

CHAPTER 25 - THE RULER OF SKY ISLAND

The girl now took off Rosalie's ring and put it carefully away in her pocket. "It won't matter who sees me now," she remarked, "an' I want 'em to know that you an' me, Cap'n, are running this kingdom. I'm Queen o' the Pinkies an' Booloorooess o' the Blues, an'--"

"What's that?" asked the sailor. "You're--you're WHAT, Trot?"

"Booloorooess. Isn't that right, Cap'n?"

"I dunno, mate. It sounds bigger ner you are, an' I don't like the word, anyhow. S'pose you jus' call yourself the Boss? That fills the bill an' don't need pernouncin'."

"All right," she said. "Queen o' the Pinkies an' Boss o' the Blues. Seems funny, don't it, Cap'n Bill?"

Just then they heard a sound of footsteps in the corridor. The soldiers had recovered their courage, and fearful of the anger of their dreaded Boolooroo, whom the Princesses declared would punish them severely, had ventured to return to the room. They came rather haltingly, though, and the Captain of the Guards first put his head cautiously through the doorway to see if the coast was clear. The goat discovered him and tried to make a rush, but the rope held the animal back, and when the Captain saw this, he came forward more boldly.

"Halt!" cried Trot. The Captain halted, his soldiers peering curiously over his shoulders and the Six Snubnosed Princesses looking on from behind, where they considered themselves safe. "If anyone dares enter this room without my permission," said Trot, "I'll pull this cord and slice your master that once was the Boolooroo."

"Don't come in! Don't come in!" yelled the Boolooroo in a terrified voice.

Then they saw that the sailor was free and the Boolooroo bound in his place. The soldiers were secretly glad to observe this, but the Princesses were highly indignant. "Release his Majesty at once!" cried Indigo from the corridor. "You shall be severely punished for this rebellion."

"Don't worry," replied Trot. "His Majesty isn't his Majesty any longer. He's jus' a common Blueskin. Cap'n Bill and I perpose runnin' this Island ourselves,

after this. You've all got to obey ME, for I'm the Booloorooess--no, I mean the Boss--o' the Blues, and I've a notion to run things my own way."

"You can't," said Turquoise scornfully. "The Law says--"

"Bother the Law!" exclaimed Trot. "I'll make the Laws myself from now on, and I'll unmake every Law you ever had before I conquered you."

"Oh, have you conquered us, then?" asked the Captain of the Guards in a surprised tone.

"Of course," said Trot. "Can't you see?"

"It looks like it," admitted the Captain.

"Cap'n Bill is goin' to be my General o' the Army an' the Royal Manager o' the Blue Country," continued Trot, "so you'll mind what he says."

"Nonsense!" shouted Indigo. "March in and capture them, Captain! Never mind if they do slice the Boolooroo. I'm his daughter, and I'LL rule the kingdom."

"You won't!" screamed Cobalt. "I'll rule it!"

"I'll rule it myself!" cried Cerulia.

"No, no!" yelled Turquoise. "I'll be the Ruler."

"That shall be MY privilege!" shouted Sapphire. Cobalt began to say, "I'm the--"

"Be quiet!" said Trot sternly. "Would you have your own father sliced so that you could rule in his place?"

"Yes, yes, of course!" rejoined the six Princesses without a second's hesitation.

"Well, well! What d' ye think o' that, Mr. Boolooroo?" asked Cap'n Bill.

"They're undutiful daughters. Don't pay any attention to them," replied the frightened Boolooroo.

"We're not goin' to," said Trot. "Now, you Blue Cap'n, who are you and your soldiers going to obey, me or the snubnosed ones?"

"You!" declared the Captain of the Guards positively, for he hated the Princesses, as did all the Blueskins.

"Then escort those girls to their rooms, lock 'em in, an' put a guard before the door."

At once the soldiers seized the Princesses and notwithstanding their snarls and struggles marched them to their rooms and locked them in. While they were gone on this errand, the Boolooroo begged to be released, whining and wailing for fear the knife would fall upon him. But Trot did not think it safe to unbind him just then. When the soldiers returned, she told their leader to put a strong guard before the palace and to admit no one unless either she or Cap'n Bill gave the order to do so. The soldiers obeyed readily, and when Trot and Cap'n Bill were left alone, they turned the goat loose in the Room of the Great Knife and then locked the animal in with the Boolooroo.

"The billygoat is the very best guard we could have, for ever'body's 'fraid o' him," remarked Cap'n Bill as he put the key of the room in his pocket. "So now, Queen Trot, what's next on the program?"

"Next," said Trot, "we're goin' to hunt for that umbrel, Cap'n. I don't mean to stay in this dismal Blue Country long, even if I am the Queen. Let's find the umbrel and go home as soon as we can."

"That suits me," the sailor joyfully exclaimed, and then the two began a careful search through the palace. They went into every room and looked behind the furniture and underneath the beds and in every crack and corner, but no place could they spy the Magic Umbrella. Cap'n Bill even ventured to enter the rooms of the Six Snubnosed Princesses, who were by this time so thoroughly alarmed that they had become meek and mild as could be. But the umbrella wasn't there, either.

Finally, they returned to the great throne room of the palace, where they seated themselves on the throne and tried to think what could possibly have become of the precious umbrella. While they were sitting and talking together, the Captain of the Guards entered and bowed respectfully. "Beg pardon, your Small-Sized Majesty," said he to Trot, "but it is my duty to report that the Pinkies are preparing to attack the City."

"Oh! I'd forgotten the Pinkies!" exclaimed the girl. "Tell me, Captain, have you such a thing as a Brass Band in this City?"

"We have two fine bands, but they are not brass," replied the Captain. "Their instruments are made of blue metal."

"Well, order 'em out," commanded Trot. "And say, get all the soldiers together and tell all the people there's going to be a high time in the Blue City tonight. We'll have music and dancing and eating and--"

"An' neckties to drink, Trot. Don't forget the royal neckties," urged Cap'n Bill.

"We'll have all the fun there is going," continued the girl, "for we are to entertain the Army of the Pinkies."

"The Pinkies!" exclaimed the Captain of the Guards. "Why, they're our enemies, your Short Highness."

"Not any more," replied Trot. "I'm Queen of the Pinkies, an' I'm also Queen of the Blues, so I won't have my people quarreling. Tell the Blue people we are to throw open the gates and welcome the Pinkies to the City, where everybody will join in a grand celebration. And jus' as soon as you've spread the news an' got the bands tuned up and the soldiers ready to march, you let us know, and we'll head the procession."

"Your Microscopic Majesty shall be obeyed," said the Captain, and went away to carry out these commands.