

A Season of Happiness



the wonderful world
of Story-Telling

MOONBERRY PIE



MP44

www.aseasonofhappiness.com

STARLIGHT AND MOONSHINE And The Lost City Of The Yincas Story Two – Sailing into Danger

You should know the story so far; if not, before going on, perhaps you'd better have a read of Story One – A Message in a Bottle.

Very worried that Danny and Lucy had transported themselves into comic-book world and were stranded there, Joshua was desperate to start the next comic in the series to try and get his grandchildren home. The first picture showed sailors beating at a cabin door; and behind them was Filcher, still shouting at the men: "Hurry up!" he was growling. "I want that map!"

The comic story moved on. Lucy and Danny were still in the cabin along with Professor Dib-Dob. Something had gone wrong when the children had tried to Moonberry Pie the three of them back to the real world. Dib-Dob thought he knew why and was saying: "It's me - I'm too heavy. Release my hands and say the words again. Save yourselves, and the map. Without it, Filcher will need me to guide him to the lost city, so I won't be harmed. Now GO!"

Joshua's eyes were popping and he held his breath. Then his grandchildren were calling: "Moonberry Pie!" a second time. The next moment they appeared beside him in the kitchen, just in time to see the broken door crashing open and the sailors bursting into the cabin.

Lucy turned the page, and the three of them were looking at somewhere that wasn't anywhere on any ship. Instead, Captain Starlight and Colonel Moonshine were talking with Lord Nuff-Nuff and his butler Henshaw in Gumbyland Manor. "Good: they made it," said Danny. Placing a hand on the picture, he said: "Hey, Captain Starlight – I've got the map;" and he held it over the comic: "See."

"They can't, Danny," said Joshua. "Only we can see them because we have the pictures; but they can't see us. They can only hear and talk to us."

"Well, I think that's a rubbish bit of magic, then," complained the boy. "Okay. I've still got your cookie, Granddad; so I'm going back into comic-book world." Before his grandfather and sister could do anything to stop him, he called out: "Moonberry Pie!" Then, there he was in the next picture with the other four, and he was handing the map to Starlight.

She studied it, frowned a little; and eventually nodded. "I'm pretty sure I know where these islands are; but it's quite long way from here."

"Then we can't be standing here chit-chatting," declared Nuff-Nuff. "We should set sail immediately."

“Did you say *WE*?” queried Starlight. “I’m sorry, but you can’t come with us, Lord Nuff-Nuff. It may well be dangerous.”

“Maybe even Huge,” added Moonshine seriously, but also hopefully.

Nuff-Nuff snorted. “Whether dangerous or huge, I’m coming,” he stated positively. “Dib-Dob is *my* Uncle. What kind of a nephew would I be if I didn’t at least try to rescue him?”

“Well, if he’s going,” Henshaw, the giant penguin butler put in, “I shall have to. Just imagine the mess he’ll get into without me – it doesn’t bear thinking about.”

“And me,” said Danny, “I’m coming too.”

“Oh, no you’re not!” growled Lucy at the comic.

“But it was me who brought the map,” insisted Danny.

“We almost lost you before and it’s not going to happen again. You’ve given Captain Starlight the map and that’s enough. Just you Moonberry Pie straight back here this instant, or you’re in big trouble!” Reluctantly, Danny did as he was told; then the three real-world people carried on reading the comic.

After Captain Starlight reluctantly agreed to take Lord Nuff-Nuff and his butler Henshaw along, she looked up straight to where Lucy, Danny and Joshua would be, even though she couldn’t actually see them from comic-book world, and said: “I’m sorry, but I won’t be taking any more passengers. Please stay in your own world reading the story. We may need you to help us if something goes wrong here.”

After loading extra supplies to cater for everyone on board, Starlight’s ship sailed out of Gumbyland harbour. Once clear of land, Moonshine turned the wooden wheel to do his blow-up thing. The balloons floating above began to fill with air and had soon lifted the ship off the sea; then they were flying at speed through the sky towards the horizon.

They flew over a few islands, and each time Starlight shook her head. “We’re not there yet,” she declared, and continued to steer the ship across the next patch of open sea. Eventually she spotted something familiar and gave a sigh of relief. “There it is,” she said, “The first of the islands drawn on Professor Dib-Dob’s map. Now we just have to keep following it, island by island. If the Professor is leading Filcher the same way, with luck we should catch up with them before nightfall.”

Much later in the day, Moonshine was peering into the distance through his telescope. “By Jove, I see it, Starlight,” he called out, “Just below the horizon. At least, I think it’s the Professor’s ship. I’ll let you know for certain when we get closer.” While Starlight kept her ship on course, coming ever nearer to the one in front, Moonshine continued to focus his telescope on the distant vessel; but it was becoming harder to see. The sun was going down and the sea was growing darker by the minute. “Can you make more speed, Starlight?” he asked. “We’re losing them.”

“We’re going as fast as we can, Moonshine,” she stated. “How close are they?”

Instead of replying, Moonshine gasped, moving the telescope from his eye momentarily; then bringing it back up in a hurry. “I can see them again, and that’s strange. They are heading towards a glow in the distance.” Starlight’s ship floated in the air coming ever closer until Moonshine was able to see what was causing the peculiar glow in the sky. “Slow down, Starlight,” he ordered. “The glow is coming from an island, mainly from a pretty huge volcano sitting right in the middle of it.”

“The next picture is showing the island,” said Joshua pointing at the comic on the table before them, “And there’s a ship anchored just off the beach. It isn’t Captain Starlight’s, so it must be Professor Dib-Dob’s.”

“Why would they go so close to an island with a volcano on it?” Danny queried; then placed his hand on the comic and asked the same question of Captain Starlight.

Starlight looked up to where she knew Danny would be. “Because, according to the map, that is the island where Professor Dib-Dob believed the lost city to be.” Turning away, she spoke to Colonel Moonshine: “Can you see what’s happening?”

The Colonel swung his telescope up to his eye. “They must have sent a rowing boat ashore, and now it’s coming back,” he announced.

The next part was a real worry. A close-up of Dib-Dob’s ship showed Filcher leaning over the side and calling out to a figure standing alone on the beach: “If there really is a lost city here, Professor, you’re welcome to it. I’ll just take your ship as payment for you wasting my time. Oh, and that volcano seems to be getting ready to blow its top, so I guess we won’t be seeing each other again.”

Lucy was frowning as she asked her grandfather: “Does Captain Starlight have a plan to get Professor Dib-Dob off the island before the volcano explodes?”

“I suppose we could ask her,” said Joshua, “But her ship is still heading towards the island, so she must have something in mind.”

It was Lord Nuff-Nuff’s voice that came back: “She certainly does, and there’s no problem, Joshua,” he said.

Then, in the background Henshaw was heard to mutter: “Says you.”

“Stop with the gloomy comments, you stupid penguin,” hissed Nuff-Nuff. “We are going to rescue my uncle. All we have to do is pick him up from the beach. How hard could that be?”

Starlight’s ship was soon hovering right over the beach; and it seemed that Lord Nuff-Nuff’s prediction was correct; until suddenly it wasn’t!

Moonshine had been lowering a rope ladder over the side so that Dib-Dob could climb from the beach to the ship. He stopped suddenly and looked up as a massive explosion erupted from the volcano. Next, the ship was flying away from the beach. “Where are you going?” Moonshine shouted. “We almost had him.”

“It’s not me, Moonshine,” Starlight explained. “A blast of wind from the explosion is sending us out to sea.”

“If he doesn’t get off soon Professor Dib-Dob’s going to get fried,” said Danny, pointing to a stream of red-hot molten lava pouring down the side of the volcano.”

“And Captain Starlight’s ship is too far away to help,” added Lucy.

“Worse than that,” said Joshua pointing to the next scene. “Hot ash is falling from the sky and the balloons are beginning to smoke. Pretty soon they’ll have holes in them, the air will leak out and the ship will drop down onto the sea.”

“Couldn’t we patch them with your sticky tape like we did in the pirate adventure, Granddad?” suggested Danny.

“There isn’t time,” put in Lucy, “But we can save Professor Dib-Dob if we hurry. Give me back my cookie, Danny; and I need yours too Granddad. I’m going to Moonberry Pie to the beach and bring the Professor back here.”

Joshua shook his head. “Too dangerous,” he declared. “Give me Lucy’s Pie, Danny. I’ll go.” The boy was disappointed and reluctant to hand over the cookie. “Give it to me now, Danny!” he growled, “Quickly!” Pointing at the comic he added: “And whatever you do, don’t turn the page to the next picture until the two of us are back here safely. I don’t fancy either of us going up in smoke!”

Danny placed his hand on the last picture of Dib-Dob alone on the beach and called out: “Hang on, Professor – Granddad’s coming for you!”

Joshua took a deep breath, held up both cookies and said the words: “Moonberry Pie!”

“He’s there!” said Lucy excitedly as Joshua suddenly appeared on the beach next to Dib-Dob. “Now he’s giving the Professor a cookie and...”

In an instant, Joshua and Dib-Dob were standing in the kitchen with the two children. The Professor being a comic-book character in a very different place and time had never seen anything like Joshua’s house in the real world. He was gazing around with his mouth open. Eventually he said: “By Jingo, this *is* a wonder! Do you all live here?”

“Just me,” explained Joshua. “My grandchildren are just visiting.”

“So are you, Professor,” said Danny. “Now we have to get you back to comic-book world and onto Captain Starlight’s ship so that...”

“Not so fast, Danny,” ordered Lucy. “First we have to see what problems we might be sending him into.” She had turned the page over and, being the last one in that comic, there were just a few pictures.

The ship was now sailing on the sea, and Captain Starlight was struggling to steer away from something peculiar in the distance. “What is it, Moonshine?” she asked

Colonel Moonshine was peering through his telescope. “I’m not sure, but it looks like...” He paused for a moment, then declared: “Correction – It doesn’t *look* like – it *IS!*”

Starlight frowned. “Is what?”

“A whirlpool, is what,” announced the Colonel. “It’s HUGE and we’re heading straight for it! Change course, Starlight!”

“I’m trying to,” hissed the Captain, “But we seem to be caught in a strong current and I can’t turn the wheel!” Then she pleaded through gritted teeth: “Someone give me a hand.” Moonshine was starting along the deck towards the wheelhouse until Starlight shouted at him: “Not you, Moonshine! Stay up front to keep watch on what we’re heading for.”

“Come on,” Henshaw said, tugging at Nuff-Nuff’s sleeve. “Captain Starlight needs our help with the wheel.”

“But that’s work!” protested Nuff-Nuff. “Lords don’t work!”

“Well, this one does,” growled his butler sternly. “Refuse and you’ll be eating bread and water for a month when we get back to Gumbyland.”

Moonshine must have heard Henshaw’s comment, because he called back: “It could be that none of us will see Gumbyland ever again. The strong current is pulling us straight towards the whirlpool – and it’s much HUGER than I thought!”

Lucy gasped and said: “The final picture in this comic shows the ship spinning down into the centre of the whirlpool. Now we won’t know what happens until we start the next one. All we have to go on is the advertising blurb at the bottom. And for your benefit Danny, it says...”

Will the ship and all on board be sucked into the whirlpool?

Can this be Starlight’s and Moonshine’s last HUGE adventure?

And what about Professor Dib-Dob – does this mean he will never be able to return to comic-book world, not ever?

Read about it next month... if you dare...!