

Chapter 2

## The children wish to be rich

The next morning Martha took Baby out with her and the children decided to go back to the gravel-pit to look for the Psammead again. At first they could not find it. 'Perhaps it wasn't really here,' Robert said. But they began to dig into the sand with their hands and suddenly they came to the brown furry body of the Psammead. It sat up and shook the sand out of its fur.

'How are you today?' Anthea asked.

'Well, I didn't sleep very well, but thank you for asking,' the Psammead answered.

'Can you give wishes today?' Robert said. 'Because we'd like to have two, if we can. But one is a very little wish.'

'Well, all right,' said the Psammead, looking at Robert with its long eyes. 'Let's have the little wish first.'

'Martha mustn't know about the wishes,' Robert said. 'I mean, she mustn't see anything different about us. And can you do that for every wish on every day?'

The Psammead went a little bigger and then went small again. 'I've done that,' it said. 'It was easy. What's the next wish?'

'We wish,' said Robert slowly, 'to be very rich.'

'How much money do you want?' asked the Psammead. 'It won't do you much good, of course,' it said quietly to itself. 'Well, how much – and do you want it in gold or notes?'

'Gold, please,' Robert said. 'Millions!'

'A full gravel-pit, all right?' said the Psammead, sounding bored. 'But get out before I begin, or you'll die underneath it.'

Its thin arms got very long and it began to move them about. The children were afraid, and ran as fast as they could up to the road. When they were there, they turned to look back. They had to close their eyes and open them again very slowly. The gravel-pit was full, right up to the top, with new, shining, gold coins!



*The gravel pit was full – with new, shining, gold coins.*