

## **Ellis Parker Butler**

## The Water Goats, and Other Troubles

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## I. THE WATER GOATS

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"And then," said the landscape gardener, combing his silky, pointed beard gently with his long, artistic fingers, "in the lake you might have a couple of gondolas. Two would be sufficient for a lake of this size; amply sufficient. Yes," he said firmly, "I would certainly advise gondolas. They look well, and the children like to ride on them. And so do the adults. I would have two gondolas in the lake."

Mayor Dugan and the City Council, meeting as a committee of the whole to receive the report of the landscape gardener and his plan for the new public park, nodded their heads sagely.

"Sure!" said Mayor Dugan. "We want two of thim—of thim gon—thim gon—"

"Gondolas," said the landscape gardener. "Sure!" said Mayor Dugan, "we want two of thim. Remimber th' gondolas, Toole."

"I have thim fast in me mind," said Toole. "I will not let thim git away, Dugan."

The landscape gardener stood a minute in deep thought, looking at the ceiling.

"Yes, that is all!" he said. "My report, and the plan, and what I have mentioned, will be all you need."

Then he shook hands with the mayor and with all the city councilmen and left Jeffersonville forever, going back to New York where landscape gardeners grow, and the doors were opened and the committee of the whole became once more the regular meeting of the City Council. The appropriation for the new park was rushed through in twenty minutes, passing the second and third readings by the reading of the title under a suspension of the by-laws, and being unanimously adopted. It was a matter of life and death with Mayor Dugan and his ring. Jeffersonville was getting tired of the joyful grafters, and murmurs of discontent were concentrating into threats of a reform party to turn the cheerful rascals out. The new park was to be a sop thrown to the populace—something to make the city proud of itself and grateful to its mayor and council. It was more than a pet scheme of Mayor Dugan, it was a lifeboat for the ring. In half an hour the committees had been appointed, and the mayor turned to the regular business. Then from his seat at the left of the last row little Alderman Toole arose.

"Misther Mayor," he said, "how about thim—thim don—thim don—Golas!" whispered Alderman Grevemeyer hoarsely, "dongolas."

"How about thim dongolas, Misther Mayor?" asked Alderman Toole.

"Sure!" said the mayor. "Will annyone move that we git two dongolas t' put in th' lake for th' kids t' ride on? Will annyone move that Alderman Toole be a conmittee of wan t' git two dongolas t' put in th' lake?"

"I make dot motions," said Alderman Greveneyer, half raising his great bulk from his seat and sinking back with a grunt.

"Sicond th' motion," said Alderman Toole.

"Moved and siconded," said the mayor, "that Alderman Toole be a committee t' buy two dongolas t' put in th' lake