

News  Chronicle

BOYS' & GIRLS' STORY BOOK N°2

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KING BOM'S ICE-CREAM

KING BOM was a perfect nuisance. He was a very stupid fellow, but he thought he was clever, so he was always interfering in everything and making muddles. People got very tired of him, especially his wife, Queen Prylla, who often used to long to box his ears. But she didn't dare to in case Bom ordered her head to be cut off.

That was one of his very stupid habits. He would say, "Off with his head!" at any time, and, although he might be very sorry the next day, by that time, of course, it was too late to change his mind.

One day King Bom went to a meeting of his councillors, and upset all their plans. No matter what they proposed to do he wanted something different. In the end all the councillors walked out in a huff, and the King roared, "Off with their heads!"

"You can't do that," said the Queen quickly. "The people will rise against you if you do, and put you off the throne."

"Off with *their* heads then!" roared the King, losing his temper even more.

"Don't be silly," said the Queen sharply. "If you cut off everybody's head you won't have any people to rule over and you won't like that!"

The King stared so fiercely at Queen Prylla that she quite thought he would say "Off with *her* head!" too. So she went up to him and patted his hand. "It's very hot," she said. "Let's go and have an ice—a strawberry one with vanilla all round."

Now if there was one thing that the King liked more than another, it was an ice. He was always in a good temper when he was eating ices, and he ate a great many. So he stopped frowning, took the Queen's arm, and went down the High Street to the ice-cream shop.

That night the councillors came to the Queen and warned her that if King Bom interfered any more they would put him on the non-stop train to Topsy-Turvy Land, and that would be the end of *him*.

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“Your Majesty, we are very sorry,” said the chief councillor to the Queen, “we are devoted to *you*—and if you liked to stay behind and rule us whilst the King goes to Topsy-Turvy Land we shall be delighted.”

“Oh, dear me, no, I couldn't do that,” said the Queen. “I should have to go with the King if he went. If I didn't he would do all sorts of dreadful things—put his socks on inside out and try to eat his egg with a fork instead of a spoon. Things like that. I couldn't stay behind and rule you.”

“Well, we don't know who else to have,” said the chief councillor. “There's nobody quite so clever as you are, Queen Prylla. Just think about it, will you?”

Off they went and left the poor Queen in a great way. It would be dreadful to have to leave the Palace and go off to Topsy-Turvy Land—especially as she had only just finished making her new strawberry jam. It would be a pity to leave that before she had tasted it properly.

Queen Prylla sat and thought hard. She was fond of King Bom, for all his stupid ways, and she wanted him to be happy—but *she* wanted to be happy too, and she wanted the people to be happy as well. It was all very difficult.

“Bom would be perfectly happy if only he could sit all day eating ices!” she thought. And then a great idea flashed into her head! Perhaps she could find a way out of her difficulty, after all!

She put on a dark cloak and ran down to the ice-cream shop. It was kept by two brownies. They were most surprised to see the Queen.

“Listen,” she said to them. “To-morrow is the King's birthday, as you know. Now I want you to make a very, very special ice indeed—one that he will think is the most delicious ice he has ever eaten. Put all the loveliest things you know into it—silver moonlight, a butterfly's blue shadow, the heart of a crocus—and flavour it with strawberry, because that is his favourite.”

“Oh, certainly, Your Majesty!” said the brownies, bowing. “We will do our very best.”

“Bring it up to me at eleven o'clock in the morning,” said the Queen. “Don't forget.”

KING BOM'S ICE-CREAM



"Here's quite a good one," said Mrs. Wrinkle to the Queen, handing her a very small object indeed.

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Off she went—and this time she disappeared into a tiny cottage at the very end of the village. Here lived Mrs. Wrinkle, a witch who had long since retired from business, and had taken up knitting.

She was pleased to see the Queen, and when she heard that she wanted a wishing-spell she was only too delighted to give her one. She still had a few left in a tin in the kitchen.

“Here’s quite a good one,” she said to the Queen, handing her a very small object indeed. “This will melt if you put it into a cake, for instance.”

“Oh, that will do nicely,” said the Queen, and she slipped it into her bag. “Thank you so much. Now pray get on with your knitting, Mrs. Wrinkle, and don’t mention to anyone that I’ve been here.”

The next day, at eleven o’clock, the ice-cream brownies arrived with the ice. It was magnificent. It was all colours of the rainbow and it glittered and shone in a most gorgeous way. It really looked far too good to eat.

The Queen took it and thanked them. Then she went quickly into the pantry with it, and slipped into the very middle of it the wishing-spell she had got from Mrs. Wrinkle.

The King had been very stupid that morning. He had sent for his councillors and given them all a good scolding, so that they fumed and raged. They went out of the Palace and came back with a large ticket.

The Queen caught sight of it as she came out of the pantry with the ice.

“Goodness!” she said, nearly dropping the ice, “is that a ticket to Topsy-Turvey Land?”

“Yes, and it isn’t a return-ticket, either!” said the chief councillor angrily.

“Wait a minute!” begged the Queen. “Wait a minute! Don’t be in such a hurry! I’ve got an idea to put everything right. Just let me try it, before you go in and give the King that ticket.”

“All right,” said the councillor gruffly. “But don’t be long, Your Majesty.”

The Queen hurried into the King’s study. Bom sat there

KING BOM'S ICE-CREAM

looking as black as a thundercloud.

"Look, Bom, dear!" said Queen Prylla, going up to him. "Here's a most delicious birthday ice, specially made for you by the ice-cream brownies."

"I don't want it," said Bom, peevishly.

"Oh, yes you do!" said the Queen, setting it down in front of him.

"Oh, no I don't," said Bom, pushing it away.

"Then I'll give it to the cat," said the Queen. "Puss, puss, puss, where are you? Come along, here's a lovely ice for you!"

"Don't give my ice to that wretched cat!" said the King crossly.

"But you said you didn't want it," said the artful Queen. "Puss, puss!"

"Well, I *do* want it!" cried Bom in a temper, and he took up the spoon and began to eat the ice.

It really was a marvellous ice. I couldn't tell you all that was in it, but it tasted like sunshine and snow, and made the King feel better than he had done for days.

"This is a very good ice," he said, when he was half-way through. "It's perfectly delicious. The best I've ever eaten!"

The Queen watched him finish up the ice greedily. She knew that he must have eaten the little wishing-spell inside it, and she



"This is a very good ice," said the King. "It's perfectly delicious."

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was anxiously waiting for him to say what he usually said at the end of a specially nice ice.

He said it. He finished up the last spoonful, laid down the spoon, leaned back in his chair, gave a huge sigh and said, "How I wish I could eat that ice all over again!"

Immediately his wish was granted. The ice appeared before him just as it had done when he first saw it, and in great glee he took up his spoon once more.

"Now he's off!" thought the Queen in delight. "He'll wish the wish again when he comes to the end, and eat yet another ice—and then wish the wish again. Well, he's happy for the day. Now I'll go and tell the councillors."

Off she went and told them what she had done.

"King Bom won't worry you any more," she said. "He'll simply spend his days eating that ice again and again, feeling perfectly happy—and I shall be able to rule you, and everyone will be contented."

The councillors peeped in at the King gobbling up his birthday ice. He came to the end and sighed. "How I wish I could eat that ice all over again!" they heard him say. And immediately the ice reappeared, and he began to eat it greedily.

The councillors began to laugh. They thought it was funny. The Queen laughed too. The King heard them, but instead of shouting "Off with their heads!" he simply waved his spoon good-naturedly at them and went on with his ice.

"You're a clever woman, Your Majesty!" said the chief councillor. "We'll take this ticket to the station and get back the money for it this very minute. You shall rule us from to-day!"

Off they went, and the Queen sank down into a chair, quite exhausted. Things had really been a little too exciting the last few days. Then she heard a contented voice from the study, "How I wish I could eat that ice all over again!"

And, so people say, King Bom is still eating ices to this very day!