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The HUGE Adventures of Starlight and Moonshine

by Dave Hawkins

Story Five DANNY SAVES the DAY

Lucy was sitting on Danny's bed. Her brother was stretched out on the rug looking at the comic. "They're still tied up," he said, "We really have to go back and rescue them! Have you got plan B yet?"

"Not quite," replied his sister. "Obviously we can't use the pie until they are free, otherwise we'll get caught and tied up too; but I've been thinking," she added and reached down towards Danny. "Let me see the comic."

Danny passed it to her. "Here you are, but there's nothing much to look at, just the same picture and a lot of empty squares."

"It's my guess they are where the next parts of the story will go, when they eventually happen."

"Exactly right," whispered Captain Starlight from the comic. "Before our huge adventure can continue, somehow YOU have to tell the next part of the story, the bit when we escape."

"That's just what I was thinking," said Lucy, "And I believe Danny can do it the same way he made you a Captain and Moonshine a Colonel."

"That's it, Lucy!" Danny almost shouted, "I'll make the next picture showing them all untied and taking the ship back."

"For a start," said Lucy, "You can't just have the ropes untying themselves – that wouldn't be right, not even in a comic. Plus," she continued, "There are too many soldiers for the four of them to beat on their own."

Danny went quiet and was frowning deeply for a while; then he jumped onto the bed and turned the comic so that he could see it properly. "I know how to do it, but I'll need you all to help," he said to the characters in the picture, "Especially you, Henshaw."

"Why Henshaw?" complained Lord Nuff-Nuff. "Why not me?"

"Because," said Danny, "I'm the one writing this part of the story, and I want Henshaw."

The young boy placed his hand over the next empty square and said: "The one in charge is giving his soldiers new orders."

Danny lifted up his hand and, sure enough, another picture had appeared showing the soldiers gathered together on the deck. The leader was saying: "The prisoners will be no trouble. Two of you stay with me. The rest of you can go back to the beach." The boy's hand covered another empty square for a moment, then lifted up. The new picture showed rowing boats full of soldiers heading away from the ship.

"That's all very fine," said Colonel Moonshine, "But we're still tied up."

"You'll be free soon enough," said Danny, "Once it gets dark and the soldiers are asleep."

"But that won't be for hours!" said Nuff-Nuff. "I'm sure I can't last that long."

"You won't have to," said Danny, placing his hand on the comic for a third time. "See."

Another square had a picture drawn in it, a very dark one because it was then night. "The soldiers are asleep now," said Danny, "So you can take out your knife and cut everyone free, Henshaw."

"How does he know you have a knife?" demanded Lord Nuff-Nuff.

"Because he's writing this part of the story," said Henshaw.

"Anyway," grumbled Nuff-Nuff. "What are you doing with a knife? I didn't give you permission to have a knife!"

"Yes you did," Henshaw reminded him. "The vegetables needed cutting for dinner; and YOU said you didn't like the idea of me chopping carrots with my beak!"

Lucy was only gazing vaguely at the comic when her eyes began to widen as something strange began to happen. The very next empty square had started to fill with a new picture. "Look, Danny! Henshaw is cutting the ropes. The story is beginning to tell itself again!"

"Great!" said Danny. "NOW can we Moonberry-Pie back?"

"Just give us a few more minutes," said Captain Starlight. "We have to sneak up on the soldiers and capture them first."

Lucy's plan B was obviously working and very soon the two of them were able to hold the cookie and call out: "MOONBERRY PIE."

"Excellent!" declared Colonel Moonshine as the children appeared on the deck before him.

Danny was frowning as he looked at the Colonel. "Why are you wearing a soldier's uniform instead of your own?"

"Ha-ha," chuckled Moonshine, "That's all part of plan C."

"A very important one," added Starlight.

"One I hope he doesn't mess up," put in Lord Nuff-Nuff.

"Maybe you ought to take his place," suggested Henshaw.

"I would, gladly," said Nuff-Nuff, "But the soldier's uniform would be too tight for me. I'd look ridiculous."

"Dear oh dear," said Lucy, "I'm getting tired of you two. Can we please get on with plan C?"

“Just about to,” declared Starlight. “Hold tight everyone – it could get a bit bumpy.”

The ship had been sailing back along the coast away from the bay where Prince Jokula's ships were anchored. As it reached a small patch of sand, the Captain swung it around and headed straight at the shore. The front rose as it slid up the small beach, then began to bump its way along a narrow track that led into the forest. “How can it do this?” asked Lucy.

“My idea,” said Moonshine proudly.

“And a very good one,” said Starlight. “Putting wheels under the ship means we can go almost anywhere. Now we can DRIVE through the trees to the beach and nobody will see us.”

It took a little time to arrive at the road which led down to the beach. While the others remained hidden in the forest, Colonel Moonshine climbed down and began making his way along the road. This was rather uncomfortable because the trousers were too tight and he had to waddle. By the time he had reached the first of the guards, he was puffing and panting. “I have an urgent message for you,” he gasped. “You are to return immediately to Darkmire. Take two ships, but leave Prince Jokula's. He has enough soldiers with him at Gumbyland Manor to sail it, so you are to take all of the others.”

“ALL of them?” queried the guard.

“Every single one,” said the Colonel sternly, “And mind you do. The Prince does not think kindly of soldiers who refuse to obey orders.”

Back at the ship, Moonshine was explaining to Lucy: “I never said the message was from Prince Jokula; and the bit about him being annoyed was true because he always is, no matter what. So I actually did tell the truth, just not all of it.”

“Like Henshaw doesn't tell all the truth to me,” complained Lord Nuff-Nuff.”

“Do so,” said Henshaw.

“Do not!” repeated Nuff-Nuff.

“Well,” admitted the butler, “Most of the time you wouldn't believe the truth even if I did tell it.”

“Pack it in!” grumbled Danny, “I'm trying to listen to what Captain Starlight is saying; and it's important!”

“Thank you, Danny,” said the Captain, and she waited a few moments for the arguments to die down. Once they had, she pointed to a map on the table in front of her. “Here's the road to the Manor and, as you can see, there is only one place where the trees are close enough for us. We will take the ship as far as we can, then hide it in the forest. From there we will have to walk.”

“THEN we'll start plan D?” urged Danny.

“Don't be so impatient,” said Lucy. “Getting Prince Jokula and his soldiers out of Gumbyland Manor won't be easy, and if we rush it could all go wrong.”

“Yes it could,” said Starlight quietly because she didn’t want to worry the others.

Not realising this, Moonshine blurted out: “In fact, I suspect it will be the hardest job yet.” He stood up straight, took a deep breath and blew it out loudly. There was a very big grin on his face as he added: “Oh, I do so love huge adventures, the huger the better.”