

Chapter 1 : - The Complete Edition of O. Henry Whirligigs by O. Henry

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String whirligigs have ancient origins. The bamboo-copter or bamboo butterfly was invented in China in BC. While the initial invention did not use string to launch a propeller, later Chinese versions did. Friction whirligigs, also called gee-haws, depend on the holder rubbing a stick against a notched shaft resulting in a propeller at the end of the shaft turning, largely as the result of the vibration carried along the shaft. The motion needed to power a friction whirligig is very similar to rubbing sticks together to create fire. Friction whirligigs are another staple of craft shops and souvenir stores in the Appalachian Mountains. The wind simply pushes on the whirligig turning one part of it and it then uses inertia. The simplest and most common example of a wind-driven whirligig is the pinwheel. The pinwheel demonstrates the most important aspect of a whirligig, blade surface. Pinwheels have a large cupped surface area which allows the pinwheel to reach its terminal speed fairly quickly at low wind speed. Increasing the blade area of the whirligig increases the surface area so more air particles collide with the whirligig. This causes the drag force to reach its maximum value and the whirligig to reach its terminal speed in less time. Conversely the terminal speed is smaller when thin or short blades with a smaller surface area are utilized, resulting in the need for a higher wind speed to start and operate the whirligig. The two blade non-mechanical model is the most prevalent, [citation needed] exemplified by the classic Cardinal with Wings illustrated at right. History [edit] Etymology of the word [edit] The word whirligig derives from two Middle English words: The Oxford English Dictionary cites the Promptorium parvulorum c. Origins and evolution [edit] See also: Bamboo-copter Wooden rooster whirligig The origin of whirligigs is unknown. Both farmers and sailors use weathervanes on an ongoing basis and the assumption is one or both groups are likely the originators. By BC the bamboo-copter or dragon butterfly, a helicopter-like rotor launched by rolling a stick, had been invented in China. The weathervane, which dates to the Sumerians in 4000 BC, is the second component of wind-driven whirligigs. A grinding corn doll of ancient Egyptian origin demonstrates that string-operated whirligigs were already in use by BC. An oil by Hieronymus Bosch, probably completed between 1480 and 1500 and known as the Christ Child with a Walking Frame, contains a clear illustration of a string-powered whirligig. How the wind-driven whirligig evolved in America is not fully known, though there are some markers. George Washington brought whirligigs home from the Revolutionary War. By the mid 18th century weathervanes had evolved to include free moving "wings". What began as a simple turning of artificial feathers in the wind advanced into full blown mechanisms producing both motion and sound. Unfortunately both the exposure to the weather and the fragile nature of whirligigs means very few wind driven whirligigs from this era survive. The period between 1800 and 1850 brought rapid geographic expansion of whirligigs across the US. After 1850, production seemed for the most part to center on the southern Appalachians. Craftsman there continued to produce whirligigs into the 20th century. During the Great Depression a resurgence in production by craftsman and amateurs was attributed to the need for ready cash. Today Whirligigs are used as toys for children, as garden structures designed to keep birds or other garden pests away, as decorative yard art and as art. Whirligigs as art [edit] Whirligigs have become art. A number of museums now have collections, or examples in their collections. Henry wrote a short story called "The Whirligig of Life", about a mountain couple who decide to divorce and the events that lead to their remarriage told from the perspective of the judge. After his wife who loved the whirligigs dies, the whirligigs continue to move and symbolize the fact that life must go on for Ob. With recognition, folk art whirligigs have increased in value. They are still available, and are often used in the rice paddies as the sound they make when the wind blows scares birds away. It represents an interesting example of a combination mechanical and sound producing whirligig. The propeller, the Balinese farmer and the bull are of tin. The farmer and bull are painted but the propeller blades are not. The body is of hand whittled bamboo, fastened with rusty nails and wire and a single piece of string. The farmer is connected to the shaft of the whirligig by a bamboo stick with an offset where the stick connects to the shaft. The shaft contains a second feature, a set of knockers that create a bit of

music on raised pieces of bamboo. There are a total of six knockers which strike six bamboo plates. The bamboo plates are raised by placing a circular piece of bamboo or something similar between the knockers and the bamboo base. Each rotation causes three knockers to hit plates so the sound is actually different at each rotation. The knockers are nailed in pattern to the shaft. Whirligigs from folk artist Reuben Aaron Miller and others are considered highly collectable.

Chapter 2 : Whirligig - Wikipedia

Whirligigs offers some of O. Henry's best short stories; complete with quirky characters, witty romps with clever twists, and "I did not see that coming" endings. Included in the book is the short titled The Ransom of Red Chief, one of my all-time favorites.

This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. He changed the spelling of his middle name to Sydney in His parents were Dr. When William was three, his mother died after birthing her third child, and he and his father moved into the home of his paternal grandmother. He then enrolled at the Lindsey Street High School. His aunt continued to tutor him until he was At the drugstore, he also showed his natural artistic talents by sketching the townsfolk. Hall to Texas in March , hoping that a change of air would help alleviate a persistent cough he had developed. While on the ranch, he learned bits of Spanish and German from the mix of immigrant ranch hands. He also spent time reading classic literature. Porter resided with the Harrells for three years. He went to work briefly for the Morley Brothers Drug Company as a pharmacist. He also began writing as a sideline and wrote many of his early stories in the Harrell house. As a young bachelor, Porter led an active social life in Austin. He was known for his wit, story-telling and musical talents. He played both the guitar and mandolin. He sang in the choir at St. Porter family in early s" Athol, Margaret daughter , William Porter met and began courting Athol Estes, 17 years old and from a wealthy family. Her mother objected to the match because Athol was ill, suffering from tuberculosis. Smoot, pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church , where the Estes family attended church. The couple continued to participate in musical and theater groups, and Athol encouraged her husband to pursue his writing. Athol gave birth to a son in , who died hours after birth, and then daughter Margaret Worth Porter in September The salary was enough to support his family, but he continued his contributions to magazines and newspapers. The castle-like building he worked in was even woven into some of his tales such as "Bexar Scrip No. His job at the GLO was a political appointment by Hall. Hall ran for governor in the election of but lost. Porter resigned on January 21, , the day after the new governor, Jim Hogg , was sworn in. The bank was operated informally, and Porter was apparently careless in keeping his books and may have embezzled funds. In , he was accused by the bank of embezzlement and lost his job but was not indicted at the time. He then worked full-time on his humorous weekly called The Rolling Stone, which he started while working at the bank. Although eventually reaching a top circulation of 1,, The Rolling Stone failed in April because the paper never provided an adequate income. However, his writing and drawings had caught the attention of the editor at the Houston Post. Porter and his family moved to Houston in , where he started writing for the Post. Porter gathered ideas for his column by loitering in hotel lobbies and observing and talking to people there. This was a technique he used throughout his writing career. While he was in Houston, federal auditors audited the First National Bank of Austin and found the embezzlement shortages that led to his firing. A federal indictment followed, and he was arrested on charges of embezzlement. He was due to stand trial on July 7, , but the day before, as he was changing trains to get to the courthouse, an impulse hit him. He fled, first to New Orleans and later to Honduras, with which the United States had no extradition treaty at that time. William lived in Honduras for only six months, until January There he became friends with Al Jennings , a notorious train robber, who later wrote a book about their friendship. Unfortunately, Athol became too ill to meet Porter in Honduras as he had planned. When he learned that his wife was dying, Porter returned to Austin in February and surrendered to the court, pending trial. Athol Estes Porter died from tuberculosis then known as consumption on July 25, He was sentenced to five years in prison and imprisoned on March 25, , at the Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus, Ohio. Porter was a licensed pharmacist and was able to work in the prison hospital as the night druggist. He was given his own room in the hospital wing, and there is no record that he actually spent time in the cell block of the prison. He had 14 stories published under various pseudonyms while he was in prison but was becoming best known as "O. A friend of his in New Orleans would forward his stories to publishers so that they had no idea that the writer was imprisoned. Porter was released on July 24, , for good behavior after serving three years. Margaret

was never told that her father had been in prison—just that he had been away on business. While there, he wrote short stories. His wit, characterization, and plot twists were adored by his readers but often panned by critics. Porter married again in to childhood sweetheart Sarah Sallie Lindsey Coleman, whom he met again after revisiting his native state of North Carolina. Sarah Lindsey Coleman was herself a writer and wrote a romanticized and fictionalized version of their correspondence and courtship in her novella *Wind of Destiny*. In , Sarah left him, and he died on June 5, , of cirrhosis of the liver , complications of diabetes , and an enlarged heart. She married cartoonist Oscar Cesare of New York in ; they were divorced four years later. She died of tuberculosis in and is buried next to her father. Stories[edit] Portrait of Porter used as frontispiece in the posthumous collection of short stories *Waifs and Strays O*. In his day he was called the American answer to Guy de Maupassant. While both authors wrote plot twist endings, O. Many take place in New York City and deal for the most part with ordinary people: Henry had an inimitable hand for isolating some element of society and describing it with an incredible economy and grace of language. Some of his best and least-known work is contained in *Cabbages and Kings* , a series of stories each of which explores some individual aspect of life in a paralytically sleepy Central American town, while advancing some aspect of the larger plot and relating back one to another. *Cabbages and Kings* was his first collection of stories, followed by *The Four Million*. Henry, everyone in New York counted. He had an obvious affection for the city, which he called "Bagdad-on-the-Subway", [7] and many of his stories are set there—while others are set in small towns or in other cities. His final work was "Dream", a short story intended for the magazine *The Cosmopolitan* but left incomplete at the time of his death. The essential premise of this story has been copied, re-worked, parodied, and otherwise re-told countless times in the century since it was written. Despite efforts at petty theft, vandalism, disorderly conduct, and "flirting" with a young prostitute, Soapy fails to draw the attention of the police. Disconsolate, he pauses in front of a church, where an organ anthem inspires him to clean up his life; ironically, he is charged for loitering and sentenced to three months in prison. He goes to a town bank to case it before he robs it. They immediately fall in love and Valentine decides to give up his criminal career. He moves into the town, taking up the identity of Ralph Spencer, a shoemaker. Just as he is about to leave to deliver his specialized tools to an old associate, a lawman who recognizes him arrives at the bank. Knowing it will seal his fate, Valentine opens the safe to rescue the child. In later film and TV depictions, the Kid would be portrayed as a dashing adventurer, perhaps skirting the edges of the law, but primarily on the side of the angels. In the original short story, the only story by Porter to feature the character, the Kid is a murderous, ruthless border desperado, whose trail is dogged by a heroic Texas Ranger. The twist ending is, unusually for Porter, tragic. Pen name[edit] Porter used a number of pen names including "O. Henry" or "Olivier Henry" in the early part of his writing career; other names included S. Dowd, and Howard Clark. Henry" seemed to garner the most attention from editors and the public, and was used exclusively by Porter for his writing by about He gave various explanations for the origin of his pen name. It was during these New Orleans days that I adopted my pen name of O. I said to a friend: Help me pick out a good one. In the society columns we found the account of a fashionable ball. I want something short. None of your three-syllable names for me. I replied, "O stands for Olivier, the French for Oliver. Dispensary which Porter used working in the prison pharmacy. Henry Award is a prestigious annual prize named after Porter and given to outstanding short stories. A film was made in featuring five stories, called *O. Henry House* and *O. Henry Hall* , both in Austin, Texas, are named for him. Henry was convicted of embezzlement.

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