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The Story of Calico Clown

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CHAPTER I

THE GIANT'S SWING

"To-night we shall have a most wonderful time," said the Elephant from the Noah's Ark to a Double Humped Camel who lived in the stall next to him.

"What kind of a time?" asked the Camel. He stood on the toy counter of a big department store, looking across the top of a drum toward a Jack in the Box who was swaying to and fro on his long spring. "What do you call a wonderful time, Mr. Elephant?"

"Oh, having fun," replied the big toy animal, slowly swinging his trunk to and fro. "And to-night the Calico Clown is going to give a special exhibition."

"Oh, is he?" suddenly asked a funny little Wooden Donkey with a head that wagged up and down. "Is he going to climb a string again and burn his red and yellow trousers as he once did?"

"Indeed I am not!" exclaimed the Calico Clown himself. The Clown was leaning against his friend Mr. Jumping Jack, who was a cousin of Jack in the Box. "I'm not going to give any special exhibition like that," went on the Clown. "I'm just going to do a few funny tricks, such as standing on my head and banging my cymbals together. And, I am not sure, but I may ask a riddle."

"Will it be that one about what makes more noise than a pig under a gate?" inquired a Celluloid Doll. "Well, yes, it will be that riddle," replied the Clown, trying to look very stern.

"That's the only riddle he knows," whispered the Elephant.

"What I should like to know," said the Camel, "is why a pig should want to get under a gate, anyhow. Why didn't he stay in his pen?"

"Oh, there's no use trying to make you understand," sighed the Clown. "I'll just have to dance around, do a few jigs, bang my cymbals together, and do things like that to amuse you."

"Well, we'll have a good time to-night, anyhow," said the Celluloid Doll. "We really haven't had much fun since the Candy Rabbit and the Monkey on a Stick went away. I wish —"

"Hush!" suddenly called the Calico Clown. "Here come the clerks. The store will soon be filled with customers."

The toys became very still and quiet. This talk among them had taken place in the early morning hours, after a night of jolly good times. But when daylight came, and when clerks and customers filled the store, the toys were no longer allowed to do as they pleased. They could not move about or talk as they could on other occasions.

The Calico Clown was a jolly chap, and he seemed to stand out among all the other toys on the counter. He wore calico trousers of which one leg was red and the other yellow. He had a calico shirt that was spotted, speckled and striped in gay colors, and on each of his hands was a round piece of brass. These pieces of brass were called "cymbals," and the Calico Clown could bang them together as the drummer bangs his cymbals in the band.

I say the Calico Clown could bang his cymbals together, and by that I mean he could do it when no boys or girls or grown folk were looking at him. This was the rule for all the toys. They could move about and talk only when no human eyes were looking. As soon as you glanced at them they became as still and as quiet as potatoes.

But any one who picked up the Calico Clown could make him bang his cymbals together by pressing on his chest. There was a little spring, and also a sort of squeaker, such as you have heard in toy bears or sheep.

Besides being able to clap his cymbals together, the Calico Clown could also move his arms and legs when you pulled certain strings, like those on some Jumping Jacks. The Calico Clown was a lively fellow, as well as being very gaily dressed.

But now all the toys were still and quiet. They sat or stood or were lying down on the counter, waiting for what would happen next. And what generally did happen was that some customers came to the store and bought them.

Already a number of the toys had been sold and taken away. There was the Sawdust Doll. She was the first to go. Then the White Rocking Horse had been bought for a boy named Dick, a brother of Dorothy, who now owned the Sawdust Doll. The Lamb on Wheels had been purchased by a jolly sailor, and when the Lamb saw him she feared she would be taken on an ocean trip and made seasick. But the sailor gave the Lamb to a little girl named Mirabell. And, in the course of time, her brother Arnold was given a Bold Tin Soldier and some soldier men.

The Candy Rabbit—about whom I have told you in a book, as I have told you of these other toys—the Candy Rabbit was given as an Easter present to a little girl named Madeline, and her brother Herbert had, later, been given the Monkey on a Stick.

The Calico Clown was looking over at the Celluloid Doll, thinking how pretty she was, and he was also thinking of the Sawdust Doll, whom he had liked very much, when, all of a sudden, it seemed as if a whirlwind had blown into the toy department.

A boy with a very loud voice and feet that tramped and stamped on the floor rushed up to the counter.

"I want a toy! I want something to play with!" cried this boy. "I want a Jumping Jack and I want a Noah's Ark! You said you'd get me something if I let the dentist pull that tooth, and now you've got to! I want a lot of toys!" he cried to the lady who was with him.

"Yes, Archibald. But please be quiet!" begged his mother. "I will get you a toy. Which one do you want?"

"I want this Elephant!" cried the boy who, I am afraid, was rather rude. He caught the Elephant up by his trunk, and twisted the poor animal around.

"Goodness me, sakes alive! I'm getting dizzy," thought the Elephant. "I hope this boy is not to be my master!"

And this, it would seem, was not going to happen. Suddenly the boy dropped the Elephant.

"I don't want this toy! He can't do anything!" the boy shouted. "I want something that jiggles and joggles and does things! Oh, I want this one!" and, as true as I'm telling you, that boy caught up the Calico Clown.

"Well, I guess this is the last of me!" thought the Calico Clown. "I will not last very long in the hands of this rude chap."

The boy had grabbed up the Calico Clown and had thrown the Elephant down so hard that the Celluloid Doll was knocked over.

"Be careful, little boy, if you please," gently said the girl clerk.

"Oh, I've got to have this Clown!" went on the rude boy. "I don't care for other toys. Does this fellow do anything?" he asked of the clerk, while his mother looked on, hardly knowing what to say. Archibald had just been to the dentist's to have a tooth pulled, so perhaps we should forgive him for being a little rough.

"The Clown plays his cymbals when you touch him here," and the clerk pointed to the spring hidden in the chest of the gay fellow, under his speckled, striped and spotted calico jacket.

"Oh, I'll touch him all right! I'll punch him!" cried the boy, and he jabbed the Calico Clown so hard in the chest that the cymbals rattled together like marbles in a boy's pocket.

"He's dandy! I want him!" cried the boy. "What else does he do?" he asked.

"He moves his arms and legs when you pull these strings," was the answer, and the clerk showed the boy how to do it.

"Oh, he's a jolly toy!" cried Archibald. "I'll have some fun with him when I show him to the other fellows. Hi! Look at him jig!" and he pulled the strings so fast that it seemed as if the poor Clown would turn somersaults.

"I can see what will happen to me," thought the Clown. "I shall come to pieces in about a week, and be thrown in the ash can. Why can't he be nice and quiet?"

But Archibald was not that kind of boy. He seemed to want to make a noise or do something all the while. Most of his toys at home were broken, and that is why his mother had to promise to get him another before he would let her take him to the dentist's to have an aching tooth pulled.

"I want this Clown!" cried Archibald, making the cymbals bang together again and again.

"Very well, you may have it," his mother replied.

"I'll wrap it up for you," said the clerk, and the poor Clown was quickly smothered in a wrapping of paper around which a string was tied.

"Here is your toy, Archibald," said his mother, when the plaything came back ready to be taken out of the store. The mother had taken it from the clerk, and now she handed it to her little boy.

And so he carried the Calico Clown away, without giving the poor, jolly fellow a chance to say good-bye to the Elephant, the Camel or the Celluloid Doll.

"Now our good time for to-night is spoiled," sadly thought the Elephant. "Our jolly comrade is gone!"

All the way home in the automobile Archibald kept punching the red and yellow Clown in the chest and banging the cymbals together until the boy's mother said:

"Oh, Archibald, please be quiet! My head aches!"

"All right, I'll make my Clown jiggle!" said the boy, who really loved his mother, though sometimes he was rude.

Then he pulled the strings until the poor Clown thought his arms and legs would come off, so fast were they jerked about.

When Archibald reached home with his new toy he ran out into the street to find some of his playmates. He saw a boy named Pete and another named Sam.

"Look what I've got!" cried Archibald.

"A Jumping Jack!" exclaimed Sam.

"It's a Calico Clown, and he can do everything," said Archibald. "He's like one in a circus, and he can do funny tricks. He can jiggle his arms and legs and play the cymbals. I'll show you!"

He worked the Clown so fast that the red and yellow chap grew dizzy again.

"That's fine!" said Sam. "I wish I had a Clown like that."

"Can he do the giant's swing?" asked Pete.

"What's the giant's swing?" Archibald wanted to know.

"It's something the men do in a circus," was the answer. "Here, I have some string in my pocket. We'll make a trapeze in your back yard and we'll have the Calico Clown do the giant's swing."

"Oh, that'll be fun!" cried Archibald.

"Yes, it may be fun for you," thought the Calico Clown, "but what about me? What is the giant's swing, anyhow? Oh, I wish I were back on the toy counter!"

CHAPTER II

A BROKEN LEG

Sam and Pete hurried with Archibald to his back yard. Archibald carried the red and yellow Calico Clown in his hands. Now and then the boy would punch the gay fellow in the chest, making the cymbals clang together with a bang. Again Archibald would pull the strings, causing the Calico Clown to jiggle his arms and legs.

"You're a nice toy, all right," said Archibald. "I like my Clown!"
"But wait until I make him do the giant's swing!" exclaimed Pete.
"That will be worth seeing!"

When the boys reached a tree in Archibald's yard, Pete found a piece of broken broom handle for the bar of the trapeze. From his pocket he took some strong pieces of string. With these the broomstick was tied to the limb of a tree, so that it hung down and swung to and fro like a swing.

"Now well put the Clown on," Pete called to Archibald, when the trapeze was finished.

"How are you going to make him stay on?" asked Sam.

"Oh, I can tie him on with another piece of string," Pete answered.

"That's easy!" yelled Archibald.

It did not take Pete long to tie the Calico Clown on the swinging trapeze. It was quite high from the ground, and as the little toy man looked down and saw how far below him the green grass was, his knees seemed to shake and his cymbals to tremble.

"Oh, if I should fall now I would be broken to pieces!" said the Calico Clown to himself, for of course he dared not speak aloud now, and he dared not move by himself. "This is much higher than when I climbed the string in the toy store and caught fire at the gas

jet. This is much higher than I ever was up before," sighed the Clown.

"Is he ready to do the giant's swing now?" asked Sam.

"In a minute," answered Pete.

Once the Clown was tied on, Pete began to swing the trapeze to and fro. Farther and farther swung the Calico Clown, and, as he moved to and fro, his cymbals clanged together. His arms and legs also jiggled and jumped, as they had done when Archibald pulled the strings.

Pete stood behind the trapeze and gave it little pushes with his hands every now and then. This made it swing farther and farther.

"Oh, it almost turned all the way over!" suddenly cried Archibald.

"That's what I want it to do," said Pete. "When the trapeze goes all the way over and around and around, that's the giant's swing I was telling you about. Watch!"

Archibald and Sam watched, and in another moment the trapeze swung up and over so hard that it turned around and around in a regular circle.

"Hurray! There she goes!" cried Pete.

"Oh, look!" exclaimed Sam.

"Say, that's great!" yelled Archibald. "I didn't know my Calico Clown could do that!"

As for the Calico Clown himself, he did not know it either, and he felt very bad that he was made to do the giant's swing.

"Oh, how dizzy it makes me feel!" he said to himself. "I know I'm going to fall!"

He could feel the strings that tied him to the broomstick bar beginning to loosen. The Calico Clown shut his eyes, thinking that if he did not see the green grass whirling around beneath him he would not feel so dizzy. Around and around he went in the giant's swing.

And then, all of a sudden, something broke. It was the string holding the Calico Clown to the broomstick. And when the string broke off flew the Clown!

He flew off just when the trapeze was at the highest point, and away through the air sailed the red and yellow toy, as if he had been shot from a cannon.

"Oh, look at that!" cried Archibald, "Now you've gone and done it, Pete!"

"He busted loose!" shouted Sam.

"If he falls and breaks, you've got to get me another," cried Archibald.

"I'm going to fall, all right," thought the poor Clown to himself, "and I shouldn't be a bit surprised if I broke into bits!"

One can not go sailing through the air forever, even if one is a Calico Clown. And, after being flung off the trapeze and shooting along high above the green grass, the Calico Clown felt himself falling down.

Once more he shut his eyes, as he could do this without the boys seeing him. His arms and legs jiggled and joggled about, and his cymbals clanged with a tinkling sound.

"Oh, dear!" sighed the Calico Clown.

There came a soft, dull thud on the grass. That was the Calico Clown falling down. He felt a sudden, sharp pain go through him, and then he seemed to faint away.

For a time the Calico Clown knew nothing of what happened. Archibald, Sam and Pete ran over to where the toy had fallen. Archibald was the first to pick it up. The cymbals were still fast to the Clown's hands, and so were the jiggling strings attached to his arms and legs. But something was wrong.

"Oh, one of his legs is broken!" cried Archibald. "My Calico Clown is spoiled! Pete, you've broken one of his legs!"

And that was what had happened. In his fall from the trapeze the poor red and yellow toy had cracked one of his wooden legs. It was the one on which he wore the red half of his trousers.

"I—I didn't mean to do that," said Pete.

"Well, you did it; and now you have to get me another toy!" exclaimed

Archibald. "If you don't I'll tell my mother on you."

"Oh, Arch!" exclaimed Sam.

"Oh, all right. I'll get you another," said Pete quickly. "You can come over to my house now, and I'll give you anything I have in place of your Calico Clown. I didn't think his leg would break so easily."

The three boys, with Archibald carrying the poor, broken-legged Clown, hurried out of the yard. As they were going to Pete's house they met a boy named Sidney, who was a brother of Herbert and Madeline. Madeline owned the Candy Rabbit, and Herbert had a Monkey on a Stick—both of them toys that had once lived in the same store with the Calico Clown.

"What have you?" asked Sidney of Archibald.

"A Calico Clown," was the answer. "He was new a little while ago, but Pete put him on a trapeze and made him do the giant's swing and now he's done for—he's got a broken leg."

"What are you going to do with him?" asked Sidney.

"He's going to make me give him one of my toys in place of the Clown," answered Pete. "Of course it was my fault he broke—I guess I didn't tie him on tight enough. And I'm willing to give Archie another toy for him, but—"

Sidney suddenly thrust his hand into his pocket and pulled out a gaily painted top that hummed and made music when you spun it.

"I'll trade you that for your Calico Clown," said Sidney to Archibald.

"But the Clown has a broken leg," explained Pete.

"I don't care. Maybe I can mend it," Sidney answered. "Once I fixed a Jumping Jack that had lost his head."

"Well, if you did that, you can fix a Clown that has only a broken leg," said Sam. "Go on and trade with him, Archie."

"All right, I will," decided Archibald. He held out the broken Clown and in trade took the musical top.

"Now I don't have to give you any of my toys, do I, Archie?" asked Pete.

"Nope," Archibald answered. "I'd rather have this top than a broken Calico Clown."

While he was being traded for the top the Calico Clown came out of his faint. His broken leg did not hurt so much now. He felt more like himself.

"Oh, ho!" he thought. "I am to have a new master, it seems. Well, I hope it will not be one who makes me do the giant's swing. Once is enough for that!"

Archibald went off with Sam and Pete to try the musical top. Sidney carried the Calico Clown toward the house where Madeline and Herbert lived.

"I'll fix you as good as new," said Sidney, looking at the dangling, broken leg.

And, as Sidney walked along, all of a sudden he heard his sister calling.

"Oh, quick, somebody! Somebody come quick! He's fallen into the water!"

CHAPTER III

THE CLOWN'S DANCE

Sidney stuffed the Calico Clown into his pocket and ran as fast as he could toward his sister. He saw her standing near a little fountain in the side yard of their home.

"What's the matter, Madeline?" asked Sidney, making sure the Calico Clown was not falling out of his pocket as he ran along.

"Oh, he's in the water!" said the little girl.

"Who is?" her brother wanted to know. "Who's in?"

"My Candy Rabbit. I set him on the edge of the fountain so he could watch the birds having a bath, and he fell right in."

Sidney looked toward the fountain. He saw nothing of the Candy Rabbit.

"You can't see him 'cause he's over the edge, down inside," went on Madeline. "I can't reach and get him, or I'd fish him out myself. And if he stays there very long he'll melt, as he almost did once when he fell into the bathtub. Oh, please get him out for me."

"I will!" promised Sidney.

"Oh, is it possible I am to see my dear old friend, the Candy Rabbit, again?" thought the Calico Clown, who, though stuffed into Sidney's pocket, had heard all that was said. The toys could hear and understand talk at all times, except when they were asleep. The broken leg of the gay red and yellow chap did not hurt him very much just now. "I shall certainly be glad to see the Candy Rabbit again," the Clown thought. "And Sidney had better hurry and get him out of the water, or he surely will melt, and that would be dreadful."

The fountain in the yard of the house where Herbert, Madeline and Sidney lived was rather a high one. The little girl could just reach up to the rim of the basin to set her Rabbit there, but, once he had toppled over and was down inside, she could neither see nor reach him.

"You'll have to stand on something or you can't get him," Madeline said to Sidney. "Shall I get you a box?"

"No, I'll stand on my tiptoes," he answered. And he did, thus making himself tall enough to reach over into the water and fish out the Candy Rabbit.

Out that sweet fellow came, dripping wet, but not much harmed.

"Oh, he didn't melt, did he?" asked Madeline. "I'm so glad!"

"He hasn't melted yet," answered Sidney, as he handed the Easter toy to his sister. "But you'd better put him in the sun to dry, or he may crumble away."

"I will," Madeline promised.

As Sidney turned to walk away, the Calico Clown fell out of his pocket.

"What's that? Where'd you get him?" cried Madeline. At the same time the Candy Rabbit saw the gay red and yellow chap from the toy store.

"Oh, there's my dear old Clown friend!" thought the Rabbit, all wet as he was. "How in the wide world did he get here?"

But of course he could not ask, any more than the Calico Clown could answer.

And when the Clown, lying on the grass where he had fallen from Sidney's pocket, saw the Candy Rabbit, the Clown said to himself:

"Yes, there he is! The same one I knew before. Oh, if we could only get together by ourselves and talk! How much we could say!"

Sidney picked the Calico Clown up off the grass.