

### **The Third Surprise - THE TRAMP DOG AND THE MONARCH'S LOST TEMPER**

One day the Monarch of Mo, having nothing better to do, resolved to go hunting blackberries among the bushes that grew at the foot of the mountains.

So he put on an old crown that would not get tarnished if it rained, and, having found a tin pail in the pantry, started off without telling any one where he was going.

For some distance the path was a nice, smooth taffy, that was very agreeable to walk on; but as he got nearer the mountains the ground became gravelly, the stones being jackson-balls and gum-drops; so that his boots, which were a little green when he picked them, began to hurt his feet.

But the King was not easily discouraged, and kept on until he found the blackberry bushes, when he immediately began to fill his pail, the berries being remarkably big and sweet.

While thus occupied he heard a sound of footsteps coming down the mountain side, and presently a little dog ran out from the bushes and trotted up to him.

Now there were no dogs at all in Mo, and the King had never seen a creature like this before; therefore he was greatly surprised, and said:

"What are you, and where do you come from?"

The dog also was surprised at this question, and looked suspiciously at the King's tin pail; for many times wicked boys had tied such a pail to the end of his tail. In fact, that was the reason he had run away from home and found his way, by accident, to the Valley of Mo.

"My name is Prince," replied the gravely; "and I have come from a country beyond the mountains and the desert."

"Indeed! are you in truth a prince?" exclaimed the monarch; "then you will be welcome in my kingdom, where we always treat nobility with proper respect. But why do you have four feet?"

"Because six would be too many," replied the dog.

"But I have only two," said the King.

"I am sorry," said the dog, who was something of a wag, "because where I come from it is more fashionable to walk on four feet."

"I like to be in the fashion," remarked the King, thoughtfully; "but what am I to do, having only two legs?"

"Why, I suppose you could walk on your hands and feet," returned the dog with a laugh.

"So I will," said the King, being pleased with the idea; "and you shall come to the palace with me and teach me all the fashions of the country from whence you came."

The King got down on his hands and knees, and was delighted to find he could get along in this way very nicely.

"How am I to carry my pail?" he asked.

"In your mouth, of course," replied the dog. This suggestion seeming a happy one, the King took the pail in his mouth and they started back toward the palace. But when his Majesty came to the gum-drops and jackson-balls they hurt his hands and knees, so that he groaned aloud. But the dog only laughed. Finally they reached a place where it was quite muddy. Of course the mud was only jelly, but it hadn't dried up since the last rain. The dog jumped over the place nimbly enough, but when the King tried to do likewise he failed, and came down into the jelly with both hands and knees, and stuck fast.

Now the monarch had a very good temper, which he carried in his vest pocket; but as he passed over the gum-drop pebbles on his hands and knees this temper dropped out of his pocket, and, having lost it, he became very angry at the dog for getting him into such a scrape.

So he began to scold, and when he opened his mouth the pail dropped out and the berries were all spilled. This made the dog laugh more than ever, at which the King pulled himself out of the jelly, jumped to his feet, and began to chase the dog as fast as he could. Finally the dog climbed a tall tree where the King could not reach him, and when safe among the branches he looked down and said: "See how foolish a man becomes who tries to be in fashion rather than live as nature intended he should! You

can no more be a dog than I can be a king; so hereafter, if you are wise, you will be content to walk on two legs."

"There is much truth in what you say," replied the Monarch of Mo. "Come with me to the palace, and you shall be forgiven; indeed, we shall have a fine feast in honor of your arrival."

So the dog climbed down from the tree and followed the King to the palace, where all the courtiers were astonished to see so queer an animal, and made a great favorite of him.

After dinner the King invited the dog to take a walk around the grounds of the royal mansion, and they started out merrily enough. But the King's boots had begun to hurt him again; for, as they did not fit, being picked green, they had rubbed his toes until he had corns on them. So when they reached the porch in front of the palace the King asked:

"My friend, what is good for corns?"

"Tight boots," replied the dog, laughing; "but they are not very good for your feet."

Now the King, not yet having found his lost temper, became exceedingly angry at this poor jest; so he rushed at the dog and gave it a tremendous kick.

Up into the air like a ball flew the dog, while the King, having hurt his toe by the kick, sat down on the door-step and nursed his foot while he watched the dog go farther and farther up, until it seemed like a tiny speck against the blue of the sky.

"I must have kicked harder than I thought," said the King, ruefully; "there he goes, out of sight, and I shall never see him again!"

He now limped away into the back garden, where he picked a new pair of boots that would not hurt his feet; and while he was gone the dog began to fall down again. Of course he fell faster than he went up, and finally landed with a crash exactly on the King's door-step. But so great was the force of the fall and so hard the door-step that the poor dog was flattened out like a pancake, and could not move a bit.

When the King came back he said:

"Hullo! some kind friend has brought me a new door-mat as a present," and he leaned down and stroked the soft hair with much pleasure. Then he wiped his feet on the new mat and went into the palace to tell the Queen.

When her Majesty saw the nice, soft door-mat she declared it was too good to be left outside; so she brought it into the parlor and put it on the floor before the fire-place.

The good King was sorry he had treated the dog so harshly, and for fear he might do some other dreadful thing he went back to the place where he had lost his temper and searched until he found it again, when he put it carefully away in his pocket where it would stay.

Then he returned to the palace and entered the parlor; but as he passed the mat, his new boots were so clumsy, he stumbled against the edge and pushed the mat together into a roll.

Immediately the dog gave a bark, got upon its legs and said:

"Well, this is better! Now I can breathe again, but while I was so flat I could not draw a single breath."

The monarch and his Queen were much surprised to find that what they had taken for a mat was only the dog, that had fallen so flat on their door-step; but they could not forbear laughing at his queer appearance. For, as the King had kicked the mat on the edge, the dog was more than six feet long, and no bigger around than a lead-pencil; which brought its front legs so far from its rear legs that it could scarcely turn around in the room without getting tangled up.

"But it is better than being a door-mat," said the dog; and the King and Queen agreed with him in this.

Then the King went away to tell the people he had found the dog again, and when he left the palace he slammed the front door behind him. The dog had started to follow the King out, so when the front door slammed it hit the poor animal so sharp a blow on the nose that it pushed his body together again; and, lo and behold! there was the dog in his natural shape, just as he was before the King kicked him.

After this the dog and the King agreed very well; for the King was careful not to kick, since he had recovered his temper, and the dog took care not to say anything that would provoke the King to anger.

And one day the dog saved the Kingdom and all the Valley of Mo from destruction, as I shall tell you another time.