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The HUGE Adventures of Starlight and Moonshine

by Dave Hawkins

Story Two MOONBERRY PIE

After their first meeting with Captain Starlight and Colonel Moonshine, the two children were eager for night-time to come, but their day seemed a very long one indeed. Danny was at pre-school and was still very excited. He would have loved to tell his friends what had happened, but he was sure that if he did the comic-book characters wouldn't come back to life again. So, all he could do was try to be patient and say nothing.

Lucy was much the same. Being in second-grade school she had more things than her brother to keep her busy, but that didn't make the time go any faster; and when the final bell sounded, she raced from the classroom to the gate where her mother usually waited for her. Strangely, however, she found her Grandfather standing there. "Why are you here, Granddad?" she asked, "Is Mum sick or something?"

"No, nothing like that, Lucy," he replied as he guided her out to the street and they began walking. "I told Mum I would meet you from school for a bit of exercise; but although it was true, it was just an excuse. I needed to talk with you, in private." The old man paused to look around, making sure there was no person close enough to hear, then he asked quietly: "Did anything strange or different happen last night?"

Lucy felt goose bumps tingling and said in a rush: "Oh, yes. We spoke to Captain Starlight and Colonel Moonshine, and..."

"CAPTAIN Starlight?" puzzled Joshua frowning, "How did she become a Captain?"

"Danny made her one," replied the young girl, "And he did the same for Colonel Moonshine. He just put his hand on the comic and it happened. They were both very pleased - they said so."

The old man stopped walking, took a deep breath, gazed up into the sky and whispered to himself: "So it WAS true and not merely a young boy's imagination."

Lucy overheard him. "Yes, Granddad, it was like you said it might be - IF we believed - and we did, so it was. Captain Starlight and Colonel Moonshine came to life for us."

Joshua was nodding. "Then I was right to come." Taking a small package from his pocket, he handed it to his Granddaughter, but when she went to take it, he wouldn't let go, saying: "You must not open this now, nor any place where someone might see; not your Mum and Dad, not anyone. Do you understand?" He waited for Lucy's nod before allowing her to take the packet. "Put it in your bag and wait until tonight when you and Danny are alone. Only then should you un-wrap it."

Lucy hesitated, really wanting to see what was inside the blue tissue-paper wrapping. After another moment had passed she slipped the package into her school-bag. "Okay, Granddad, but can you tell me what it is?"

"You will see soon enough," said Joshua. "All I can say is that you will need it the way I did when I was your age. Starlight will tell you why."

"CAPTAIN Starlight," Lucy reminded him.

"Yes, I was forgetting, CAPTAIN Starlight."

As soon as tea had finished, Danny went straight to his room to wait for Lucy. She was fetching the "something" their Granddad had given her, and she had made it sound really special; but when she came in and put it on the bed her brother was disappointed. "It's just a bunch of screwed-up old paper," he said, "What's so special about that?"

"It must be," insisted Lucy, "The way Granddad talked about it. Anyway..." She started to un-wrap the paper. "I guess what's inside is the important bit."

Once the paper was off, Danny still couldn't see what was so special. "It looks like a mouldy cookie, and it's got flies in it."

Lucy groaned. "They're probably currants, silly."

"Well, I'm not going to eat it!" said the boy, screwing his face up.

"It's not for eating," said a muffled voice which sounded as if it was coming from under the bed.

"Colonel Moonshine!" said Danny in surprise, "Is that you?" In seconds he was down on hands and knees, and reaching under the bed to pull out the comic book.

"Were you expecting someone else?" asked Moonshine grumpily.

"No need to be like that, Moonshine," said Captain Starlight. "At least they have it now."

"Yes," said the Colonel, "But there's only one, and there are two of them."

"That's because it was Joshua's," Starlight explained, "One pie for one person."

"I know that!" said Moonshine, and he was starting to get annoyed. "I CAN count! The point I'm trying to make is that they will need one pie each. How is that ever going to work?"

Lucy was very confused. “Could you stop arguing for a moment, please?” She waited until the comic-book heroes went silent. “You’re talking about pies, but this is just a biscuit; and if it isn’t to be eaten, what’s it for?”

“To bring you here with us,” said Colonel Moonshine. “That is, if you still want to come into comic-book world.”

“Yes, we do!” said Danny excitedly, “Really we do. Isn’t that right, Lucy?” He noticed his sister open her mouth and rushed on before she could say anything. “How do we do it? Is it like Alice, the girl who went through the magic mirror?”

Captain Starlight was chuckling. “I suppose it is in a way, but you can’t just walk into our comic – you have wish yourselves here.”

Danny closed his eyes tightly. “I wish, I wish,” he said breathlessly. When he opened his eyes, he was disappointed to find that he was still sitting on the floor of his bedroom. He glared at Lucy. “You said Granddad didn’t tell fibs, but he must have! The pie doesn’t work. Colonel Moonshine said it wouldn’t.”

The boy started to get up off the rug. Lucy pulled him back down. “Wait a minute, Danny. There must be more to it than just wishing.”

“There is, Lucy,” said Captain Starlight. “You do have to wish, and you must truly believe in what you are wishing for; but there is something else: something that will make it happen.”

“The pie!” said Danny, snatching the cookie from Lucy’s hand. He closed his eyes again and repeated the words: “I wish, I wish.” This time, he only squinted a little at first, then opened his eyes fully to discover he hadn’t gone anywhere at all. Tossing the cookie onto Lucy’s lap he mumbled: “Stupid pie!”

“By George,” said Colonel Moonshine, “Did you hear that Starlight? Danny almost had it!”

“Almost, Moonshine,” replied Starlight. “I think it’s time we put my new idea to the test.”

“And what new idea is that, Starlight?”

“Two with only one, Moonshine”

“Now I’m as confused as Lucy,” said Moonshine, “How can two be one?”

“I said WITH one, Moonshine. I think we can bring both Lucy and Danny here with only one pie.” Then Starlight was speaking to the children: “I want you to sit close together.” She waited for Danny to shuffle next to his sister before continuing. “Right, both of you hold onto the pie with your fingers.” She waited again for them to do what she asked. “Now, Lucy. As you are the reader, I want you to look closely at the pie. You will see there are words cut into the top. Don’t say them out loud; just whisper them to Danny.” She waited some more as Lucy leaned close and spoke quietly into her brother’s ear. When she sat up straight, Starlight asked: “Don’t say them yet, Danny, but do you remember the words?”

Not sure whether he should say anything at all, Danny nodded.

Starlight turned to the Colonel. “Well, Moonshine, it’s now or never. Let’s hope this works.”

She explained what the children had to do; not once, but three times, just to make sure they had it right. When she was satisfied, she took a deep breath and said: "When you are ready, do what I've told you."

Lucy looked sideways at her brother, Danny looked back, then their eyes dropped to the little biscuit they were holding between them. "After three?" said Lucy. Danny nodded and closed his eyes. His sister did the same, took a deep breath and began counting: "One, two, three..."

Then their voices joined together to call out the very special words: "MOONBERRY PIE!"

What happened next was almost unbelievable, except they did believe because they wanted to. The words seemed to echo on a rushing wind that filled the air. Although they could never fly before, the children were doing just that, drifting on a warm breeze through rainbow skies. Suddenly it all stopped and they were left with a strange taste, a sweet taste in their mouths like fruit, or berries...!

Lucy opened her eyes and gasped. She was no longer sitting on the floor of Danny's room, but was standing on the deck of a sailing ship. It was like the odd-looking one in the comic-book pictures, but it was different somehow; and she said what she was thinking out loud: "It all seems so real."

Captain Starlight was right behind Lucy and said: "It always was for us, and now it is for you and Danny."

"And what about you, Danny?" said Colonel Moonshine, "Do you still think Moonberry Pie is stupid?"

The young boy was staring up, past the wooden mast and the ropes to the balloons above. Hurrying to the side of the ship, he looked over and expected to see water. Instead they appeared to be floating on clouds. His eyes were very wide when he turned back to face the others. "Oh, no, Colonel Moonshine. Moonberry Pie is magic!"