

## **The Eighth Surprise - THE BRAVERY OF PRINCE JOLLIKIN**

There is no country so delightful but that it suffers some disadvantages, and so it was with the Valley of Mo. At times the good people were obliged to leave their games and sports to defend themselves against a foe or some threatened disaster. But there was one danger they never suspected, which at last came upon them very suddenly.

Away at the eastern end of the Valley was a rough plain, composed entirely of loaf sugar covered with boulders of rock candy which were piled up in great masses reaching nearly to the foot of the mountains, containing many caves and recesses.

The people seldom came here, as there was nothing to tempt them, the rock candy being very hard and difficult to walk on.

In one of the great hollows formed by the rock candy lived a monstrous Gigaboo, completely shut in by the walls of its cavern. It had been growing and growing for so many years that it had attained an enormous size.

For fear you may not know what a Gigaboo is I shall describe this one. Its body was round, like that of a turtle, and on its back was a thick shell. From the center of the body rose a long neck, much like that of a goose, with a most horrible looking head perched on the top of it. This head was round as a ball, and had four mouths on the sides of it and seven eyes set in a circle and projecting several inches from the head. The Gigaboo walked on ten short but thick legs, and in front of its body were two long arms, tipped with claws like those of a lobster. So sharp and strong were these claws that the creature could pinch a tree in two easily. Its eyes were remarkably bright and glittering, one being red in color, another green, and the others yellow, blue, black, purple and crimson.

It was a dreadful monster to see--only no one had yet seen it, for it had grown up in the confinement of its cave.

But one day the Gigaboo became so big and strong that in turning around it broke down the walls of the cavern, and finding itself at liberty, the monster walked out into the lovely Valley of Mo to see how much evil it could do.

The first thing the Gigaboo came to was a large orchard of preserved apricots, and after eating a great quantity of the preserves it wilfully cut off the trees with its sharp claws and utterly ruined them. Why the Gigaboo should have done this I can not tell; but scientists say these creatures are by nature destructive, and love to ruin everything they come across.

One of the people, being in the neighborhood, came on the monster and witnessed its terrible deeds; whereupon he ran in great terror to tell the King that the Gigaboo was on them and ready to destroy the entire valley. Although no one had ever before seen a Gigaboo, or even heard of one, the news was so serious that in a short time the King and many of his people came to the place where the monster was, all having hastily armed themselves with swords and spears.

But when they saw the Gigaboo they were afraid, and stood gazing at it in alarm, without knowing what to do or how to attack it.

"Who among us can hope to conquer this great beast?" asked the King, in dismay. "Yet something must be done, or soon we shall not have a tree left standing in all the Valley of Mo." The people looked at one another in a frightened way, but no one volunteered his services or offered to advise the monarch what to do.

At length Prince Jollikin, who had been watching the monster earnestly, stepped forward and offered to fight the Gigaboo alone.

"In a matter of this kind," said he, "one man is as good as a dozen. So you will all stand back while I see where the beast can best be attacked."

"Is your sword sharp?" asked his father, the King, anxiously.

"It was the sharpest on the tree," replied the Prince. "If I fail to kill the monster, at least it can not kill me, although it may cause me some annoyance. At any rate, our trees must be saved, so I will do the best I can."

With this manly speech he walked straight toward the Gigaboo, which, when it saw him approaching, raised and lowered its long neck and twirled its head around, so that all the seven eyes might get a glimpse of its enemy.

Now you must remember, when you read what follows, that no inhabitant of the Valley of Mo can ever be killed by anything. If one is cut to pieces, the pieces still live; and, although this seems strange, you will find, if you ever go to this queer Valley, that it is true. Perhaps it was the knowledge of this fact that made Prince Jollikin so courageous.

"If I can but manage to cut off that horrible head with my sword," thought he, "the beast will surely die."

So the Prince rushed forward and made a powerful stroke at its neck; but the blow fell short, and cut off, instead, one of the Gigaboo's ten legs. Quick as lightning the monster put out a claw and nipped the Prince's arm which held the sword, cutting it from its body. As the sword fell the Prince caught it in his other hand and struck again; but the blow fell on the beast's shell, and did no harm.

The Gigaboo, now very angry, at once nipped off the Prince's left arm with one of its claws, and his head with the other. The arm fell on the ground and the head rolled down a little hill behind some bonbon bushes. The Prince, having lost both arms, and his head as well, now abandoned the fight and turned to run, knowing it would be folly to resist the monster further. But the Gigaboo gave chase, and so swiftly did its nine legs carry it that soon it overtook the Prince and nipped off both his legs.

Then, its seven eyes flashing with anger, the Gigaboo turned toward the rest of the people, as if seeking a new enemy; but the brave Men of Mo, seeing the sad plight of their Prince and being afraid of the awful nippers on the beast's claws, decided to run away; which they did, uttering as they went loud cries of terror.

But had they looked back they might not have gone so fast nor so far; for when the Gigaboo heard their cries it, in turn, became frightened, having been accustomed all its life to silence; so that it rushed back to its cavern of rock candy and hid itself among the boulders.

When Prince Jollikin's head stopped rolling, he opened his eyes and looked about him, but could see no one; for the people and the Gigaboo had now gone. So, being unable to move, he decided to lie quiet for a time, and this was not a pleasant thing for an active young man like the Prince to do. To be sure, he could wiggle his ears a bit, and wink his eyes; but that was the extent of his powers. After a few minutes, because

he had a cheerful disposition and wished to keep himself amused, he began to whistle a popular song; and then, becoming interested in the tune, he whistled it over again with variations.

The Prince's left leg, lying a short distance away, heard his whistle, and, recognizing the variations, at once ran up to the head.

"Well," said the Prince, "here is a part of me, at any rate. I wonder where the rest of me can be."

Just then, hearing the sound of his voice, the right leg ran up to the head. "Where is my body?" asked the Prince. But the legs did not know.

"Pick up my head and place it on top of my legs," continued the Prince; "then, with my eyes and your feet, we can hunt around until we find the rest of me."

Obedying this command, the legs took the head and started off; and perhaps you can imagine how funny the Prince's head looked perched on his legs, with neither body nor arms.

After a careful search they found the body lying upon the ground at the foot of a shrimp-salad tree. But nothing more could be done without the arms; so they next searched for those, and, having discovered them, the legs kicked them to where the body lay.

The arms now took the head from the legs and put the legs on the body where they belonged. Then the right arm stuck the left arm in its place, after which the left arm picked up the right arm and placed it also where it belonged. Then all that remained was for the Prince to place his head on his shoulders, and there he was--as good as new!

He picked up his sword, and was feeling himself all over to see if he was put together right, when he chanced to look up and saw the Gigaboo again coming toward him. The beast had recovered from its fright, and, tempted by its former success, again ventured forth.

But Prince Jollikin did not intend to be cut to pieces a second time. He quickly climbed a tree and hid himself among the branches.

Presently the Gigaboo came to the tree and reached its head up to eat a cranberry tart. Quick as a flash the Prince swung his sword downward, and so true was his stroke that he cut off the monster's head with ease.

Then the Gigaboo rolled over on its back and died, for wild and ferocious beasts may be killed in Mo as well as in other parts of the world. Having vanquished his enemy, Prince Jollikin climbed down from the tree and went to tell the people that the Gigaboo was dead.

When they heard this joyful news they gave their Prince three cheers, and loved him better than ever for his bravery. The King was so pleased that he presented his son with a tin badge, set with diamonds, on the back of which was engraved the picture of a Gigaboo.

Although Prince Jollikin was glad to be the hero of his nation, and enjoyed the triumph of having been able to conquer his ferocious enemy, he did not escape some inconvenience. For, as the result of his adventure, he found himself very stiff in the joints for several days after his fight with the Gigaboo.