

Chapter VII - Twinkle Gets Thirsty

AFTER they had seen the sights of the city the carriage turned into a broad highway that led into the country, and soon they began to pass fields of sugar corn and gardens of sugar cabbages and sugar beets and sugar potatoes. There were also orchards of sugar plums and sugar apples and vineyards of sugar grapes. All the trees were sugar, and even the grass was sugar, while sugar grasshoppers hopped about in it. Indeed, Chubbins decided that not a speck of anything beneath the dome of Sugar-Loaf Mountain was anything but pure sugar--unless the inside of the frosted man proved to be of a different material.

By and by they reached a pretty villa, where they all left the carriage and followed the sugar king into the sugar house. Refreshments had been ordered in advance, over the sugar telephone, so that the dining table was already laid and all they had to do was to sit in the pretty sugar chairs and be waited upon by maple-sugar attendants.

There were sandwiches and salads and fruits and many other sugar things to eat, served on sugar plates; and the children found that some were flavored with winter-green and raspberry and lemon, so that they were almost as good as candies. At each plate was a glass made of crystal sugar and filled with thick sugar syrup, and this seemed to be the only thing to drink. After eating so much sugar the children naturally became thirsty, and when the king asked Twinkle if she would like anything else she answered promptly:

"Yes, I'd like a drink of water."

At once a murmur of horror arose from the sugar people present, and the king pushed back his chair as if greatly disturbed.

"Water!" he exclaimed, in amazement.

"Sure," replied Chubbins. "I want some, too. We're thirsty."

The king shuddered.

"Nothing in the world," said he gravely, "is so dangerous as water. It melts sugar in no time, and to drink it would destroy you instantly."

"We're not made of sugar," said Twinkle. "In our country we drink all the water we want."

"It may be true," returned the king; "but I am thankful to say there is no drop of water in all this favored country. But we have syrup, which is much better for your health. It fills up the spaces inside you, and hardens and makes you solid."

"It makes me thirstier than ever," said the girl. "But if you have no water we must try to get along until we get home again."

When the luncheon was over, they entered the carriage again and were driven back towards the city. On the way the six sugar horses became restless, and pranced around in so lively a manner that the sugar coachman could scarcely hold them in. And when they had nearly reached the palace a part of the harness broke, and without warning all six horses dashed madly away. The chariot smashed against a high wall of sugar and broke into many pieces, the sugar people, as well as Twinkle and Chubbins, being thrown out and scattered in all directions.

The little girl was not at all hurt, nor was Chubbins, who landed on top the wall and had to climb down again. But the king had broken one of the points off his crown, and sat upon the ground gazing sorrowfully at his wrecked chariot. And Lord Cloy, the frosted man, had smashed one of his feet, and everybody could now see that underneath the frosting was a material very like marshmallow--a discovery that was sure to condemn him as unfit for the society of the solid sugar-loaf aristocracy of the country.

But perhaps the most serious accident of all had befallen Princess Sakareen, whose left leg had broken short off at the knee. Twinkle ran up to her as soon as she could, and found the Princess smiling happily and gazing at the part of the broken leg which she had picked up.

"See here, Twinkle," she cried; "it's as solid as the king himself! I'm not hollow at all. It was only my imagination."

"I'm glad of that," answered Twinkle; "but what will you do with a broken leg?"

"Oh, that's easily mended," said the Princess, "All I must do is to put a little syrup on the broken parts, and stick them together, and then sit in the breeze until it hardens. I'll be all right in an hour from now."

It pleased Twinkle to hear this, for she liked the pretty sugar princess.