

## CHAPTER 27 - THE FATE OF THE MAGIC UMBRELLA

Next morning the search for the Magic Umbrella began in earnest. With many to hunt for it and the liberty of the whole palace to aid them, every inch of the great building was carefully examined. But no trace of the umbrella could be found. Cap'n Bill and Button-Bright went down to the cabin of the former Boolooroo and tried to find out what he had done with the umbrella, but the old Boolooroo said,

"I had it brought from the Treasure Chamber and tried to make it work, but there was no magic about the thing. So I threw it away. I haven't any idea what became of it."

The six former Princesses were sitting upon a rude bench, looking quite bedraggled and untidy. Said Indigo:

"If you will make Ghip-Ghisizzle marry me, I'll find your old umbrella."

"Where is it?" asked Button-Bright eagerly.

"Make Ghip-Ghisizzle marry me, and I'll tell you," repeated Indigo. "But I won't say another word about it until after I am married."

So they went back to the palace and proposed to the new Boolooroo to marry Indigo so they could get their Magic Umbrella. But Ghip-Ghisizzle positively refused.

"I'd like to help you," said he, "but nothing will ever induce me to marry one of those snubnoses."

"They're very pretty--for Blueskins," said Trot.

"But when you marry a girl, you marry the inside as well as the outside," declared Ghip-Ghisizzle, "and inside these Princesses there are wicked hearts and evil thoughts. I'd rather be patched than marry the best of them."

"Which IS the best?" asked Button-Bright.

"I don't know, I'm sure," was the reply. "Judging from their actions in the past, there is no best."

Rosalie the Witch now went to the cabin and put Indigo into a deep sleep by means of a powerful charm. Then, while the Princess slept, the Witch made

her tell all she knew, which wasn't a great deal, to be sure; but it was soon discovered that Indigo had been deceiving them and knew nothing at all about the umbrella. She had hoped to marry Ghip-Ghisizzle and become Queen, after which she could afford to laugh at their reproaches. So the Witch woke her up and went back to the palace to tell Trot of her failure.

The girl and Button-bright and Cap'n Bill were all rather discouraged by this time, for they had searched high and low and had not found a trace of the all-important umbrella. That night none of them slept much, for they all lay awake wondering how they could ever return to the Earth and to their homes.

In the morning of the third day after Trot's conquest of the Blues, the little girl conceived another idea. She called all the servants of the palace to her and questioned them closely. But not one could remember having seen anything that looked like an umbrella.

"Are all the servants of the old Boolooroo here?" inquired Cap'n Bill, who was sorry to see Trot looking so sad and downcast.

"All but one," was the reply. "Tiggle used to be a servant, but he escaped and ran away."

"Oh, yes!" exclaimed Trot. "Tiggle is in hiding somewhere. Perhaps he doesn't know there's been a revolution and a new Boolooroo rules the country. If he did, there's no need for him to hide any longer, for he is now in no danger."

She now dispatched messengers all through the City and the surrounding country, who cried aloud for Tiggle, saying that the new Boolooroo wanted him. Tiggle, hiding in the cellar of a deserted house in a back street, at last heard these cries and joyfully came forth to confront the messengers. Having heard of the old Boolooroo's downfall and disgrace, the old man consented to go to the palace again, and as soon as Trot saw him she asked about the umbrella.

Tiggle thought hard for a minute and then said he remembered sweeping the King's rooms and finding a queer thing--that might have been an umbrella--lying beneath a cabinet. It had ropes and two wooden seats and a wicker basket all attached to the handle.

"That's it!" cried Button-Bright excitedly, and "That's it! That's it!" cried both Trot and Cap'n Bill.

"But what did you do with it?" asked Ghip-Ghisizzle.

"I dragged it out and threw it on the rubbish heap in an alley back of the palace," said Tiggie. At once they all rushed out to the alley and began digging in the rubbish heap. By and by Cap'n Bill uncovered the lunch basket, and pulling on this he soon drew up the two seats, and finally the Magic Umbrella.

"Hurrah!" shouted Button-Bright, grabbing the umbrella and hugging it tight in his arms.

"Hooray!" shrieked the parrot.

"Cap'n Bill's a lucky fellah, 'Cause he found the old umbrella!"

Trot's face was wreathed in smiles. "This is jus' the best luck that could have happened to us," she exclaimed, "'cause now we can go home whenever we please."

"Let's go now--this minute--before we lose the umbrella again," said Button-Bright.

But Trot shook her head. "Not yet," she replied. "We've got to straighten out things in Sky Island first of all. A Queen has some duties, you know, and as long as I'm Queen here, I've got to live up to the part."

"What has to be did, mate?" inquired Cap'n Bill.

"Well, we've fixed the Blue Country pretty well by makin' 'Sizzle the Boolooroo of it; but the Pinkies mus' be looked after, too, 'cause they've stood by us an' helped us to win. We must take 'em home again safe an' sound and get a new Queen to rule over 'em. When that's done, we can go home any time we want to."

"Quite right, Trot," said the sailor approvingly. "When do we march?"

"Right away," she replied. "I've had enough of the Blue Country, haven't you?"

"We have, mate."

"We've had plenty of it," observed Button-Bright.

"And the Pinkies are anxious to get home," added Rosalie, who was present.

So Cap'n Bill unhooked the seats from the handle of the umbrella and wound the ropes around the two boards and made a package of them, which he carried under his arm. Trot took the empty lunch basket, and Button-Bright

held fast to the precious umbrella. Then they returned to the palace to bid goodbye to Ghip-Ghisizzle and the Blues.

The new Boolooroo seemed rather sorry to lose his friends, but the people were secretly glad to get rid of the strangers, especially of the Pinkies. They maintained a sullen silence while Coralie and Captain Tintint formed their ranks in marching order, and they did not even cheer when Trot said to them in a final speech:

"I'm the Queen of Sky Island, you know, and the new Boolooroo has to carry out my orders and treat you all nicely while I'm away. I don't know when I'll come back, but you'd better watch out an' not make any trouble, or I'll find a way to make you sorry for it. So now, goodbye!"

"And good riddance!" screamed the Six Snubnosed Girls who had once been Princesses and who were now in the crowd that watched the departure.

But Trot paid no attention to them. She made a signal to the Pinkie Band, which struck up a fine Pink March, and then the Army stepped out with the left foot first, and away went the conquerors down the streets of the Blue City, out of the blue-barred gateway and across the country toward the Fog Bank.