



ONCE UPON
PLANET NOG

THE PURPLE HAT

On the imaginary planet of Nog, lived the Noggians, a friendly one-eyed, blue-skinned race of people. They wore purple clothes in a style that, to you and me, would seem rather like pajamas. The Noggians loved the color purple and prized the tree that gave them the rich, purple sap. The Noggians made dye from the sap and dyed *all* their cloth to be a hue of purple.

King Bloggish was the king of Nog. He was a grand and generous man, and greatly loved by all the Noggians.

King Bloggish often wore a peculiar purple hat. It was his favorite hat. But alas, on one sad day the king's purple hat went missing. King Bloggish's was very sad to have lost his hat. His servants spent the day searching the palace for the king's hat, but were unable to find it.

Turning to his most trustworthy and brilliant counselors for help, King Bloggish said, "I'm sure you will know how to find my beautiful hat."

"I suspect," said Contog the Clever, "that you left your hat at your mother's house when you visited her."

"Yes, yes," said the king, "that is very possible."

"And I suspect," said Beshot the Great, "that it fell off your head when you went for a ride on your cootang¹."

¹ A *cootang* is an animal on Nog that is much like a horse with purple hair and only one eye.



"Hmm. That is also possible," said the king.

"I'm sure I know where it is, my lord," said Dashfoot the Quick. "Last night, as you stood on your balcony, it was quite windy. The wind probably blew the hat off your head. Because the wind was blowing to the east, I'm sure that if we look in the field east of the palace, we will find it there."

"That's also possible," said the king, as he arose from his throne.

"I am very tired from the strain of worrying about my lost hat. It is time for me to retire to bed, so I'll leave this matter in your capable hands. I trust you to determine a plan to find my hat. And to encourage you in your efforts, I promise to give a reward to the one who finds it. Good evening."



The counselors gathered to discuss the problem.

"Firstly," said Beshot, "I think your idea, Dashfoot, is totally absurd. That 'wind,' as you call it, was barely a breeze. I am sure my suggestion of what happened to the king's hat is more likely."

"What?" shouted Dashfoot. "Your notion is not only unlikely, but it's also ridiculous to think our wise king did not place his hat securely upon his head before setting out on his ride."

"The two of you can continue to argue about your foolish opinions concerning what happened to the king's hat. However, I am certain that I will be the one to receive the king's promised reward," said Contog. "I happen to know the king visited his mother yesterday evening, and I'm sure he must have set his hat down while he was talking to her."

"My friends," Toshgi the Meek politely said, "you have each suggested a likely possibility about how the king's hat was lost. I believe that if we take time to humbly listen to one another and work together, we will find the hat."

"Listen to Dashfoot's ideas and help him look for the hat?" Beshot asked. "Imagine me, Beshot the Great, crawling around in a field looking for a hat! What do you think I am? A field mouse?"

"Well, it's absurd to think you can just ride your cootang out where the king rode yesterday and quickly spot his hat!" Dashfoot shouted back.

On and on they argued, putting down each other's ideas. Contog stormed out of the room, sure that he was the wisest of the three and eager to search the king's mother's house.

Toshgi offered to go with Contog to help him search, but Contog didn't want anyone sharing the king's reward with him, so he declined Toshgi's offer.

Right away Beshot left to search the woods where the king had ridden the day before, and Dashfoot was off to the field. They also declined Toshgi's offer to help.

Toshgi was left alone, saddened by how his friends had been more interested in the offered reward than in counseling and working together to find the king's hat.

I only want to help, thought Toshgi, but they won't let me.



He sat down quietly in a corner and waited for the others to return and see who would be rewarded. As he casually looked about him, he noticed a lump in the great purple cushion on the king's throne.

That must be uncomfortable for the king to sit on, thought Toshgi. I'll take a look to see if I can fix it for him.

As Toshgi lifted up the cushion to smooth out the lump, he noticed that the lump wasn't in the cushion, but was caused by an object under the cushion. He lifted up the object and realized that what he was holding in his hand was the king's missing purple hat.

Toshgi smiled, thinking how happy the king would be to have his hat back again.

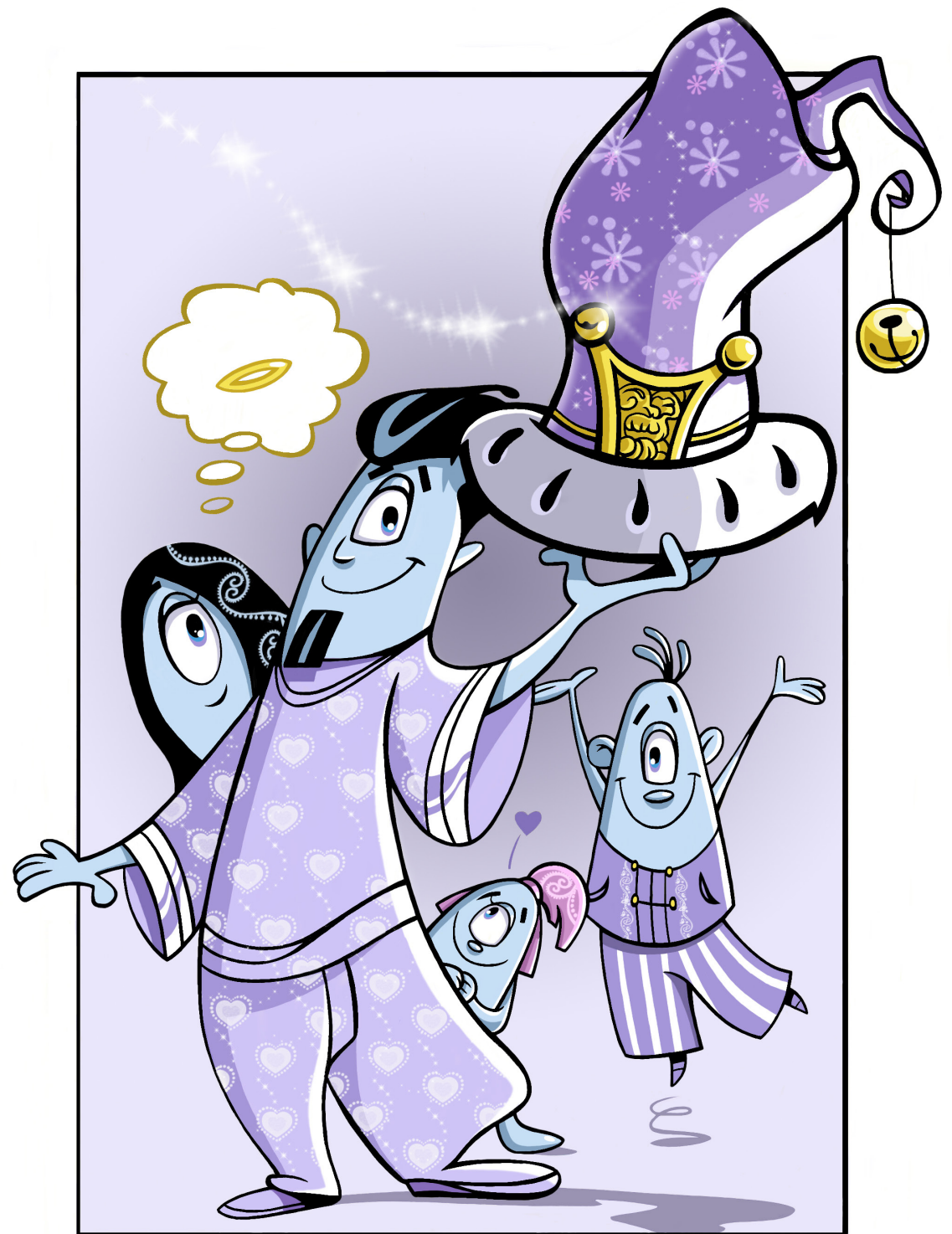


The following morning all four of the king's counselors were again in court with the king. Contog the Clever, Beshot the Great, and Dashfoot the Quick each related to the king the story of their great quest and the effort they put into searching for the king's hat. Each one of the first three stories ended with how they had failed to find the hat.

Finally, it was Toshgi the Meek's turn. From behind his back he pulled out the king's favorite purple hat, washed and reshaped to its original form. The king was overjoyed and donned it at once.

"Thank you, Toshgi, for finding my hat," said the king. "You will get the promised reward."

As they left the palace, the other three counselors surrounded Toshgi, eager to know where he had found the hat. Toshgi humbly recounted his story.



Beshot, Dashfoot, and Contog were silent as they pondered their recent behavior.

"Dashfoot, I owe you an apology," Beshot said. "I shouldn't have belittled your thoughts about what might have happened to the king's hat."

"Thank you for your apology, Beshot," Dashfoot answered. "But as we all know, the king's hat wasn't blown off his head, neither from the balcony nor when riding his cootang. I also owe each of you an apology for being argumentative and trying to prove I had the best idea for finding the king's hat."

"We all owe Toshgi an apology," said Contog. "Toshgi, you tried to get us to listen to each other, but we were each so concerned about proving that we were right and receiving the promised reward that we didn't want to listen."

"We wouldn't even let you help us, because we selfishly wanted the reward ourselves," Dashfoot said to Toshgi.

"Thank you for your apologies, my friends," Toshgi said. "I forgive you. I would like to use the king's kind reward to treat you to a special meal together. Will you join me?"

"That is most generous, Toshgi!" Contog exclaimed. "It would be our pleasure."

And off the four counselors went to enjoy good food and each other's friendship.

