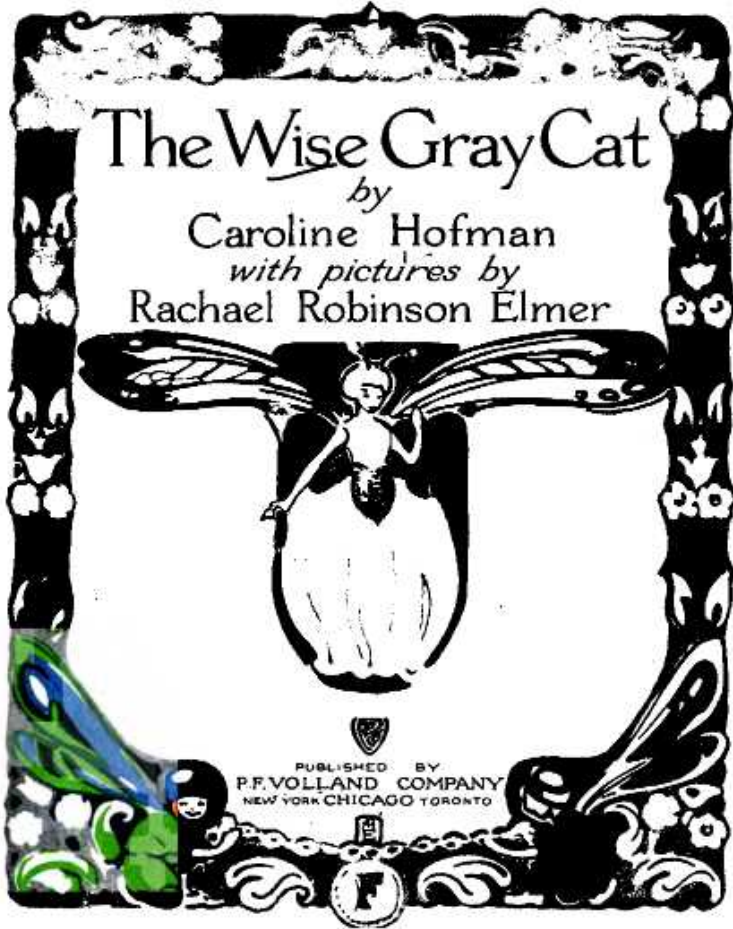
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CAROLINE HOFMAN

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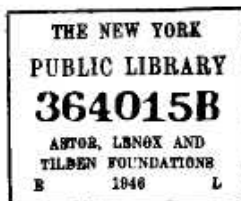
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*To
my little pupils of
Miss Mills' School*



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THE WISE GRAY CAT

ONCE there was a Wise Gray Cat who lived in a cottage near the forest. She often sat in her doorway on pleasant days, smoothing her shining coat with her tongue and watching the passersby. One summer afternoon, while she was sitting there, in the warm sunshine, she heard a small, strange sound. It was like nothing that she had ever heard in all her lives, for she had already

lived seven of her nine lives, and having very sharp ears had heard a great deal.

“Tick-tick, tick-tick!” came the little noise again. Wise Gray Cat heard it quite plainly, but though she cocked her head on one side and listened carefully, she had no idea what it could be. So she called her friend Happy-go-hop, the frog.

Happy-go-hop came springing along with his flute tucked under his arm, for he had been practicing a new tune, down by the silvery pond.





“Listen! Happy-go-hop,” said Gray Cat, “what do you hear?”

“Tick-tick, tick-tick!” the little noise kept saying, down in the grass.

“It must be the grass growing,” said Happy-go-hop, shutting one eye and listening.

“I never heard the grass growing,” said the Wise Gray Cat, “but I cannot think it sounds like that.”

“I will ring the chimes, and call the Little People,” suggested Happy-go-hop, “they can tell us.”

So he went down to the edge of the pond, where the blue bells grew, and he shook one of the stems till all the tiny bells rang the merriest chime you ever heard. The next minute the air was filled with wee, shimmering things, pale green and thin, so that you could see right through them, and a minute after a crowd of Little People had gathered around Wise Gray Cat and Happy-go-hop.

“Little People,” said Wise Gray Cat, “we should like to know, if you please, how the grass sounds when it is growing?”

“Does it sound like that?” asked the Frog. All the Little People took off their caps so they could hear the “Tick-Tick” sound better.

“Not at all,” said one of the Little People.



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