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### The Children's Hour

BY HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

Between the dark and the daylight,  
When the night is beginning to lower,  
Comes a pause in the day's occupations,  
That is known as the Children's Hour.

I hear in the chamber above me  
The patter of little feet,  
The sound of a door that is opened,  
And voices soft and sweet.

From my study I see in the lamplight,  
Descending the broad hall stair,  
Grave Alice, and laughing Allegra,  
And Edith with golden hair.

A whisper, and then a silence:  
Yet I know by their merry eyes  
They are plotting and planning together  
To take me by surprise.

A sudden rush from the stairway,  
A sudden raid from the hall!  
By three doors left unguarded  
They enter my castle wall!

They climb up into my turret  
O'er the arms and back of my chair;  
If I try to escape, they surround me;  
They seem to be everywhere.

They almost devour me with kisses,  
Their arms about me entwine,  
Till I think of the Bishop of Bingen  
In his Mouse-Tower on the Rhine!

Do you think, O blue-eyed banditti,  
Because you have scaled the wall,  
Such an old mustache as I am  
Is not a match for you all!

I have you fast in my fortress,  
And will not let you depart,  
But put you down into the dungeon

In the round-tower of my heart.

And there will I keep you forever,  
Yes, forever and a day,  
Till the walls shall crumble to ruin,  
And moulder in dust away!