

## A Season of Happiness Presents



[www.aseasonofhappiness.com](http://www.aseasonofhappiness.com)

### Story Six –THE BEACH BALLOON

By Dave Hawkins

Pronto was taking his little cart round The Valley delivering groceries. He had stopped by a hole in the ground with a door in it. This was Mrs Rabbit's warren, and he had come to bring her a bag of carrots. It was a very large bag, and it needed to be because Mrs Rabbit had ten little bunnies to feed. As soon as she opened the door to Pronto, all of the bunnies rushed out to begin skipping and jumping around. "My, my," said Pronto as he watched the bunnies playing, "I imagine you have your hands full with all these children."

Mrs Rabbit tried to smile. "I just have to manage, Pronto," she said wearily, "It's a mother's job to take care of her children; although I have to say it can be quite tiring."

"You certainly do look very tired," Pronto said, "I think you should take a rest from the children, if only for a while."

"There are times I wish I could," said Mrs Rabbit sadly, "But who would look after them for me, even for a day?"

Pronto thought for a moment, then said: "I might be able to help there. As soon as I've finished my deliveries, I'll be back." Once he had returned to his shop, he loaded some special things into the cart – ten sun-hats, ten buckets and spades, two enormous sun shades, and a big bottle of sun cream. Then he pedalled out to Mrs Rabbit's warren again and said cheerfully to her children: "Come on, bunnies. Into the cart – we are going on a trip to the beach so that your Mum can have a nice rest."

The bunnies were overjoyed and began leaping in and out of the cart, squealing and laughing. "Settle down," said Pronto sternly, but trying not to sound too cross, "If you want me to take you to the beach, you must behave." The bunnies went quiet for a while, but they were so excited to be going on a trip that they were soon bouncing around again and making lots of noise. "Oh, dear," whispered Pronto to himself, "I didn't realise ten little bunnies would be such a handful. I'll never be able to do this on my own."

He pedalled straight to Wombat's hole, thinking he could ask his friend and the Drumlins for help. Unfortunately, trouble was waiting on the path that ran past Wombat's garden. A leaf rake was on the ground and Pronto failed to notice, so he rode straight over it. There were some loud bangs, then lots of hissing. The noise brought Wombat and the Drumlins out to see what had happened. Pronto climbed off the bicycle and looked dismally down at its wheels and those of the cart. In all, four of the tyres were quite flat, having been stabbed by the sharp spikes of the rake. "Just look at my tyres!" moaned Pronto.

"Never mind your tyres," grumbled Wombat, "What about my rake? I hope you haven't bent it. How did you come to run over it in the first place? You obviously weren't watching where you were going."

"I didn't expect it to be on the path," complained Pronto, "It's a garden rake. It's supposed to be in the garden. Anyway, I won't be going anywhere now, watching or not." He turned to face the bunnies in the cart and said: "I'm sorry, bunnies, but it seems I won't be able to take you to the beach after all."

Hearing the sad news, the bunnies started to cry. This made some of the Drumlins cry too, and even Wombat had a tear in his eye. "This is no good," said Red loudly, "Drumlins should not cry. Drumlins are always happy. What we need is something to do that is fun, and I know just the thing. We will take the bunnies on a nice walk." Red had the Drumlins take two bunnies each and formed them into a line. "Right, smarten up," he commanded; then, when he was satisfied he bellowed out: "Follow me. By the left, Company, quick march."

After the second time of marching round the gardens, it was clear none of the bunnies were having fun and they began crying again. "Children like stories," suggested Orange in a whisper, "Tell them about how you helped Bower Bird find a lady-friend, Blue."

Blue had the bunnies sit on the ground before him and he started telling the tale about the missing blue things and how he had helped Bower Bird. Unfortunately, he was taking so long because he had to keep pausing to find the right words that the children were quickly bored. Purple offered to give them leaping and jumping lessons until Yellow groaned and said: "Please no, Purple. You leaping and bouncing is bad enough. I don't think any of us could stand ten bunnies doing it too. I know I couldn't."

No matter what new ideas were tried, the bunnies weren't interested. Eventually, one said: "We want to go to the beach like you promised, Pronto." Another put in: "Yes, the beach!" In moments, all of the bunnies were chanting: "The beach, the beach, we want the beach!"

This caused Pronto to feel very awkward. "I can't take you," he explained, "Not until my tyres have been mended; and by the time they are, the day will be over."

"We could always fly," suggested Green, "Then flat tyres wouldn't be a problem."

"Yes, yes," chimed in Purple getting very excited, "That would be even better than leaping." She paused for a moment, then asked: "How are we going to do that?"

"I have an idea," said Green, "But we will need Rainbow's help to make it work."

Because Red was the leader, Green told him what needed doing, then Red dished out the orders in his usual noisy way. Orange was tied to the handlebars of Pronto's bicycle at the front of his cart. Next, Red ordered the Drumlins into the cart, and told the bunnies to climb aboard and sit on the Drumlins' laps. Pronto was on his bicycle as ordered by Red, and he turned to look at Wombat who was just standing watching. "Come along, Wombat," he said, "Get in."

"I'm not coming," stated Wombat grumpily, "I don't like the beach – I always get sand in my sandwiches. Anyway, I don't see how you can fly. The cart hasn't got wings and neither has Orange."

"That's why we need you," Green told him. "For the next step, we have to call Rainbow; and, as you are the Umbrella Master, we would like you to do your spinning-umbrella thing. Then we won't be tired after doing the Drumlin dance and can all enjoy ourselves at the beach."

Although he had no idea how Rainbow could make Pronto's cart fly, Wombat did his umbrella-twirling. When Rainbow arrived, Green explained his plan to her. Bringing down her hand, Rainbow placed it gently on Orange who was still tied to the handlebars of Pronto's bike. In seconds, she began to grow bigger; then bigger and bigger, puffing up like a balloon. Soon, Orange was so big and full of air that she rose off the ground and into the air. Bigger still and she was such a large balloon that she started to lift the cart off the ground.

"Stop a moment, please, Rainbow," said Green; then he called to Wombat: "Come on, Wombat – into the cart before it takes off."

"I told you: I'm not coming," insisted Wombat.

"Then," declared Pronto, "That would make you a real spoilsport. If you don't come and bring your umbrella to call Rainbow again, Orange will stay a balloon and she won't be able to enjoy her time at the beach. And afterwards, she will have to become a balloon again to fly us home. Without you and your umbrella, nobody goes to the beach. Is that what you want?"

Apparently it wasn't, and Wombat agreed to go to the beach with the others. Surprisingly, he had a good time, particularly when it came to building sand castles, although the ones he made generally collapsed after he dug holes beneath them. The day was so enjoyable that no-one wanted it to end; but, of course, it had to. "These little bunnies need to be in bed soon," Red reminded them.

So, with Wombat's umbrella and Rainbow's help, Orange flew them all home. Mrs Rabbit was really pleased when her children ran up to hug her. "Do you know," she said, "I feel so much better after my rest; but I did miss having my little bunnies here with me."

"Well," said Pronto, "Maybe we could do this again; and next time you could come with us, Mrs Rabbit."

Back at Wombat's hole, he and Pronto were having a cup of tea as they talked over the day. "Do you know, Pronto," he said, "I had such fun I didn't have time to be grumpy." Thinking about that, he added: "I'm not sure which I prefer – fun or grumpy. Grumpy, I think – I'm better at that."