

## A Season of Happiness Presents



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### Story Five – THE WORLD’S HIGHEST-EVER LEAPER

By Dave Hawkins

It was the time of year when all the birds in The Valley were sitting on their nests, keeping their eggs warm until they hatched out into baby birds. Everything seemed fine, but Rainbow knew something terrible was soon to happen. From her home high in the sky, she could see way off into the distance; and there, coming towards The Valley were some very big, very black clouds. This meant a storm was on its way, and with it would be strong winds that would blow all of the nests out of the trees.

In the past, Rainbow had waited to be called, either by Wombat and his umbrella or the Drumlin dance; however, by the time The Valley people realised the storm was coming it would be too late and the birds’ nests would be lost. Rainbow decided there was only one thing for it – she would have to warn The Valley of the danger.

Instead of visiting Wombat in his bedroom, Rainbow appeared in Pronto’s home. She didn’t want to shine too brightly because that would wake her children. Her three Drumlins were in Pronto’s lounge room. Purple and Yellow were asleep on the sofa, while Red was snoring softly in the armchair. Rainbow slipped quickly past them and into the bedroom. She awoke Pronto by tickling his nose with one of her six fingers. “Rainbow?” he mumbled sleepily when he saw her, “What’s the matter? Why have you come?”

Once Rainbow had explained, she asked: “Do you wish me to make some Priz-magic?”

Pronto was now fully awake and said positively: “No, Rainbow. We must try to fix our own problems as best we can. You have kindly left your children, the Drumlins, here in The Valley. With their help we can save the nests before the storm arrives.” He paused to think for a moment. “If we really do need some Priz-magic, though, I’ll have Wombat spin his umbrella to call you. Is that alright?”

Rainbow agreed and left Pronto to do what he had to do. His first job was to wake everybody up, and for this he would need a special hat. Going to his box, he chose his night-

watchman's hat because it was still night-time. The Drumlins who lived in his home woke up as soon as he touched each of them. Red was alert as usual and knew that Pronto wouldn't have awakened him in the middle of the night unless there was an emergency. Yellow frowned a bit, seeing as her beauty sleep had been disturbed. Purple did what she always did, jumping up from the couch and declaring excitedly: "'Where's the trouble? I'll leap right in and fix it!"

Yellow droned: "I don't suppose there's any point in asking you to go back to sleep, Purple?"

"This isn't the time for any of us to sleep," said Pronto very seriously. "Rainbow came and told me that there's a gigantic storm coming and we have to save the birds' nests from being blown out of the trees."

With Red marching in front, they all went next door to Wombat's hole to wake the others. When Pronto explained Rainbow had told him about the storm and that the birds' nests were in danger, Wombat was very grumpy. "How come Rainbow came to you?" he demanded to know, "I'm the one she visited in the beginning. I've got the umbrella, the only one in The Valley, I might remind you; and *I'm* the only one who can spin it to call Rainbow. All you've got is a box of hats!"

Once Wombat had calmed down, the Drumlins and the two friends – Wombat eventually and reluctantly admitted that they were still friends – all set to working on a plan of action. It was obvious that they had to remove the nests from the trees before the storm arrived, so Red marched them out to the forest. That was where it was realised that the nests were too high in the trees to reach from the ground. Purple claimed she could leap up and grab them; but each time she tried, her leap wasn't high enough. "I'll go and get my ladder," said Pronto, then off he went.

"I don't believe Pronto's ladder will solve our problem," said Green, "With only one ladder to reach them, we will never get all of the nests down before the storm arrives."

"Surely you can jump higher," suggested Yellow to Purple.

"I tried," said Purple sadly, "Not almost, and not once, but three times and I couldn't do it."

Orange was whispering to Blue who finally said: "Orange has, er, had an idea. Could we, er, have a word, Green?"

The three Drumlins went into a huddle. At the end of their whispered conversation, Green said: "We need your cape, Purple."

"I'll get cold without it," complained Purple, "It's still very early in the morning."

"Drumlins never get cold," stated Red, "Take it off, Purple. That's an order!"

"I would if I were you," said Yellow with a twinkle in her eye, "I have the feeling you will be doing so much leaping that you won't be cold at all."

"Leaping, did you say?" Purple was suddenly a changed Drumlin. Stripping off her cape, she gave it to Red, who passed it to Green. Purple asked: "Right, where and how do you want me to leap? Don't take too long to decide – I'm getting excited."

"Don't we know it," droned Yellow. "Tell her the plan, Green."

At first Green's plan was a puzzle. With the exception of Purple, he had the Drumlins hold the cape between them, and they stretched it out like a trampoline. "Hop onto the springboard, Purple," ordered Red, "And, on my command, Leap!" Purple climbed onto the outstretched cape and waited. "On the word 'bounce'," said Red, "Bounce!" He noticed Purple getting ready to jump and added hastily: "I didn't say 'Leap' yet, Purple. Wait for the command. Now, you Drumlins holding the cape, bounce Purple up and down on it."

Out and in the Drumlins went, and Purple's cape became tight and slack. As it did, even without her having to try, Purple began to bounce higher and higher on the makeshift trampoline. When he thought she was bouncing as high as she was going to, Red shouted: "Now, Purple – Leap!"

Up she went, right into the tree under which the Drumlins were holding her cape; and she went up high enough to be able to snatch the first of the nests from the tree. Once she had dropped down onto the trampoline, she handed the nest to one of the Drumlins, then waited for the trampoline to bounce enough for Red to command 'Leap!' again.

So it went for the entire morning: Purple leaping up into the trees to save the nests, and Pronto helping with his ladder. By midday they had rescued all of the nests and had placed them together on the ground. "Well" said Yellow as she looked around what they had done, "I never thought we'd manage it, but we did; and, I feel I have to say, it wouldn't have happened without Purple's leaping ability."

"Did I do good?" asked Purple, hopefully.

"I have to admit," said Pronto, "I have never seen anyone jump as high as that before. I would say you could be the world's highest-ever leaper, Purple; and I am proud to add that you are living with me in my home."

Wombat grunted. "I wonder if you'll be so proud after she's broken all your dishes," he grumbled. In those few moments, the wind had begun to freshen, so Wombat added: "Seems the storm's almost here. Maybe Purple's got all the nests out of the trees, but they can still get blown away down here on the ground. I don't believe any amount of leaping is going to help them now."

"Definitely not," said Pronto, "But you can save them, Wombat, always assuming you brought your umbrella. Twirl it around and call Rainbow. We need some Priz-magic to cover the nests and protect them from the storm."

So, Wombat did just that. He spun his umbrella in the air and sent a bright, twisting light into the darkening sky. Seeing it, rainbow came and, with her six-fingered hand, she placed a shining, many-coloured canopy over the nests. The storm roared through The Valley, tossing the trees of the forest around; but the birds' nests remained safe beneath Rainbow's Priz-magic shelter.

After the storm had passed, they were able to return all of the nests to the trees. Not a single egg was broken. The birds went back to sitting on them and were very pleased, as was

Pronto. "We should feel very lucky to have the Drumlins here in the Valley to help us," he said to Wombat, "And I don't mind Purple breaking a few things after what she did for the birds with her amazing leaping."

"Hrrumph!" snorted Wombat. "It seems everyone's a hero except me. All that leaping and stuff would have meant nothing if I hadn't called Rainbow for some Priz-magic to finish off."

"You are quite right," Pronto generously admitted, "And you did your umbrella-spinning so well. In fact, I would have to say that you have proved yourself to be a true Umbrella Master." Then he turned to the Drumlins and asked: "Wouldn't you agree, Drumlins?"

Much to Wombat's delight, they did. The praise still ringing in his ears, he swaggered proudly home, swinging his umbrella and muttering to himself: "Umbrella Master. Sounds better than plain old Wombat. I quite like it." He swung his umbrella again. "I'm fairly sure I do."

Pronto watched his friend leaving and groaned. "Maybe I shouldn't have said that. He will be impossible to live with now."

Green started to say: "Unlike you, Pronto..."

Then Blue and Orange helped him with the rest: "*We* have to."