

### **CHAPTER 3 - A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE**

They had early breakfasts at Trot's house, because they all went to bed early, and it is possible to sleep only a certain number of hours if one is healthy in body and mind. And right after breakfast Trot claimed Button-Bright's promise to take her to town with the Magic Umbrella.

"Any time suits me," said the boy. He had taken his precious umbrella to bed with him and even carried it to the breakfast table, where he stood it between his knees as he ate; so now he held it close to him and said he was ready to fly at a moment's notice. This confidence impressed Cap'n Bill, who said with a sigh:

"Well, if you **MUST** go, Trot, I've pervided a machine that'll carry you both comf'table. I'm summat of an inventor myself, though there ain't any magic about me."

Then he brought from the shed the contrivance he had made the night before. It was merely a swing seat. He had taken a wide board that was just long enough for both the boy and girl to sit upon, and had bored six holes in it, two holes at each end and two in the middle. Through these holes he had run stout ropes in such a way that the seat could not turn and the occupants could hold on to the ropes on either side of them. The ropes were all knotted together at the top, where there was a loop that could be hooked upon the crooked handle of the umbrella.

Button-Bright and Trot both thought Cap'n Bill's invention very clever. The sailor placed the board upon the ground while they sat in their places, Button-Bright at the right of Trot, and then the boy hooked the rope loop to the handle of the umbrella, which he spread wide open. "I want to go to the town over yonder," he said, pointing with his finger to the roofs of the houses that showed around the bend in the cliff.

At once the umbrella rose into the air, slowly at first, but quickly gathering speed. Trot and Button-Bright held fast to the ropes and were carried along very easily and comfortably. It seemed scarcely a minute before they were in the town, and when the umbrella set them down just in front of the store--for it seemed to know just where they wanted to go--a wondering crowd gathered around them. Trot ran in and changed the yarn, while Button-Bright stayed

outside and stared at the people who stared at him. They asked questions, too, wanting to know what sort of an aeroplane this was and where his power was stored and lots of other things, but the boy answered not a sound. When the little girl came back and took her seat, Button-Bright said, "I want to go to Trot's house."

The simple villagers could not understand how the umbrella suddenly lifted the two children into the air and carried them away. They had read of airships, but here was something wholly beyond their comprehension.

Cap'n Bill had stood in front of the house, watching with a feeling akin to bewilderment the flight of the Magic Umbrella. He could follow its course until it descended in the village, and he was so amazed and absorbed that his pipe went out. He had not moved from his position when the umbrella started back. The sailor's big blue eyes watched it draw near and settle down with its passengers upon just the spot it had started from.

Trot was joyous and greatly excited. "Oh, Cap'n, it's gal-lor-ious!" she cried in ecstasy. "It beats ridin' in a boat or--or--in anything else. You feel so light an' free an'--an'--glad! I'm sorry the trip didn't last longer, though. Only trouble is, you go too fast."

Button-Bright was smiling contentedly. He had proved to both Trot and Cap'n Bill that he had told the truth about the Magic Umbrella, however marvelous his tale had seemed to them. "I'll take you on another trip, if you like," said he. "I'm in no hurry to go home, and if you will let me stay with you another day, we can make two or three little trips with the family luck."

"You mus' stay a whole week," said Trot decidedly. "An' you mus' take Cap'n Bill for an air-ride, too."

"Oh, Trot! I dunno as I'd like it," protested Cap'n Bill nervously.

"Yes you would. You're sure to like it."

"I guess I'm too heavy."

"I'm sure the umbrella could carry twenty people if they could be fastened to the handle," said Button-Bright.

"Solid land's pretty good to hold on to," decided Cap'n Bill. "A rope might break, you know."

"Oh, Cap'n Bill! You're scared stiff," said Trot.

"I ain't, mate. It ain't that at all. But I don't see that human critters has any call to fly in the air, anyhow. The air were made for the birds, an'--an' muskeeters, an'--"

"An' flyin'-fishes," added Trot. "I know all that, Cap'n, but why wasn't it made for humans, too, if they can manage to fly in it? We breathe the air, an' we can breathe it high up, just as well as down on the earth."

"Seein' as you like it so much, Trot, it would be cruel for me to go with Butt'n-Bright an' leave you at home," said the sailor. "When I were younger--which is ancient history--an' afore I had a wooden leg, I could climb a ship's ropes with the best of 'em, an' walk out on a boom or stand atop a mast. So you know very well I ain't skeered about the highupness."

"Why can't we all go together?" asked the boy. "Make another seat, Cap'n, and swing it right under ours. Then we can all three ride anywhere we want to go."

"Yes, do!" exclaimed Trot. "And see here, Cap'n, let's take a day off and have a picnic. Mother is a little cross today, and she wants to finish knitting your new stockin', so I guess she'll be glad to get rid of us."

"Where'll we go?" he asked, shifting on his wooden leg uneasily.

"Anywhere. I don't care. There'll be the air-ride there an' the air-ride back, an' that's the main thing with ME. If you say we'll go, Cap'n, I'll run in an' pack a basket of lunch."

"How'll we carry it?"

"Swing it to the bottom of your seat."

The old sailor stood silent a moment. He really longed to take the air-ride but was fearful of danger. However, Trot had gone safely to town and back and had greatly enjoyed the experience. "All right," he said. "I'll risk it, mate, although I guess I'm an old fool for temptin' fate by tryin' to make a bird o' myself. Get the lunch, Trot, if your mother'll let you have it, and I'll rig up the seat."

He went into the shed and Trot went to her mother. Mrs. Griffith, busy with her work, knew nothing of what was going on in regard to the flight of the Magic Umbrella. She never objected when Trot wanted to go away with Cap'n Bill for a day's picnicking. She knew the child was perfectly safe with the old sailor, who cared for Trot even better than her mother would have done. If she

had asked any questions today and had found out they intended to fly in the air, she might have seriously objected, but Mrs. Griffith had her mind on other things and merely told the girl to take what she wanted from the cupboard and not bother her. So Trot, remembering that Button-Bright would be with them and had proved himself to be a hearty eater, loaded the basket with all the good things she could find.

By the time she came out, lugging the basket with both hands, Cap'n Bill appeared with the new seat he had made for his own use, which he attached by means of ropes to the double seat of the boy and girl. "Now then, where'll we go?" asked Trot.

"Anywhere suits me," replied Cap'n Bill. They had walked to the high bluff overlooking the sea, where a gigantic acacia tree stood on the very edge. A seat had been built around the trunk of the tree, for this was a favorite spot for Trot and Cap'n Bill to sit and talk and watch the fleet of fishing boats sail to and from the village. When they came to this tree, Trot was still trying to think of the most pleasant place to picnic. She and Cap'n Bill had been every place that was desirable and nearby, but today they didn't want a nearby spot. They must decide upon one far enough away to afford them a fine trip through the air. Looking far out over the Pacific, the girl's eyes fell upon a dim island lying on the horizon line just where the sky and water seemed to meet, and the sight gave her an idea.

"Oh, Cap'n Bill!" she exclaimed. "Let's go to that island for our picnic. We've never been there yet, you know."

The sailor shook his head. "It's a good many miles away, Trot," he said, "further than it looks to be from here."

"That won't matter," remarked Button-Bright. "The umbrella will carry us there in no time."

"Let's go!" repeated Trot. "We'll never have another such chance, Cap'n. It's too far to sail or row, and I've always wanted to visit that island."

"What's the name of it?" inquired Button-Bright while the sailor hesitated to decide.

"Oh, it's got an awful hard name to per-nounce," replied the girl, "so Cap'n Bill and I jus' call it 'Sky Island' 'cause it looks as if it was half in the sky. We've been told it's a very pretty island, and a few people live there and keep cows

and goats and fish for a living. There are woods and pastures and springs of clear water, and I'm sure we would find it a fine place for a picnic."

"If anything happened on the way," observed Cap'n Bill, "we'd drop in the water."

"Of course," said Trot, "and if anything happened while we were flyin' over the land, we'd drop there. But nothing's goin' to happen, Cap'n. Didn't Button-Bright come safe all the way from Philydelfy?"

"I think I'd like to go to Sky Island," said the boy. "I've always flown above the land so far, and it will be something new to fly over the ocean."

"All right, I'm agree'ble," decided Cap'n Bill. "But afore we starts on such a long journey, s'pose we make a little trial trip along the coast. I want to see if the new seat fits me an' make certain the umbrel will carry all three of us."

"Very well," said Button-Bright. "Where shall we go?"

"Let's go as far as Smuggler's Cove an' then turn 'round an' come back. If all's right an' shipshape, then we can start for the island."

They put the broad double seat on the ground, and then the boy and girl sat in their places and Button-Bright spread open the Magic Umbrella. Cap'n Bill sat in his seat just in front of them, all being upon the ground.

"Don't we look funny?" said Trot with a chuckle of glee. "But hold fast the ropes, Cap'n, an' take care of your wooden leg."

Button-Bright addressed the umbrella, speaking to it very respectfully, for it was a thing to inspire awe. "I want to go as far as Smuggler's Cove and then turn around in the air and come back here," he said. At once the umbrella rose into the air, lifting after it first the seat in which the children sat, and then Cap'n Bill's seat.

"Don't kick your heels, Trot!" cried the sailor in a voice that proved he was excited by his novel experience. "You might bump me in the nose."

"All right," she called back. "I'll be careful."

It was really a wonderful, exhilarating ride, and Cap'n Bill wasn't long making up his mind he liked the sensation. When about fifty feet above the ground the umbrella began moving along the coast toward Smuggler's Cove, which it soon reached. Looking downward, Cap'n Bill suddenly exclaimed, "Why, there' a

boat cast loose, an' it's goin' to smash on the rocks. Hold on a minute, Butt'n-Bright, till we can land an' drag it ashore."

"Hold on a minute, Umbrella!" cried the boy. But the Magic Umbrella kept steadily upon its way. It made a circle over the Cove and then started straight back the way it had come. "It's no use, sir," said Button-Bright to the sailor. "If I once tell it to go to a certain place, the umbrella will go there, and nowhere else. I've found that out before this. You simply CAN'T stop it."

"Won't let you change your mind, eh?" replied Cap'n Bill. "Well, that has its advantidges, an' its disadvantiges. If your ol' umbrel hadn't been so obstinate, we could have saved that boat."

"Never mind," said Trot briskly, "here we are safe back again. Wasn't it jus' the--the fascinatingest ride you ever took, Cap'n?"

"It's pretty good fun," admitted Cap'n Bill. "Beats them aeroplanes an' things all holler, 'cause it don't need any regulatin.'"

"If we're going to that island, we may as well start right away," said Button-Bright when they had safely landed.

"All right. I'll tie on the lunch-basket," answered the sailor. He fastened it so it would swing underneath his own seat, and they all took their places again.

"Ready?" asked the boy.

"Let 'er go, my lad."

"I want to go to Sky Island," said Button-Bright to the umbrella, using the name Trot had given him. The umbrella started promptly. It rose higher than before, carrying the three voyagers with it, and then started straight away over the ocean.