

## CHAPTER 30 - THE JOURNEY HOME

After the Pinkies had been dismissed, their new Queen Rosalie, by means of a clever charm, conjured up a dinner table set with very nice things to eat. They all enjoyed a hearty meal and afterward sat and talked over their adventures.

"Will you take the parrot home with you, Trot?" asked Cap'n Bill.

"Guess not, Cap'n," she answered. "Mother wouldn't like to have him hangin' 'round an' screechin' bad po'try ev'ry minute. I'll give him to Rosalie, for I'm sure she'll take good care of him."

Rosalie accepted the gift with pleasure, but the parrot looked sober for a while and then said,

"This looks to me like a giveaway; But here I am, and here I'll stay. The country's pink, but we'll all be blue When Trot goes home as she says she'll do."

They now packed the lunchbasket with the remains of the feast, for they knew a long journey was before them and feared they might be hungry before they landed again. Cap'n Bill straightened out the ropes and adjusted the seats, while Button-Bright examined the umbrella to see if it had been injured in any way when the elephant tramped through the Fog Bank.

The boy looked into the small red eyes of the carved elephant's-head handle with some misgivings, but as seen in the strong sunshine the eyes were merely red stones, while the handle plainly showed the marks of the tool that had carved it.

When all was ready, they went into the Court of the Statues, where all the Pinkies were assembled--together with their Pink Band--and Cap'n Bill hooked the swinging seats onto the handle of the Magic Umbrella.

Trot kissed Rosalie and Coralie and Tourmaline goodbye and said to them:

"If you ever happen to come to Earth, you must be sure to visit me, and I'll try to give you a good time. But p'raps you'll stay here all your lives."

"I think we shall," replied Rosalie, laughing, "for in all Sky Island there will be no Magic Umbrella for us to fly with."

"And when you see Polychrome," added Trot, "jus' give her my love."

Then she and Button-Bright seated themselves in the double seat, which was flat upon the pink ground, and Cap'n Bill sat before them on his own seat, to which the lunch basket had been fastened by means of a stout cord.

"Hold fast!" said the sailor man, and they all held fast to the ropes while the boy, glancing up toward the open umbrella he held, said solemnly and distinctly:

"Take us to Trot's house on the Earth." The umbrella obeyed, at once mounting into the air. It moved slowly at first, but gradually increased its speed. First it lifted the seat of the boy and the girl, then Cap'n Bill's seat, and finally the lunch basket.

"Fly high!--Mind your eye! Don't cry!--Bye-bye!"

shouted the parrot from the Pink Witch's shoulder.

Trot leaned over and waved her hand. The Pink Band played as loud as it could--in order that the travelers might hear it as long as possible--and Rosalie and Coralie and Tourmaline threw kisses to their vanishing friends as long as they remained in sight.

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"Seems good to be on the way home again," remarked Trot as the umbrella bumped into a big, black cloud.

"It reely does, mate," answered the sailorman joyously.

Fast through the cloud the umbrella swept, and then suddenly it sailed into a clear, blue sky, across which a great and gorgeous Rainbow spread its radiant arch. Upon the bow danced the dainty Daughters of the Rainbow, and the umbrella passed near enough to it for the passengers to observe Polychrome merrily leading her sisters, her fleecy robes waving prettily in the gentle breeze.

"Goodbye, Polly!" cried Button-Bright, and Trot and Cap'n Bill both called out, "Goodbye!"

Polychrome heard and nodded to them smilingly, never halting in her graceful dance. Then the umbrella dropped far below the arch, which presently faded from view.

It was an exciting ride. Scenes presented themselves entirely different from those they had seen on their former voyage, for the sky changes continually, and the clouds of a moment ago are not the clouds of an hour ago. Once they passed between two small stars as brilliant as diamonds, and once an enormous bird whose wings spread so wide that they shadowed the sun soared directly over them and lost itself in the vague distance of the limitless sky.

They rode quite comfortably, however, and were full of eager interest in what they saw. The rush of air past them made them hungry, so Cap'n Bill drew up the lunchbasket and held it so that Button-Bright and Trot could help themselves to the pink food, which tasted very good. And finally a dark rim appeared below them, which the sailor declared must be the Earth. He proved to be correct, and when they came nearer, they found themselves flying over the waves of the ocean. Pretty soon a small island appeared, and Trot exclaimed,

"That's the Sky Island we thought we were goin' to--only we didn't."

"Yes, an' there's the mainland, mate!" cried Cap'n Bill excitedly, pointing toward a distant coast.

On swept the Magic Umbrella. Then its speed gradually slackened; the houses and trees on the coast could be seen, and presently--almost before they realized it--they were set down gently upon the high bluff near the giant acacia. A little way off stood the white cottage where Trot lived.

It was growing dusk as Cap'n Bill unhooked the seats and Button-Bright folded up the umbrella and tucked it under his arm. Trot seized the lunchbasket and ran to the house, where she found her mother busy in the kitchen.

"Well, I'm back again," said the little girl. "Is supper ready, mama?"

Button-Bright stayed all night with them, but next morning, bright and early, he hooked one of the seats to his Magic Umbrella, said goodbye to Trot and Cap'n Bill, and flew into the air to begin his journey to Philadelphia. Just before he started, Trot said:

"Let me know if you get home safe, Button-Bright, an' come an' see me again as quick as you can."

"I'll try to come again," said the boy. "We've had a good time, haven't we, Trot?"

"The bes' time I EVER had!" she replied enthusiastically. Then she asked, "Didn't you like it, too, Cap'n Bill?"

"Parts o' it, mate," the sailor answered as he thoughtfully made marks in the sand with the end of his wooden leg, "but seems to me the bes' part of all was gett'n' home again."

After several days Trot received a postal card from Button-Bright. It was awkwardly scrawled, for the boy was not much of a writer, but Trot managed to make out the words. It read as follows:

"Got home safe, Trot, and the folks were so worried they forgot to scold me. Father has taken the Magic Umbrella and locked it up in the big, strong chest in the attic. He put the key in his own pocket, so I don't know as I'll ever be able to see you again. But I'll never forget the Queen of Sky Island, and I send my love to you and Cap'n Bill.

"Your friend,

"Button-Bright."

THE END