

Chapter VIII - After the Runaway

NOW the king came up to them, saying: "I hope you are not injured."

"We are all right," said Twinkle; "but I'm getting dreadful thirsty, so if your Majesty has no objection I guess we'll go home."

"No objection at all," answered the king.

Chubbins had been calmly filling his pockets with broken spokes and other bits of the wrecked chariot; but feeling nearly as thirsty as Twinkle, he was glad to learn they were about to start for home.

They exchanged good-byes with all their sugar friends, and thanked the sugar king for his royal entertainment. Then Captain Brittle and his soldiers escorted the children to the archway through which they had entered Sugar-Loaf City.

They had little trouble in going back, although the tunnel was so dark in places that they had to feel their way. But finally daylight could be seen ahead, and a few minutes later they scrambled up the stone steps and squeezed through the little doorway.

There was their basket, just as they had left it, and the afternoon sun was shining softly over the familiar worldly landscape, which they were both rejoiced to see again.

Chubbins closed the iron door, and as soon as he did so the bolts shot into place, locking it securely.

"Where's the key?" asked Twinkle.

"I put it into my pocket," said Chubbins, "but it must have dropped out when I tumbled from the king's chariot."

"That's too bad," said Twinkle; "for now no one can ever get to the sugar city again. The door is locked, and the key is on the other side."

"Never mind," said the boy. "We've seen the inside of Sugar-Loaf Mountain once, and that'll do us all our lives. Come on, Twink. Let's go home and get a drink!"