

Up the Tree Again

Enid Blyton

...And then a note came from Silky and Moon-Face. This is what it said:

DEAR BESSIE, FRANNY, JO AND RICK,

We know that you don't want any more adventures just yet, but you might like to know that there is a most exciting land at the top of the Faraway Tree just now. It is the Land of Do-As-You-Please, even nicer than the Land of Take-What-You-Want. We are going there tonight. If you want to come, come just before midnight and you can go with us. We will wait for you till then.

Love from SILKY AND MOON-FACE

The children read the note one after another. Their eyes began to shine. "Shall we go?" said Franny. "Better not," said Jo. "Something silly is sure to happen to us. It always does."

"Oh, Jo! Do let's go!" said Bessie. "You know how exciting the Enchanted Wood is at night, too, with all the fairy folk about—and the Faraway Tree lit with lanterns and things. Come on, Jo—say we'll go."

"I really think we'd better not," said Jo. "Rick might do something silly again."

"I would not!" said Rick in a temper. "It's not fair of you to say that."

"Don't quarrel," said Bessie. "Well, listen—if you don't want to go, Jo, Franny and I will go with Rick. He can look after us."

"Pooh! Rick wants looking after himself," said Jo.

Rick gave Jo a punch on the shoulder and Jo slapped back.

"Oh, don't!" said Bessie. "You're not in the Land of Do-As-You-Please now!"

That made everyone laugh. "Sorry, Jo," said Rick. "Be a sport. Let's all go to-night. Or at any rate, let's go up the tree and hear what Silky and Moon-Face can tell us about this new land. If it sounds at all dangerous we won't go. See?"

"All right," said Jo, who really did want to go just as badly as the others, but felt that he ought not to keep leading the girls into danger. "All right. We'll go up and talk to Silky and Moon-Face. But mind—if I decide not to go with them, there's to be no grumbling."

"We promise, Jo," said Bessie. And so it was settled. They would go to the Enchanted Wood that night and climb the Faraway Tree to see their friends.

It was exciting to slip out of bed at half-past eleven and dress. It was very dark because there was no moon.

"We shall have to take a torch," said Jo. "Are you girls ready? Now don't make a noise, or you'll wake Mother."

They all crept down stairs and out into the dark, silent garden. An owl hooted nearby, and something ran down the garden path. Bessie nearly squealed.

"Sh! It's only a mouse or something," said Jo. "I'll switch on my torch now. Keep close together and we shall all see where we're going."

In a bunch they went down the back garden and out into the little lane there. The Enchanted Wood loomed up big and dark. The trees spoke to one another softly. "Wisha, wisha, wisha," they said. "Wisha, wisha, wisha!"

The children jumped over the ditch and walked through the wood, down the paths they knew so well. The wood was full of fairy folk going about their business. They took no notice of the children. Jo soon switched off his torch. Lanterns shone everywhere and gave enough light to see by.

They soon came to the great dark trunk of the Faraway Tree. A rope swung down through the branches.

"Oh, good!" said Rick. "Is Moon-Face going to pull us up?"

"No," said Jo. "We'll have to climb up—but we can use the rope to help us. It's always in the tree at night to help the many folk going up and down."

And indeed there were a great many people using the Faraway Tree that night. Strange pixies, goblins and gnomes swarmed up and down it, and brownies climbed up, chattering hard.

"Where are they going?" asked Rick in surprise.

"Oh, up to the Land of Do-As-You-Please, I expect," said Jo. "And some of them are visiting their friends in the tree. Look—there's the Angry Pixie! He's got a party on to-night!"

The Angry Pixie had about eight little friends squashed into his tree-room, and looked as pleased as could be. "Come and join us!" he called to Jo.

"We can't," said Jo. "Thanks all the same. We're going up to Moon-Face's."

Everyone dodged Dame Washalot's washing water, laughed at old Watzisname sitting snoring as usual in his chair, and at last came to Moon-Face's house.

And there was nobody there! There was a note stuck on the door.

We waited till midnight and you didn't come. If you do come and we're not here, you'll find us in the Land of Do-As-You-Please.

Love from SILKY AND MOON-FACE.

P.S.—*Do* come. Just think of the things you want to do—you can do them all in the Land of Do-As-You-Please!

"Golly!" said Rick, longingly, "what I'd like to do better than anything else is to ride six times on a roundabout without stopping!"

"And I'd like to eat six ice-creams without stopping!" said Bessie.

"And I'd like to ride an elephant," said Franny.

"And I should like to drive a motor-car all by myself," said Jo.

"Jo! Let's go up the ladder!" begged Franny.

"Oh, do, do let's! Why can't we go and visit a really nice land when one comes? It's just too mean of you to say we can't."

"Well," said Jo. "Well—I suppose we'd better! Come on!"

With shrieks and squeals of delight the girls and Rick pressed up the little ladder, through the cloud. A lantern hung at the top of the hole to give them light—but, lo and behold! as soon as they had got into the land above the cloud it was daytime! How extraordinary!

The children stood and gazed round it. It seemed a very exciting land, rather like a huge amusement park. There were roundabouts going round and round in time to music. There were swings and see-saws. There was a railway train puffing along busily, and there were small aeroplanes flying everywhere, with brownies, pixies and goblins having a fine time in them.

"Goodness! Doesn't it look exciting?" said Bessie. "I wonder where Moon-Face and Silky are."

"There they are—over there—on that round-about!" cried Jo. "Look—Silky is riding a tiger that is going up and down all the time—and Moon-Face is on a giraffe! Let's get on, too!"

Off they all ran. As soon as Moon-Face and Silky saw the children, they screamed with joy and waved their hands. The roundabout stopped and the children got on. Bessie chose a white rabbit. Franny rode on a lion and felt very grand. Jo went on a bear and Rick chose a horse.

"So glad you came!" cried Silky. "We waited and waited for you. Oh—we're off! Hold tight!"

The roundabout went round and round and round. The children shouted for joy, because it went so fast. "Let's have six rides without getting off!" cried Jo. So they did—and dear me, weren't they giddy when they did at last get off. They rolled about like sailors!

"I feel like sitting down with six ice-creams," said Bessie. At once an ice-cream man rode up and handed them out thirty-six ice-creams. It did look a lot. When Jo had divided them all out equally there were six each. And how delicious they were! Everybody managed six quite easily.

"And now, what about me driving that railway engine!" cried Jo, jumping up. "I've always wanted to do that. Would you all like to be my passengers? Well, come on, then!"

And off they all raced to where the railway train was stopping at a little station. "Hi! Hie!" yelled Jo to the driver. "I want to drive your train!"

"Come along up, then," said the driver, jumping down. "The engine is just ready to go!"