

BARTHOLOMEW and the OOBLECK



By **Dr. Seuss**





BARTHOLOMEW
and the
OOBLECK



Written and illustrated

BY **DR. SEUSS**

R A N D O M H O U S E N E W Y O R K



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HEY still talk about it in the Kingdom of Didd as The-Year-the-King-Got-Angry-with-the-Sky. And they still talk about the page boy, Bartholomew Cubbins. If it hadn't been for Bartholomew Cubbins, that King and that Sky would have wrecked that little Kingdom.

Bartholomew had seen the King get angry many, many times before. But *that* year when His Majesty started growling at the *sky*, Bartholomew Cubbins just didn't know what to make of it.

Yet all that year, the old King did it. All year long he stared up into the air above his kingdom, muttering and sputtering through his royal whiskers, "Humph! The things that come down from my sky!"

All spring when the rain came down, he growled at *that* . . .



All summer when the sunshine came down, he growled at *that* . . .

All autumn when the fog came down,
he growled at *that* . . .



And that winter when the snow came down, he started shouting! "This snow! This fog! This sunshine! This rain! BAHH! These four things that come down from my sky!"

"But, King Derwin," Bartholomew tried to calm him. "You've *always* had these same four things come down."

"That's just the trouble!" bellowed the King. "Every year the *same* four things! I'm mighty tired of those old things! I want something **NEW** to come down!"

"Something *new* come down . . .?" Bartholomew gasped. "That's impossible, Your Majesty. You just can't have it."

"Boy, don't you dare tell me what I can or cannot have! Remember, Bartholomew, I am King!"

"I know, Sire," said Bartholomew. "You rule all the land. And you rule all the people. But even kings can't rule the *sky*."



"Can't, eh?" His Majesty flew into a terrible rage. "Well, maybe *other* kings can't do it, but maybe I'm one king who can! You mark my words, Bartholomew Cubbins, I *will* have something new come down!"

But *how* to get something new to come down . . . ? That was rather hard to think up. And for many days the old King stomped around, trying to figure out *some* way to do it.

Then, finally, late one night, when all the lords and ladies of the palace were fast asleep . . . just as the King was buttoning his royal nightshirt . . . he suddenly stopped still. A strange wild light began to shine in his gray-green eyes.

"Why, of course!" He began laughing. "*They* can do it for me! Bartholomew Cubbins, blow my secret whistle! Quick! Call my royal magicians!"

"Your *magicians*, Your Majesty?" Bartholomew shivered. "Oh, no, Your Majesty! Don't call *them*!"

"You hold your tongue, Bartholomew Cubbins! You do as I command you. Blow my secret whistle!"

"Yes, Sire," Bartholomew bowed. "But, Your Majesty, I still think that you may be very sorry."





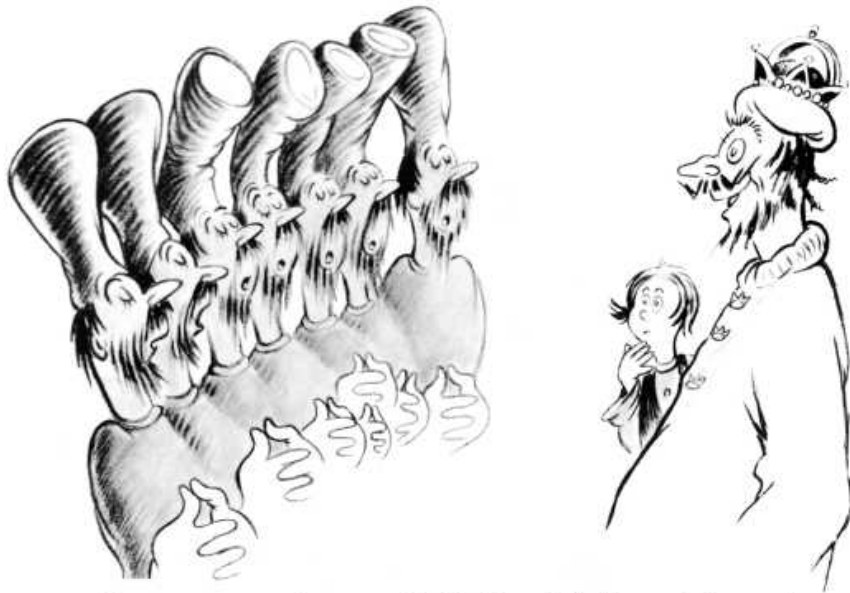
He took the King's secret whistle from its secret hook. He blew a long, low blast down the King's back secret stairway.

And a moment later he heard them coming! Up from their musty hole beneath the dungeon, up the empty midnight tunnel to the royal bedchamber tower, came the magicians on their padded, shuffling feet. Up and right into the room they came chanting:

*"Shuffle, duffle, muzzle, muff.
Fista, wista, mista-cuff.
We are men of groans and howls,
Mystic men who eat boiled owls.
Tell us what you wish, oh King.
Our magic can do anything."*

"I wish," spoke the King, "to have you make something fall from my skies that no other kingdom has ever had before. What can you do? What will you make?"





For a moment they stood thinking, blinking their creaky eyes. Then they spoke a word . . . one word . . . "Oobleck."

"Oobleck . . .?" asked the King. "What will it look like?"

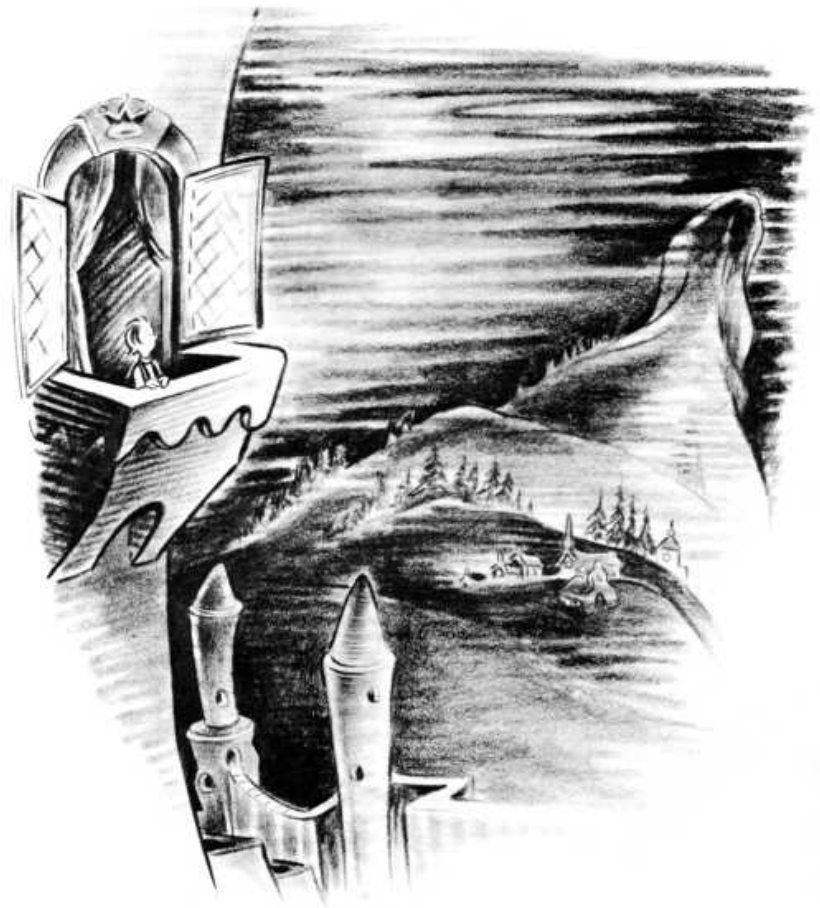
*"Won't look like rain. Won't look like snow.
Won't look like fog. That's all we know.
We just can't tell you any more.
We've never made oobleck before."*

They bowed. They started toward the door.

*"We go now to our secret cave
On Mystic Mountain Neeka-tave.
There, all night long, we'll work for you
And you'll have oobleck when we're through!"*

"They'll do something crazy!" whispered Bartholomew. "Call them back, Your Majesty! Stop them!"

"Stop them? Not for a ton of diamonds!" chuckled the King. "Why, I'll be the mightiest man that ever lived! Just think of it! Tomorrow I'm going to have OOBLECK!"

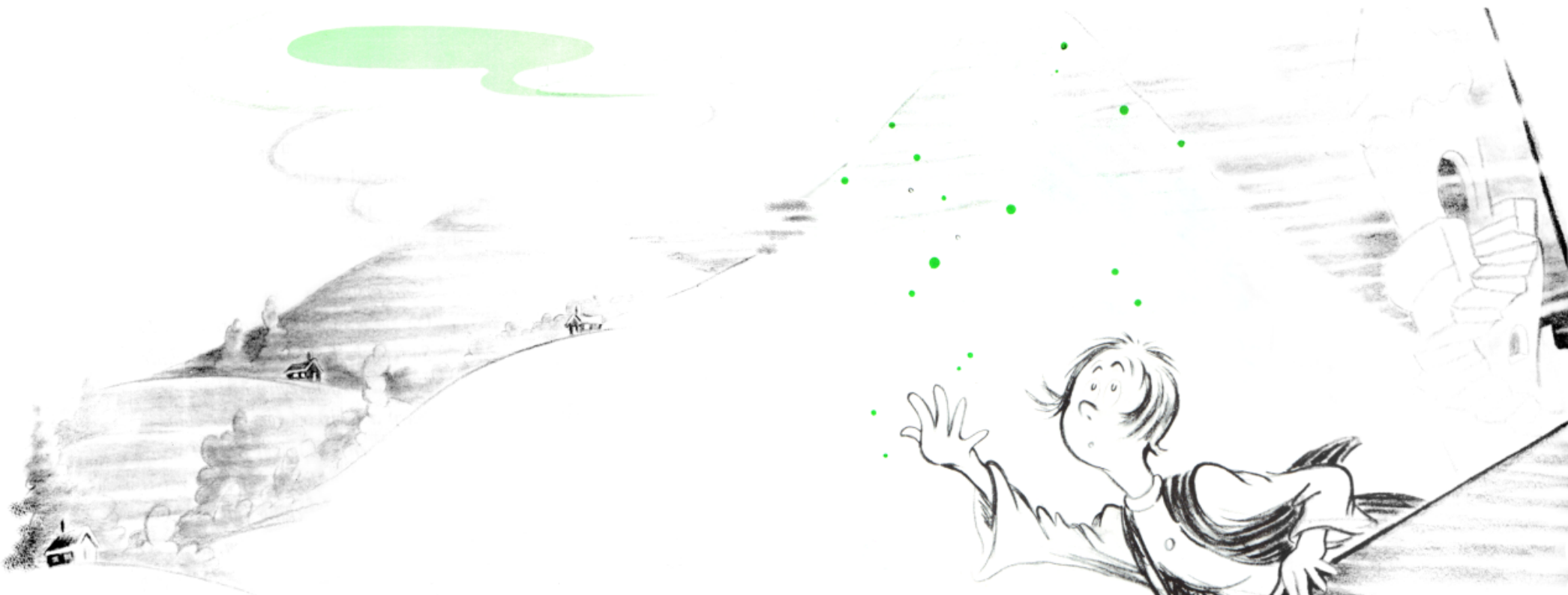


It took Bartholomew a long time to get the excited King to sleep that night. But there was no sleep for Bartholomew, the page boy. All night long he stood in the King's window, staring out at the Mystic Mountain Neeka-tave. Somewhere up there, Bartholomew knew, the magicians were working their terrible magic.



All night the magicians did. All night they walked circles round their magic fire, making magic mumbling with their clucking tongues:

*"Oh, snow and rain are not enough!
Oh, we must make some brand-new stuff!
So feed the fire with wet mouse hair,
Burn an onion. Burn a chair.
Burn a whisker from your chin
And burn a long sour lizard skin.
Burn yellow twigs and burn red rust
And burn a stocking full of dust.
Make magic smoke, green, thick and hot!
(It sure smells dreadful, does it not?)
That means the smoke is now just right
So, quick! Before the day gets light,
Go, magic smoke! Go high! Go high!
Go rise into the kingdom's sky!
Go make the oobleck tumble down
On every street, in every town!
Go make the wondrous oobleck fall!
Oh, bring down oobleck on us all!"*



Dawn was just breaking and Bartholomew was still standing . . . trembling, watching at the bedchamber window. But now, as the sun rose, Bartholomew smiled. Those silly magicians hadn't done a thing!

Then, suddenly, Bartholomew Cubbins stopped smiling.

Was he seeing things . . . ? No! There *was* something strange up there in the sky!

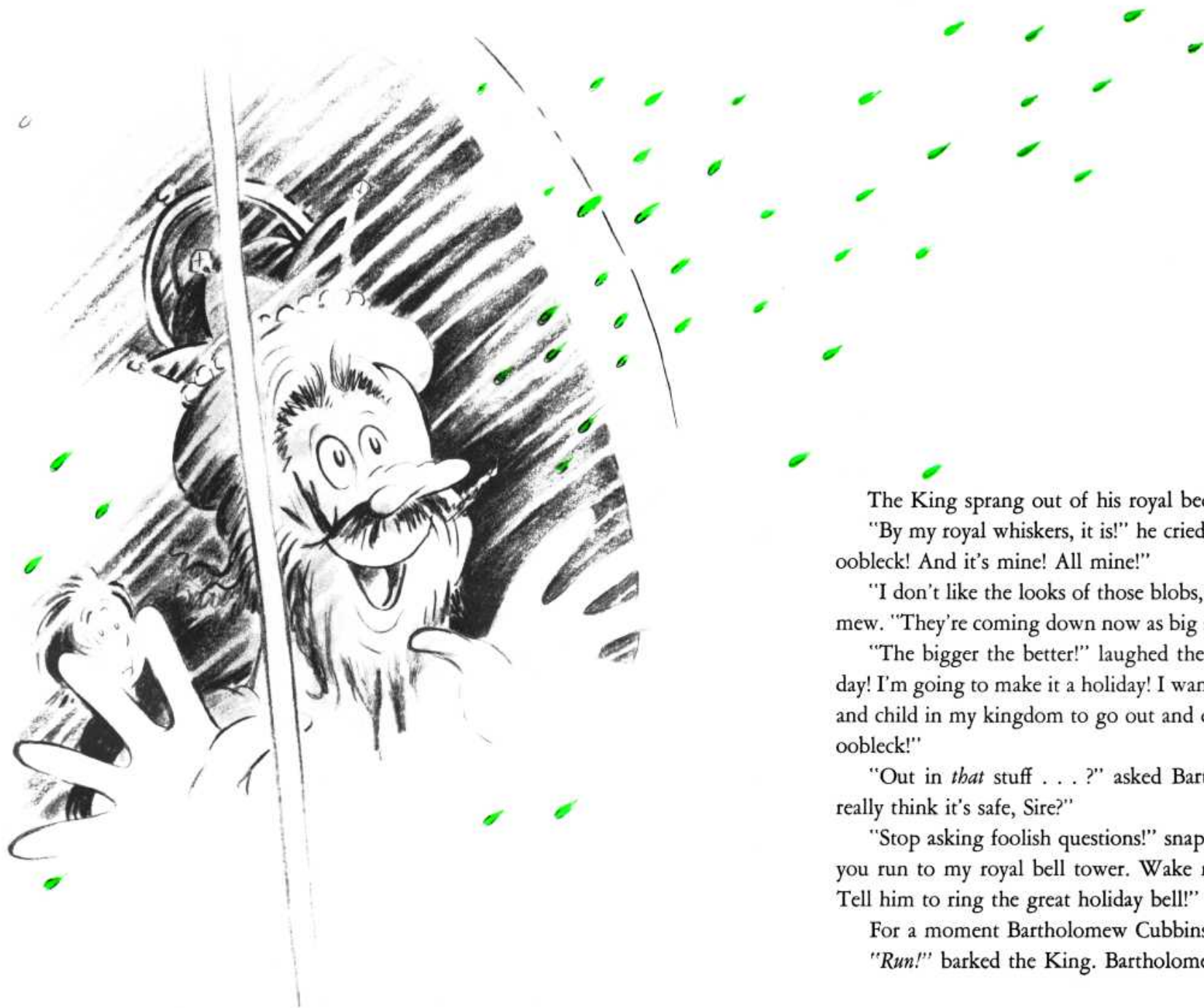
At first it seemed like a little greenish cloud . . . just a wisp of greenish steam. But now it was coming lower, closer, down toward the fields and farms and houses of the sleeping little kingdom.

It was swirling around the topmost turrets of the palace. Tiny little greenish specks were shimmering in the air right

over his head. Queer little greenish blobs, just about the size of grape seeds!

He stretched out his hand. He started to catch one. Then he pulled his hand back! There was something frightening about those blobs. Bartholomew slammed the window shut.

"Wake up, Your Majesty!" he shouted. "Your oobleck! It's falling!"



The King sprang out of his royal bed sheets.

"By my royal whiskers, it is!" he cried. "Oh, that beautiful oobleck! And it's mine! All mine!"

"I don't like the looks of those blobs, Sire," said Bartholomew. "They're coming down now as big as greenish peanuts."

"The bigger the better!" laughed the King. "Oh, what a day! I'm going to make it a holiday! I want every man, woman and child in my kingdom to go out and dance in my glorious oobleck!"

"Out in *that* stuff . . . ?" asked Bartholomew. "Do you really think it's safe, Sire?"

"Stop asking foolish questions!" snapped the King. "Boy, you run to my royal bell tower. Wake my royal bell ringer. Tell him to ring the great holiday bell!"

For a moment Bartholomew Cubbins didn't move.

"*Run!*" barked the King. Bartholomew ran.



Across the sleeping palace, Bartholomew ran. Then up the ladder of the high bell tower, he climbed to the bell ringer's little cubbyhole in the belfry.

"Ring your bell!" he called. "His Majesty the King proclaims today a holiday!"



The old man crawled out of his cot. He grabbed the bell rope. "What's the holiday for, Bartholomew?"

"You'll find out soon enough!" said Bartholomew.

The bell ringer yanked the rope. Nothing happened.

He yanked it harder. Still nothing happened.

"Heh . . . ? What's wrong with my bell?" he murmured.

"I'd better take a look outside."

He poked his head out through the little trap door.



"Merciful gracious!" he gulped. "What is THAT? All over my bell like greenish molasses!"

"Not only your bell!" Bartholomew cried. "Look at that poor robin down there in that tree! She's stuck to her nest! She can't move a wing! That oobleck's gooey! It's gummy! It's like glue!"



"Oooh!" The bell ringer wrung his hands. "If that green stuff sticks up *robins*, it'll stick up *people*, too!"

"Someone's got to warn the people!" cried Bartholomew. "Got to wake 'em and warn 'em to stay inside their houses! I'll tell the royal trumpeter!" he shouted. He turned and slid like lightning down the bell tower ladder.