

## **The Fourth Surprise - THE PECULIAR PAINS OF FRUITCAKE ISLAND**

Prince Zingle, who was the eldest of all the princes of the Valley of Mo, at one time became much irritated because the King, his father, would not allow him to milk the cow with the golden horns. This cow was a great favorite with the King, because she gave as large a quantity of ice-cream at a milking as an ordinary cow does of milk, and in the warm days this was an agreeable luxury. The King liked to keep the cow with the golden horns for his own use and that of the Queen; so Prince Zingle thought he was being abused, having a great fondness for ice-cream himself.

To be sure, there was the great fountain of ice-cream soda-water playing constantly in the courtyard, which was free to every one; but the Prince longed for what he could not have.

Therefore, being filled with anger against his father, the King, he wandered away until he chanced to come near to the castle of the Purple Dragon.

When the wicked monster saw the Prince, it decided that here was a splendid opportunity to make mischief; so it said, politely:

"Good morning, King Zingle."

"I am not a king--I am only a prince," replied Zingle.

"What! not a king?" exclaimed the Dragon, as if surprised; "that is too bad."

"I can never be a king while my father lives," continued the Prince, "and it is impossible for him to die. So what can I do?"

"Since you ask my advice, I will tell you," answered the naughty Dragon. "Down near Rootbeer River, where the peanut trees grow, is a very deep hole in the ground. You must get the King to go and look into this hole, and while he is leaning over the edge, push him in. Of course, he will not die, for that, as you say, is impossible; but no one will know where to find him. So, your father being out of the way, you will be king in his place."

"That is surely good advice," said the Prince, "and I will go and do it at once. Then the cow with the golden horns will be mine, and I shall become the Monarch of Mo."

The Prince turned to go back to the palace, and as soon as he was out of sight, the horrid Dragon laughed to think what a fool it had made of the boy.

When Zingle saw his father he called him aside and said:

"Your Majesty, I have discovered something very funny at the bottom of the hole near the peanut trees. Come and see what it is."

So the King went with the Prince, without suspecting his evil design, and while he leaned over the hole the Prince gave him a sudden push. The next moment down fell the Monarch of Mo--way to the bottom!

Then Prince Zingle went back to the palace and began to milk the cow with the golden horns.

Now when the King found himself at the bottom of the hole he at first did not know what to do; so he sat down and thought about it. Presently a happy idea came into his head. He knew if only he was at the other end of the hole, he would be at the top instead of the bottom, and could make his escape. So the King took hold of the hole, and exerting all his strength, turned the hole upside down. Being now at the top he stepped upon the ground and walked back to the palace, where he caught Prince Zingle milking the cow with the golden horns.

"Oh, ho!" he said, "you wish to be King, do you? Well, we'll see about that!" Then he took the naughty Prince by the ear and led him into the palace, where he locked him up in a room from which he could not escape.

The King now sat himself down in an easy chair and began to think on how he could best punish the Prince, but after an hour of deep thought he was unable to decide on anything that seemed a sufficient chastisement for so great an offense.

At last he resolved to consult the Wise Donkey.

The Wise Donkey lived in a pretty little house away at the end of the Valley, for he didn't like to mix with the gay life at the court. He had not

always been wise, but at one time was a very stupid donkey indeed, and he acquired his wisdom in this way.

One Friday afternoon, just as school was letting out, the stupid donkey strayed into the school-house, and the teachers and scholars were all so anxious to get home that they never noticed the donkey, but locked him up in the school-house and went away without knowing he was there.

No one came into the building from Friday afternoon until Monday morning; so the donkey got very hungry, and certainly would have starved had he not chanced to taste of a geography that was sticking out from one of the desks. The hungry donkey decided it was not so very bad, so he ate it all up. Then he ate an arithmetic, an algebra, and two first readers. After that he lay down and went to sleep; but becoming hungry again he awoke and commenced on the school library, which he completely devoured. This library comprised all the solid and substantial wisdom in the Valley of Mo, and when the janitor opened the school-house door on Monday morning, all the books of learning in the whole land had been eaten up by the stupid donkey.

You can readily understand that after he had digested all this knowledge he became very wise, and thereafter the King and the people often consulted the Wise Donkey when their own intelligence was at fault.

So now the monarch went to the donkey's house and told him of the Prince's wickedness, asking how he could best punish him.

The Wise Donkey thought about the matter for a moment and then replied:

"I do not know a worse punishment than a pain in the stomach. Among the books I ate in the school-house was a trigonometry, and before I had digested it I suffered very severe pains indeed."

"But I can not feed the Prince a trigonometry," returned the King. "You ate the last one yourself."

"True," answered the donkey; "but there are other things that cause pain in the stomach. You know there is a certain island in Rootbeer River that is made of fruit cake of a very rich quality. I advise you to put the Prince on this island and allow him nothing to eat except the fruit cake. Presently he will have violent pains in his stomach and will be punished as greatly as you could desire."

The King was well pleased with this plan, and having thanked the donkey for his wise advice hurried back to the palace.

Prince Zingle was now brought from his room and rowed in a boat to the Fruit Cake Island in Rootbeer River, where he was left without any way to escape. He knew how to swim, to be sure, but it was forbidden by law to swim in the Rootbeer, as many people came to this river to drink.

"You shall stay here," said the King, sternly, "until you are sorry for your wickedness; and you shall have nothing to eat but fruit cake."

The Prince laughed, because he thought the punishment was no punishment at all. When the King had rowed away in the boat and Zingle was left alone, he said to himself:

"Why, this is delightful! I shall have a jolly time here, and can eat all the cake I want, without any one scolding me for being greedy."

He broke off a large piece of the island where the raisins and citron were thickest, and commenced to eat it. But after a time he became tired of eating nothing but fruit cake, and longed for something to go with it. But the island did not contain a single thing except the cake of which it was composed.

Presently Prince Zingle began to have a pain inside him. He paid no attention to it at first, thinking it would pass away; but instead it grew more severe, so that he began to cry out; but no one heard him.

The pain steadily increased, and the Prince wept and rolled on the ground and began to feel exceeding sorry he had been so wicked. Finally he seized the telephone, which was connected with the palace, and called up the King.

"Hullo!" said the King's voice, in reply; "what's wanted?"

"I have a terrible pain," said the Prince, with a groan, "and I'm very sorry indeed that I pushed your Majesty down the hole. If you'll only take me off this dreadful island I'll be the best prince in all the Valley from this time forth!"

So the King sent the boat and had the Prince brought back to the palace, where he forgave his naughty actions. Being a kind parent he next fed

his suffering son a blossom from a medicine tree, which quickly relieved his pain and led him to appreciate the pleasure of repentance.