

**DAVID BLAZE AND  
THE BLUE DOOR**

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David Blaze and the blue door by E. F. Benson

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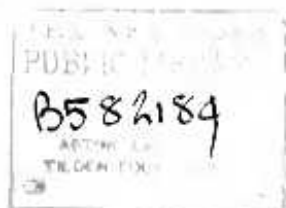
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WHY WAR  
OLDFATHER  
VLAARHLL

*Printed in the United States of America*

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# DAVID BLAIZE AND THE BLUE DOOR

## CHAPTER I

EVER since he was four years old, and had begun to think seriously, as a boy should, David Blaize had been aware that there was a real world lying somewhere just below the ordinary old thing in which his father and mother and nurse and the rest of the fast-asleep grown-up people lived. Boys began to get drowsy, he knew, about the time that they were ten, though they might still have occasional waking moments, and soon after that they went sound asleep, and lost all chance of ever seeing the real world. If you asked grown-ups some tremendously important questions, such as "Why do the leaves fall off the trees when there is glass on the lake?" as



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likely as not they would begin talking in their sleep about frost and sap, just as if that had got anything to do with the real reason. Or they might point out that it wasn't real glass on the lake, but ice, and, if they were more than usually sound asleep, take a piece of the lake-glass and let you hold it in your fingers till it became water. That was to show you that what you had called glass was really frozen water, another word for which was ice. They thought that it was very wonderful of them to explain it all so nicely, and tell you at great length that real glass did not become water if you held it in your fingers, which you must remember to wash before dinner. Perhaps they would take you to the nursery window when you came in from your walk, and encourage you to put your finger on the pane in order to see that glass did not become water. This sort of thing would make David impatient, and he asked, "Then why don't you put ice in the window, and then you could boil it for tea in the kettle?" And if his nurse wanted to go to sleep again, she would say, "Now you're talking nonsense, Master David."

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Now that was the ridiculous thing! Of course he was talking nonsense just to humour Nannie. He was helping her with her nonsense about the difference between ice and glass. He had been wanting to talk sense all the time, and learn something about the real world, in which the fish put a glass roof on their house for the winter as soon as they had collected enough red fire-leaves to keep them warm until the hot weather came round again. That might not be the precise way in which it happened, but it was something of that sort. Instead of pinching herself awake, poor sleepy Nannie went babbling on about ice and glass and sap and spring, in a way that was truly tedious and quite beside the real point.

Yet when the sleepy things tried to awake to the real world, they could not get their grown-up dreams out of their heads. Sometimes his mother would come up to the nursery before he went to bed, and take him on her knee, which was a soft, comfortable place, and tell him a story, which often began quite well and seriously. David always asked that the electric light should be put out first, because then the flame-cats would come

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out of their holes, and play puss-in-the-corner all over the nursery. They always helped the story to seem true and serious, for they were real, only the electric light must be put out first, because it gave them shocks, and naturally you could not play when you were being shocked. He knew that to be true even in the sleepy grown-up world, because once when his mother was playing with him, he had put out his tongue at Nannie when she came to say it was bed-time, and his mother couldn't play any more, because she was shocked. That was why the flame-cats must have the electric light put out.

Well, there were the flame-cats dancing (sometimes they had a ball instead of puss-in-the-corner), and here was he very comfortable and wide-awake, and sometimes, as I have said, the story began quite well, with an air of truth and reality about it. There was a little green man with whiskers who lived in the pear-tree, and washed his hands with Pears' soap. Or there was a red-faced old woman who lived in the apple-tree, and kept a sharp look-out for dumplings coming round the corner, for these were her