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100 Ways to Make a Japanese House

Hannah Field

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Scenes of children making dollhouses are something of a leitmotif in Rumer Godden's celebrated doll stories. Her first children's novel, *The Dolls' House* (1947), has sisters Charlotte and Emily Dane refurbishing a Victorian dollhouse, while in 1956's *The Fairy Doll*, the young protagonist Elizabeth fashions a more unassuming home for her doll. Of course, Charlotte, Emily, and Elizabeth are not alone in these pursuits, and Godden is not the only mid-twentieth-century children's writer to detail them. One of Elinor Brent-Dyer's Chalet School heroines, Tom Gay, creates many dollhouses in her time at the school, selling these at the end-of-school sales; the first appears in *Tom Tackles the Chalet School* (serialized in 1947 and 1948 before being released as a single volume in 1955). The Five Dolls series by Helen Clare is likewise full of improvised dollhouse objects and craft activities; in *Five Dolls in a House* (1953), for example, heroine Elizabeth converts her child-sized blue velvet ribbon into a dolls' staircase carpet, blithely saying, "we'll pin it on with drawing-pins as I haven't any stair rods" (58). However, what is an ancillary, if significant, motif in Brent-Dyer, Clare, and even *The Dolls' House* or *The Fairy Doll* becomes the defining narrative preoccupation in two of Godden's lesser-known works, her 1961 children's novel *Miss Happiness and Miss Flower* and its sequel *Little Plum* (1963).

Indeed, before the narrative proper of *Miss Happiness* even begins, Godden signals the focus on dollhouse crafts with her acknowledgements:

My thanks are due to Edmund Waller, who designed the Japanese dolls'-house described in the book, and who with his brother Geoffrey, aged twelve, made it; to Fiona Fife-Clark, aged eleven, who furnished it, painted the scrolls and lampshade and sewed the dolls'-house quilts and cushions; to Miss Anne Ashberry and Miss Creina Glegg, of Miniature Gardens Limited, Chignal-Smealey, Essex, who made its garden and grew the tiny trees; to Miss Stella Coe (Sogetsu Ryu) for her

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advice over the meaning of flowers in Japanese lore and for reading the book; and finally and especially to Mr Seo of the Japanese Embassy, for his valuable help and advice and for the loan of books. (N. pag.)

The elaborateness of this inventory, its near-obsessive attention to detail, is notable; but so, too, is the specific provenance of these dollhouse accoutrements. Every object that inspired the fictional *Miss Happiness* dollhouse, from the space of the house itself to its smallest adornment, has been produced or painted, sewn or grown, by hand.¹ Moreover, the hand in question sometimes belonged to a child: “Geoffrey, aged twelve,” or “Fiona Fife-Clark, aged eleven.” From its very front matter, *Miss Happiness* orients around children’s dollhouse crafts, and *Little Plum* shows a similar predilection. The significance of Godden’s focus on children’s craft in specific connection with the dollhouse is the topic of my discussion here.

Why should stories in which children build or furnish dollhouses be important? The reason, I argue, is that such stories go against the prevalent conception of the dollhouse as a site antithetical to such making-play. A number of authorities who have weighed in on the subject argue as much, and before detailing the ways in which dollhouse crafts are depicted in *Miss Happiness* and *Little Plum*, I will canvas some famous criticisms. The Edgeworths provide a classic example of the complaint in *Practical Education*.² After they castigate “frail and useless toys” that demand the child’s care and attention “because they cost a great deal of money, or else . . . as miniatures of some of the fine things on which fine people pride themselves,” rather than because of any real appeal or benefit to the child (14),³ the dollhouse comes within the writers’ purview:

Our objections to dolls are offered with great submission and due hesitation. With more confidence we may venture to attack baby-houses: an unfurnished baby-house might be a good toy, as it would employ little carpenters and seamstresses to fit it up; but a completely furnished baby-house proves as tiresome to a young child, as a finished seat to a young nobleman. (15)

The standard dollhouse offers no stimulation or benefit to the child, no creative outlet; it fulfills no purpose, except to display wealth in a manner that gratifies adult wishes and desires. Some three hundred years later, Susan Stewart reads the miniature as “a metaphor for the interior space and time of the bourgeois subject” (xii), the dollhouse as the “promise of an infinitely profound interiority” (61). Lois Kuznets’s gloss on these ideas, part of the critic’s autobiographical musings on her own fascination with the miniature, is useful:

the realm of the miniature in general and of the lavishly furnished doll house in particular reveals a bourgeois adult attempt to claim an objective interiority in order to replace a subjective emptiness. For Stewart, this fictitious fulfillment has the deleterious effect of denying this voracious emotional hunger a history in time, space or sociopolitical reality. (“Taking Over” 144)

In all of these examples, the dollhouse either precludes creative play outright, or signifies qualities of adulthood, luxuriousness, and uselessness which more indirectly preclude it.

Perhaps as a result of the negative overtones I mention above, the topos of dollhouse building has been downplayed in the (fairly considerable) secondary literature on Godden. While moments in which characters create dollhouses may be touched on briefly, they are not seen as being of primary importance. For example, Margaret and Michael Rustin note both the *Dolls' House* and *Fairy Doll* episodes in their chapter on Godden in *Narratives of Love and Loss*, but find the substance of these stories elsewhere: in the family dynamic of the Dane sisters' dolls in the renovated dollhouse, say, or Elizabeth's acceptance of the loss of the fairy doll at the end of her story.⁴ Allyson Booth skirts the issue somewhat, detailing various craft projects undertaken by Elizabeth in *The Fairy Doll* before locating the significance of these projects in Elizabeth's imaginative growth rather than the physical process of constructing a home and world for the doll (145). There is a substitutive implication to these arguments: it is not the specifics of dollhouse building (and Godden's detailed depiction of craft activities to this end) but rather its result—imaginative growth—that matters. Susan Ang, one of the two critics I have found to write specifically on *Miss Happiness*, observes that the book “uses the construction and furnishing of a doll's house for two Japanese dolls as a powerful metaphor corresponding to the child Nona's gradual assimilation into her new household” (290).⁵ While Ang focuses on the actual building process more than do the Rustins or Booth, she still views the dollhouse's importance as metaphorical rather than material.

In contrast to these other writers, Frances Armstrong, in her self-described “textual history of dollhouses,” foregrounds the act of dollhouse building. She begins with dollhouses' dual valence “as metaphorical places of imprisonment for women” (à la Ibsen) and “as actual structures used in play” in fin-de-siècle writings (23). “Because of its permanence and intrinsic value,” Armstrong observes, “the traditional dollhouse is a place controlled by adults in a way that other popular ludic spaces—treehouses, clubhouses, attics, ‘desert islands’—are not” (28). Contrary to these negative connotations, though, the dollhouse stories for children which Armstrong surveys depict girls who are “able to regard dollhouses as their own ludic spaces, places dedicated to their own play” (24). This trend relates to scenes of craft, with Armstrong asserting that the heroines of dollhouse stories “readily improvised both narratives and accessories” during the period she analyzes, 1690 to 1920. (24).

Armstrong does have her doubts, averring that “after 1850 adult control is likely to take the indirect form of suggesting ways of making and furnishing dollhouses” (29), and bemoaning adult enforcement of “neatness and completeness” in dollhouse building (33). Ultimately, though, she lauds narratives in which children are at the helm of the craft process, like Ada Wallas's “Professor Green” (1906), in which “making one's own accessories for the dollhouse is most of the fun” (50). Despite the end date of Armstrong's survey, it is clear

that *Miss Happiness* and *Little Plum* mark just such positive iterations of the dollhouse story later in the twentieth century, as I shall now show.

Miss Happiness tells the story of Nona Fell, a nine-year-old girl who moves from India to live with her uncle, aunt, and cousins in England. The transition to a new school and family life proves a difficult one; initially, Nona's only friends are the titular Japanese dolls Miss Happiness and Miss Flower, sent as a gift from a mysterious great-aunt in San Francisco. It is in response to Miss Happiness and Miss Flower's dissatisfaction with their initial abode (sensed by Nona in the almost telepathic manner of all Godden doll stories) that Nona decides to build the dolls a Japanese house.⁶ Hence from its very inception the Japanese dollhouse is a child's project, its success or failure indexed to the child's craft skills. Indeed, Nona's initial amateurish attempts fail: for example, finding a cardboard box, she "cut out doors and windows, but that did not seem right and the cutting hurt her fingers" (17). The frustration Nona feels at not having "clever, careful fingers" is mitigated by her eventual discovery that she does, in fact, have such fingers (17)—the lovely sewing she later undertakes in *Little Plum* confirms this. Episodes of Nona contemplating the "beautiful paper" that will make the dollhouse roof and feeling "not at all sure that she could manage" to cut it are followed by episodes in which she does manage to do so: "With Anne folding the paper and holding it steady, Nona was able to cut off an even strip" (41–43). Nona's progress is staged as a slow acquisition of practical sufficiency and skill, the dollhouse as a breeding ground for empowering abilities that arise directly from craft activities.

The help that Nona receives in her endeavors—for example, Anne holding the paper steady—is another important element of the dollhouse's construction. One of Jean Primrose's illustrations in the original edition depicts this collective fabrication: Nona and her cousins Anne and Tom glue scalloped paper onto the roof to resemble tiles; the older children beneficently smile as Nona is positioned between them at the center of the image, in a tableau that symbolizes her growing integration into the family. Crafting the dollhouse is a unifying act, and the final party, a dolls' housewarming, brings together Nona, her friends, and the gifts meticulously fabricated for the dolls by well-wishers: schoolmate Melly's paper flowers, Melly's mother Mrs. Ashton's cocktail umbrella, teacher Miss Lane's tiny scroll, and so on (62). Nona acquires both personal skill and social aplomb via the dollhouse.

A further dimension of the creative process here is the reenvisioning of the function of material objects. At one point Nona sees an alternative use for Melly's decorative pencil box, with its "Made in Japan" label, and cannily acquires it in order to create a cupboard for Miss Happiness and Miss Flower; the children also wire a cotton reel into a working dolly lamp, with Tom "[running] a flex up through it with a tiny electric bulb and Nona [making] a paper shade to fit it" (56–57). This use of one thing for another, when carried out by a child character, incorporates a recurring motif of the miniature into children's making-play. Caroline Hunt reads the chief pleasure of Mary Nor-

ton's Borrowers series as "the recovery of wonder at objects long overlooked" (126). In a parallel examination of the miniature's appeal, Perry Nodelman speaks of "our delight in objects that are like other objects but on a smaller scale" (153). Both Hunt's "recovery of wonder" and Nodelman's "attention to scale" models of the miniature are visible in *Miss Happiness*, but they relate directly to the ingenious crafts of child-characters; here Nona creates, indeed crafts, the wonder and delight signposted by Hunt and Nodelman. As Booth contends with reference to *The Fairy Doll* and its play with objects (daisies becoming poached eggs, and so forth), the child's imaginativeness finds an outlet in miniaturized crafts (145). Moreover, the actual physical process of crafting and constructing, of repurposing everyday objects like cotton reels, is as important as the imaginative act.

Little Plum approaches children's craft from a different angle. The novel displays a clear concern with types of dollhouse play, particularly the distinction between making and owning.⁷ The range of craft activities Nona and her cousins perform in *Miss Happiness* obviously constitutes "making": a making typified by the children's active, imaginative, and joyous building and furnishing of the dollhouse, which the text describes at length. In contrast, when the child's engagement with the doll is based on ownership, doll-play becomes passive, static, and joyless. The latter type of play is handily represented in the sequel to *Miss Happiness* through the character of Gem Tiffany Jones, the child of the Fells' rich new neighbors. Gem's mother has polio and her treatment regime necessitates a move from London to Topmeadow, the town where the Fells live. Gem's father travels often and her controlling aunt, Miss Tiffany Jones, consequently looks after Gem and the new house. Gem's unhappy family circle—ill mother, absent father, unfeeling aunt—results in an inability to play that is often the subject of narrative comment. In particular, the fact that Gem owns a Japanese doll (the eponymous Little Plum) but does not play with her (instead treating her as an ornament) is condemned: "Nothing is worse for a doll than not to be played with" (50).

Gem's neglect of her doll is partly attributed to the use of objects modeled by grown-up family members. Gem is, by name alone, objectified; her father owns mines that presumably extract precious stones—the book obliquely connects these Tiffany Joneses to the famous jeweler—and consequently he has named his daughter after these "gems" (14, 4). The Tiffany Joneses' choice of decor reflects a particular attitude to children. One passage is worth quoting at length:

Belinda and Nona saw what was unmistakably children's furniture—and what beautiful furniture it was. There was a pale blue bed with poles, like a small four-poster, with a pale blue dressing-table, chest of drawers and chairs to match. There was furniture, too, for a sitting room: a school desk, a blackboard, small armchairs, bookcases and, delivered in a special van, a miniature white piano. There were toys: a big doll's house, dolls' beds, a doll's perambulator almost as large as a real one, a cooking stove, a pale blue bicycle. (9)

Gem's furniture constructs her as an ideal child in terms arbitrated by the adults in her life: smallness ("children's furniture"), delicateness ("pale blue"), learnedness ("a school desk"), culturedness (a miniature piano), and, through the litany of doll paraphernalia, dollness. Gem's own doll-like qualities are noteworthy. Her many outfits ("elaborate dresses with ruffled petticoats," "velvet cap and dear little jodhpur boots") lead Belinda to comment, "She's always dressed up," and in a nod to the recession of woman, girl, doll, Belinda also observes that Gem's fur coat is "like a lady's, only little" (20). Her "long fall of fair hair," in contrast to the less fussy styles of her contemporaries, is a further dollesque misstep (13). Belinda's preoccupation with looking across from her own house into Gem's makes the House Next Door an analogue of the dollhouse, Gem an analogue of the doll imprisoned inside. Gem's dollness becomes metonymically linked to her inability to play; she becomes, *pace* Rousseau, her own doll, or at the very least Miss Tiffany Jones's doll.

Godden plots *Little Plum* around the war between Gem and Nona's tomboyish cousin Belinda Fell, who is also a character in the first book, though one disdainfully uninvolved in the building of the dollhouse. Enlisting Nona's vaunted craft skills, Belinda offers various miniature gifts, accompanied by inflammatory notes, to Gem. The last, for example, is a set of quilts and the poorly spelled missive, "It's crool to make children sit up all night. *Our* Japanese dolls have Japanese BEDS" (65; original emphasis). Through these sallies, Belinda lays bare Gem's incapacity to treat her doll lovingly, and hence to play correctly; upon receiving these correspondences, Gem destroys each of the objects that Nona has so painstakingly made. The beauty of these items is considerable (of a meal tray: "Nona had never made anything prettier" [61]) and proportionate to the trauma their destruction effects. When the snipped-up bedding comes back to the Fells, "Even Belinda was a little dismayed. She showed the bag to Nona and Nona could have cried. 'But why?' she asked. 'Why? It took me *hours* to sew those quilts'" (68; original emphasis). However, the entire rigmarole is a false chastisement on the part of Belinda, who, "as you may have guessed, was not fond of dolls" (50).

After the war culminates in Belinda's theft of *Little Plum*, and the doll's subsequent (parentally enforced) return to Gem, it is left to Nona and the restorative values of craft to truly rehabilitate both girl and doll. Yet more making mitigates the awful destruction of the lovingly crafted object: the construction of a *Hina-matsuri*, a Japanese doll festival for *Little Plum* as well as Misses Happiness and Flower. The dollhouse could not be created in both books, so Godden riffs on its cotton-reel lamps with dolls for dolls, as the following exchange shows:

"When I was a boy," said Mr Twilfit, "my sisters made dolls of clothes' pegs; peg dolls we used to call them."

"Pegs would be too big," said Belinda.

"What do your dolls use for pegs?"

"Bits of split-up matches."

"Well then?" said Mr Twilfit, and "Matches would do," Nona had cried. (89–90)

This celebration rests on the trope of the recessive *mise en abyme*, “center within center, within within within” (Stewart 61), frequently employed by narratives of the miniature. Here, though, a trope of the miniature that usually attests to an adult writer’s cleverness in devising it becomes a feature of the child’s play with dolls. The *Hina-matsuri* is a child-made “miniature of miniatures,” with matchstick musicians playing pine-needle flutes and silver-sixpence drums, all dreamed up and created by children.

The *Hina-matsuri* is most significant, though, for marking Gem’s initiation into creative doll-play. At the celebration held at the Fells’ house, Gem has “made Little Plum look as pretty and as cared for as Miss Happiness or Miss Flower.” More to the point, she has become a true ‘maker’: Little Plum’s fan, “pleated with stiffened gold net,” has been fashioned by Gem herself using her doll iron. Approvingly Miss Happiness predicts that “Miss Gem is going to be nearly as clever as Miss Nona” (91), positioning the book’s happy ending as at least in part a property of the girl’s successful acquisition of craft skills. The negative tendencies attendant on doll-play and represented by Gem are revised into positive behaviors, which show that the way to play with dolls is creatively—or “craftily,” if you will.

The Edgeworths, Stewart, and Kuznets, as I outlined at the beginning of this discussion, voice some objections to the dollhouse and, by association, the dollhouse story. Their concerns center on the luxuriousness of dollhouses, their lack of use-value, and their appeal to adults rather than to children. Yet all of these ills are absent from *Miss Happiness* and *Little Plum*. Rather than being a thing of luxury, the Japanese dollhouse is built from scratch in a twentieth-century version of the Edgeworths’ “little carpenters and seamstresses.” It is furnished with odds and ends rather than expensive gewgaws. With Godden’s child-characters learning quantifiable skills through their craft projects, the usefulness of dollhouse play is also demonstrated. Gem learns positive doll-play, in which the doll is the object of creative energy rather than the passive display of wealth, in a story arc that implicitly redresses the very problems with the dollhouse identified by critics. Finally, children rather than adults devise, construct, and subsequently control the dollhouse and the *Hina-matsuri*—in line with Armstrong’s historical rehabilitation of the dollhouse story.

But there is still further delight to be had in children’s craft. In *Miss Happiness*, Nona first attempts to gain knowledge on exactly how to make a Japanese dollhouse from the gruff bookseller Mr. Twilfit. Unsure of what to ask for, she inquires after the title *100 Ways to Make a Japanese House*, only to be dismissed by Mr. Twilfit’s confident rejoinder: “No such book” (20). This incident seems slight, almost throwaway in the story’s trajectory, but it is in fact a neat trick, an extreme example of *mise en abyme*. Throughout the narrative the reader is referred to something called “Making the House,” which proves to be an extensive instructional appendix at the end of the novel. Godden’s novel reveals itself as a real-world version of the manual that is nonexistent in Nona’s universe: in short, there is a copy of *100 Ways to Make a Japanese House* in our world, and we are, in fact, reading it even as Nona visits Mr. Twilfit’s bookshop.

“Making the House” helps the reader to craft a real-world replica of Nona’s Japanese dollhouse in a manner reminiscent of the nonfiction how-to book, a genre itself important to children’s literature. How-to books, says Evelyn Freeman, “give children directions for various activities”—a definite description of “Making the House”—and “include children’s cookbooks, craft books, and science experiment books” (384). The formal characteristics of the how-to book, which comprise the “presentation of information in distinctive visual formats such as lists, boxed information, sidebars, charts, and graphs,” “extensive graphics,” and particular uses of language (“sets of directions for readers to follow . . . in a specific sequence”) (384), are also found in the appendix to *Miss Happiness*. An extreme specificity about the material properties of the house is necessary for the success of the project and is reflected in the fractional measurements that litter these final pages. Individual notes for each component deal with only one part of the dollhouse, breaking the immense labor involved into manageable chunks: “The Plinth,” “The Corners,” etc. (76). The carefully drawn figures show this process pictorially.

But “Making the House” is a special sort of manual, integrating elements of the preceding narrative with the how-to instructions. Different tasks are performed by different characters:

When the glue was dry and set, to make doubly sure he screwed the angle pieces (A1, A2, A3, A4) to the platform (Fig. 2), making quite sure they were perfectly upright. “That’s a crucial part,” said Tom. “That’s why I used such strong glue.”
“What’s crucial mean?” asked Nona.
“Fearfully important.” (76–77)

Tom and Nona interact in the same manner as they might in the body of the novel, their exchange weaving the fictional narrative into the production of the material object. These characters guide the reader through the building of the dollhouse, offering help in arenas both practical (the importance of strong glue) and academic (the meaning of “crucial”). Rescuing the dollhouse from its vexed associations with wealth, uselessness, and adult imposition, Godden makes it a place for creative play and craftsmanship in the reader’s own world as well as that of *Miss Happiness*.

Discussions of how children use their books, like discussions of how adults use theirs, often remain speculative. This is especially frustrating in relation to a book like *Miss Happiness*, which directly elicits particular real-world practices through its detailed instructions; it is galling that we will never know whether any individual reader of this “how-to book” does successfully find out “how to” make a Japanese dollhouse. It could be, of course, that readers of *Miss Happiness* typically have ignored Godden’s “Making the House” appendix. After all, these detailed instructions are bracketed off from the main text. Godden’s publisher, Macmillan, evidently assumes that the section is expendable; the book is still in print, unlike *Little Plum*, but the “Making the House” appendix is absent from

the 2008 edition illustrated by Gary Blyth. Any reader who wishes to make the dollhouse today will have to find a second-hand copy of the original edition.

Although I have no evidence as to contemporary readers' use of the book in the 1960s, at least one family aside from the fictional Fells and the real-world Waller brothers did make the *Miss Happiness* dollhouse, and I would like to tell their story now. Dr. Diane Purkiss, a don at Keble College, Oxford, kindly corresponded with me regarding the Japanese dollhouse made by her father-in-law, Brian Dowling, and furnished by her two children, Michael and Hermione Dowling. She has this to say of the dollhouse:

The children's paternal grandfather built the house for them, wiled into it by me saying how difficult it was, just as Mr Twilfit does in the book. Michael and I furnished it by shopping for things and making things. I remember making the garden in a tray when Mione was a baby. We made a clay lantern out of grey-silver Fimo and fired it, like Nona. My parents provided the dolls, which were and are too stout, really. Since reaching the right age Mione has added to it and made lots more, including bedding and a niche vase and scrolls and clothes. She's also remade the garden several times. ("Japanese Dolls' House")

The dollhouse's existence has been anything but static in subsequent years, too: Hermione "always rereads the books . . . and then embarks on more activities." The family doll collection also includes two Japanese emperor and empress dolls (*dairi-bina*); these recollect both *Little Plum* and another of Dr. Purkiss's doll-story favorites, Momoko Ishii's *The Dolls' Day for Yoshiko* (1965).⁸

The Dowling-Purkiss family's experience of making the dollhouse admirably demonstrates essential elements of *Miss Happiness*: the involvement of different children in the building of the dollhouse; the furnishing of the dollhouse by both making new objects and reenvisioning the purposes of existing ones; and the relation of the stories to children's real lives and real-life craft projects. This particular story about how children's books might be read (indeed, about "how to" read a children's book) suggests that the absence of "Making the House" from twenty-first-century editions of *Miss Happiness* is—to recall Nona and Tom—a "crucial" omission.

Notes

1. Godden's inclusion of a real-life toy in a work of fiction places her in a proud tradition of children's writers that includes Beatrix Potter, A. A. Milne, and E. Nesbit. For discussions of this trend see Kuznets, "Taking Over" 119–20; and Armstrong, 26–27.
2. The Edgeworths' views on the dollhouse are cited in both Frances Armstrong's article, which I will discuss at some length presently, and Claudia Mitchell and Jacqueline Reid-Walsh's work on Barbie. See Armstrong 51n3; and Mitchell and Reid-Walsh 181.
3. As a reviewer of this article has pointed out, narrative commentaries on useless objects appear repeatedly in the Edgeworths. A flimsy filigree basket in Maria Edgeworth's *Parent's Assistant* story "The Birthday Present" is one example: Rosamond makes this

fine-looking basket from expensive materials as a birthday gift for her cousin, but it disintegrates upon being handled. Although the dollhouse is not the sole (material) object of the Edgeworths' disapproval, the specifics of their qualms—and their suggestion of an “unfurnished baby-house” as an antidote—are highly relevant to my argument.

4. The Rustins' discussion of Godden's *The Kitchen Madonna* (1967) is an exception. As the critics note, *The Kitchen Madonna* does not really involve a doll per se, but instead an icon crafted by the child protagonist as a gift to an adult. The book illustrates “the development that can take place in the internal world of a child through the making of a work of art, rather than through play and make believe” (103). It is significant that the Rustins attribute such power to “the making of a work of art,” but fail to acknowledge the same in the work of craft.

5. The other critic is Lynne Rosenthal, in the Twayne's English Authors series volume on Godden.

6. With reference to wishing in Godden, Kuznets explains, “Depicted as conscious and desiring in all of Godden's doll stories, dolls are also shown to be totally dependent on sympathetic human owners for the fulfillment of their wishes” (“Taking Over” 147). The Rustins echo this statement: “The dolls can talk to each other, but not to people. In relation to children, who are very important to them, they are passive, and able to do no more than wish” (84). All critics isolate the importance of wishing in these doll stories as a process that connects child and doll; and, more broadly, the Rustins assert that in these stories “a child's moment of emotional crisis . . . is echoed and elaborated in metaphorical terms in the lives of the dolls” (91). For more on wishing in Godden, see Kuznets, *Toys Come Alive* 111.

7. Although Roland Barthes never mentions dollhouses by name in his essay on toys in *Mythologies*, he explores this distinction. In relation to most toys, he says, “the child can only identify himself as owner, as user, never as creator; he does not invent the world, he uses it: there are, prepared for him, actions without adventure, without wonder, without joy” (54).

8. *Dolls' Day* also involves a considerable amount of familial making and craft, with Momoko's beautiful heirloom Japanese dolls destroyed by Allied bombing raids on Japan and painstakingly remade in origami by her mother.

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