

'HIP-HOP, DOREMI AND THE DIRTY RIVER'

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HOW THE BIG DIRTY RIVER SEPARATED HIP-HOP AND DOREMI

Syprilia was a very beautiful and happy country. They say that it was ruled by the good Lord Sun and the kind Fairy Neptunia. In this happy and beautiful country lived a brother and a sister. No one knew their real names, but all the birds, the little animals and the flowers called them by the names of Hip-Hop and Doremi. The boy was called Hip-Hop because he was a gay and active little chap, and always on the go. The little girl was called Doremi because she had a beautiful voice and was always singing. Hip-Hop had a dog named Hector, and Doremi had a cat named Hera.

Hip-Hop and Doremi had lived more than a thousand happy days together, with their pets that could talk and the birds that sang and the flowers that danced.

The people of Syprilia were so happy and carefree that they did not notice that the Bad Spirit which had been sleeping for thousands of years in the Iron Mountain, had woken up. They did not notice that the Bad Spirit was angry with Syprilia and its people, and wanted to punish them. They did not notice that the Bad Spirit of the Iron Mountain had seeped secretly into the stream that flowed down into their valley from the Iron Mountain, and that it was turning it into a big Dirty River. Then, suddenly one morning, a torrential Dirty River came rushing down the mountain, spreading disaster and unhappiness wherever it passed, carrying the evil and terrible Spirit of the Iron Mountain with it! Oh, how terrible its laughter was!

The Dirty River had come down so suddenly and with such a thunderous noise, that Hip-Hop and Doremi closed their eyes tightly so as not to see, and held their hands over their ears so that they would not hear the thunderous noise.

Then everything calmed down. There was a sudden lull. Hip-Hop opened his eyes and saw that the River had divided the forest in which he and his sister Doremi had been playing Hide-and-seek, in two.

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And he realised that his sister was not with him any more. She was on the other side of the River. With him was only his dog Hector, who was shivering and terrified.

When everything had subsided and calmed down, Doremi too opened her eyes, and realised that the Dirty River had divided in two the happy forest where birds had been singing and flowers dancing and animals talking. And Doremi also realised that her brother was not with her any more. He was on the other side of the terrible Dirty River. Only her cat Hera was near her, looking sadly around.

Hip-Hop shouted as loud as he could "Doremi ! Doremi! Don't worry. I will get across somehow! Wait for me!" and Doremi was also shouting "Hip-Hop, try and come across! I am frightened all alone!"

But the Dirty River was a wild torrent, and the children could not hear one another. The Bad Spirit was laughing and laughing, and everybody shivered at the eerie noise. All the little animals had hidden in their burrows and nests. The birds had flown as high up as they could. Only the frogs in the river croaked Quark, Quark, as if they were keeping company with the Bad Spirit that was laughing and laughing.

Doremi was tired and cold and hungry, but she had nowhere to go, because their little house was now on the other side of the river. Therefore she huddled up in the hollow of a large tree with her cat, to spend the night. Doremi cried. Then she sang a song:

"Without my home - and without all the people i love best-
I feel like a lonely little bird-which has lost its friendly
nest".

A little bird, the barn owl, took up Doremi's sad song, and lifted it high, high up in the clouds, where all the other birds were flying around, nervous and frightened because of the Dirty River. Then the birds had a swift meeting, and decided to send a messenger to Hip-Hop. They chose the sparrow, who is small and cheeky and swift.

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The little sparrow flew as fast as he could to find Hip-Hop. It sat on his shoulder and stroked his cheek with its beak and said "Hip-Hop don't be sad. We , the birds, have decided to help you to be with Doremi again. Don't hesitate to call us, as soon as you need help. And listen, I will be your messenger. Every day I will fly very high into the sky, so that the Bad Spirit will not be able to see me, and I will cross the river to visit Doremi. I will give her all your news, and then I will come back and give you hers."

"Thank you little sparrow", said Hip-Hop, and sat down deep in thought.

HOW THE GOOD LORD SUN AND THE KIND FAIRY NEPTUNIA WANTED TO HELP HIP-HOP

Hip-Hop was very sad. Hector tried to make him laugh. He wagged his tail. He stood on his hind legs. He even tried to sing... but it was no use. "Oh, Hector, the river is so wide and fierce. What shall I do? Can you help me?"

But poor Hector did not know what to say. And so they sat side by side thinking... and thinking..., till suddenly Hip-Hop felt a warm - a very warm - hand touch his shoulder. He looked round and saw a handsome young knight in shining gold and red armour. The shining knight was smiling at him.

"Don't be sad, Hip-Hop" he said. "Our land, Syprilia, is famous for its happy people. But if there is ever one sad person there, then all the people will become sad. Sadness, you know, is a catching disease - like 'flu! Look, your friend Hector is also sad. Therefore, from one sad person come two, from two, three - so that, in a few days time, all the people of Syprilia will become sad. Then what will become of me, Lord Sun, without happy people? I will also become sad, and will put on sad black clothes, and will go and hide in the darkness and the cold.

Then Hip-Hop said "Oh, no, Lord Sun, don't wear black - you are so handsome in your shining armour, all gold and red. Please don't wear black."

"All right, don't worry," said Lord Sun "I will not put on my black armour, but you must promise to cheer up!"

"How can I cheer up?" asked Hip-Hop. "The Black River has devided our country in two. How can I be happy when my sister, Doremi, is on the other side and I cannot play or skip or dance with her?" and a big tear gathered in the corner of Hip-Hop 's eye, and a big lump in his throat. But before the big tear could run down Hip-Hop's cheek,

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LORD SUN spoke again.

"Do you think that I like the Bad Spirit that cheated Syprilia and divided it in two? Don't you think that I too would like to get rid of the Dirty River, and join both sides together again? But sadness and tears won't help, Hip-Hop. We have to do something. I have a plan, but it will take time..."

"But Doremi is so small and lonely that she can't wait for long", said Hip-Hop. And there was that lump again in his throat, and that big tear in his eye.

"That is exactly why I came to you today", said the Lord Sun. "I know that your love for your sister will make you try to join her as soon as possible, and when you and Doremi are together again, all Syprilia will be saved, because the Bad Spirit will be conquered only if all the people of Syprilia fight it together."

"Then what must I do? I am ready", Said Hip-Hop, and his eyes were shining.

"I think we will need the help of Fairy Neptunia", said Lord Sun, "So let us go quickly to her palace". And he called for his chariot, which must have been very near because it came at once. All of them climbed on to it, and for the first time in all those days, Hector heard Hip-Hop shout again and again "Lippity-oppity, skippety-op!"

A MAGIC FLUTE THAT DOES STRANGE THINGS

Wherever Lord Sun passed in his chariot drawn by golden horses, the animals and the birds and flowers would lift their heads in greeting:

"Good morning, Lord Sun, thank you for visiting us today!"

"Good morning, Lord Sun, look how I have grown!"

Then Hip-Hop realised that Lord Sun was loved and respected by all the creatures living in Syprilia, and that it was really a great honour to be sitting next to him in his shining chariot. Even Hector was standing erect, wagging his tail happily as if to say: "Here we are, the friends of Lord Sun, next to him in his chariot. Admire us!"

They passed forests and mountains, valleys and villages, and at last Lord Sun said "Look! there is the palace of Fairy Neptunia."

"Oh, what a lovely place she had! Fountains were making beautiful water patterns. There were flower beds and grass everywhere. In the little lakes were all sorts of fish, and swans and ducks and geese were swimming in the water...and how cool it was!

Fairy Neptunia came smiling to welcome them. She was beautifully dressed in pale blue. Her eyes were green. Her hair was fair and reached to her feet, and there were stars glittering in it. On her dress, coral, and fish, and seaweed were painted. Her voice was like music.

"Welcome, Lord Sun, to my palace. Since the time when our dear Syprilia was divided in two, we have had no time or wish to exchange visits," she said, and asked them to be seated on some large shells.

"It is about our dear Syprilia that we have come to visit you," said Lord Sun. "Hip-Hop here, and Hector, would like to ask you for a special favour."

"Tell me what you want, and I will try to help you," said Fairy Neptunia.

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"Well," said Hip-Hop, taking courage, "it concerns the Dirty River and... the Bad Spirit..."

"Oh, unfortunately, I can do nothing about them," said Neptunia.

"Only the people of Syprilia themselves can expel the Bad Spirit and the Black River from their country... No one else!"

"But my sister, Doremi, is on the other side and she is lonely and crying," said Hip-Hop. Again he felt tears welling up.

"Don't cry Hip-Hop, please. What would you like us to do for your sister?"

"I want to find her. I need her. I want us to be together again." said Hip-Hop, and a big sigh came from his chest. "And I want to become so big and strong that I can conquer the Bad Spirit."

"And when the Bad Spirit has been conquered, it will have to leave Syprilia, and with it will also go the Dirty River." said Lord Sun.

"Yes, that is a good idea" said Fairy Neptunia thoughtfully.

"It is, of course a very difficult problem, but I think we can find an answer to it."

As that moment Hector was chasing a fly. It was a tiny little fly that was buzzing around him. Poor Hector was trying to push it away with his paw, but it was no use. The fly was all the more determined to tease him and bite him and then fly away laughing at him!

Then Fairy Neptunia called out happily "I think I have found the answer! Sometimes the small are more powerful than the big. Look at this fly. It is nearly driving you crazy, Hector, isn't it so?"

"Woof, woof, woof, indeed it is. If I could catch it, I would sort it out!" said poor Hector.

"Yes, but you can't catch it because it is so small that it escapes your grasp, isn't it? Therefore, if Hip-Hop could become so small, he would be able to evade the Bad Spirit, and cross the River to find Doremi!..."

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"But how can that be done?" asked Hip-Hop.

"Like this," said the fairy, and took a small flute from her pocket and gave it to Hip-Hop. "Take this flute, Hip-Hop, and blow it three times".

Hip-Hop took the little flute and started to blow it. He blew once, and from being a normal boy he started growing smaller. He grew smaller and smaller until he was the size of a kitten.

"Now, Hip-Hop, blow the flute once more!"

Hip-Hop blew a second time and grew even smaller. Now he was the size of a mouse. Then he blew a third time and he became as small as an ant. Hector was very confused!

"Woof! Woof! What's happened? What have you done to my friend, Hip-Hop?" He asked the fairy in a frightened voice.

Fairy Neptunia calmed him down.

"Don't worry, Hector. Hip-Hop has only to blow the flute three more times and he will grow back to a normal boy again. As you can see, this is a magic flute. With the use of this flute and your own brains, I think that you will be able to cheat the Bad Spirit and cross the Dirty River without it finding out. And in this way you will conquer the Dirty River, and it will leave Syprilia, and you will all be happy again!"

With this, the fairy lifted Hip-Hop up in her palm. "Are you satisfied, Hip-Hop?" she asked.

"Very, very satisfied," he said, putting all his strength into his voice so that the fairy could hear him. Then he blew the flute once, and grew as big as a mouse in her hand. He jumped down, blew the flute again, and became as large as a kitten. Finally he blew it, and became as large as a normal boy. Hector, was pleased!

"Hip-Hop," he said "This is the nicest toy you have ever had!"

"This is not a toy," said Hip-Hop seriously. "This is the weapon with which we will conquer the Bad Spirit, Hector. And be careful - the Bad Spirit must not know that we have such a weapon."

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Lord Sun was watching them, smiling. Now he gave a sign to Hip-Hop that they had to leave. Hip-Hop turned towards the fairy and bowed gallantly, saying "Fairy Neptunia, I thank you for your present. I promise that as soon as I find Doremi, we will both come to thank you. And I am sure that Doremi will sing her best song to you."

Now the chariot of Lord Sun arrived, and Hip-Hop thought that it looked more beautiful and brilliant than ever, and as they passed the flowers, and the trees and all the animals and birds again, Hip-Hop waved to them and greeted them happily.

"Hello!" he shouted. "Hey there, don't be sad, Sadness is catching! Everything will be allright again in our country, as it was before - so keep cheerful."

When Lord Sun left Hip-Hop and Hector at their little cottage, they were so excited that they sat up all night making plans, - and as soon as it was daylight again, Hip-Hop could wait no longer. He blew the flute three times and became as small as an ant! He climbed onto Hector's back and said happily:

"HIPPA-HOPPA PLEASE LET'S GO!

BE A HORSE FOR ME!

I SHALL RIDE UPON YOUR BACK

AND WE'LL FIND DOREMI!"

And they went towards the Dirty River.

HOW MRS GRUMBLE, THE LONELY TURTLE, SUDDENLY BECAME GOOD AND HELPFUL

Now Hip-Hop was beside the Dirty River, trying to find a way of getting across to the other side. He was so small that only we, who know his story, would have noticed him. He looked like an ant walking on two legs! And Hector? Where was Hector? Well he was hidden behind some bushes, to make sure that the Bad Spirit didn't see him, because that would have ruined their plans.

How Hip-Hop's heart was beating! Now that he had become so small, everything seemed to him larger and more menacing. The Black River suddenly seemed endless, and how fiercely it roared. The pebbles seemed like large rocks, the grass like huge trees with thick stems. The dried leaves were like golden carpets and... oh dear! What was this terrible round thing with a hole in the centre? Surely it was a flying saucer from another planet! Hip-Hop was very scared.

He felt like blowing his flute to become a normal boy again so that he could run away quickly. But what would become of Doremi? The thought made him feel stronger. There! already his heart had stopped pounding so madly. He decided he would find out what was in that hole!

Oh goodness! Hip-Hop was right, it looked like something extra terrestrial. Now, from the hole, he could see a huge head emerging with two huge glistening horns! Did I say "Horns?" these were antennae, and one was longer than the other! Now they were turning towards Hip-Hop! Hip-Hop's legs felt like jelly. He couldn't escape! The strange head emerged even further, and now the strange creature started talking in a weird muffled voice.

"Don't be frightened, Hip-Hop. It is only me, Mr. Snail. I want to help. I have heard about your problems. I am the most faithful friend of Fairy Neptunia."

"Oh!" Hip-Hop sighed with relief, and held out his hand to shake one of the antennae extended by Mr. Snail. "I am very pleased to meet you".

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"Let's not waste any time," said Mr. Snail. "Get on my back, and I will take you to my cousin, the turtle. She is the only one who can help us, but she is quarrelsome and difficult, so try to gain her confidence!"

Immediately Hip-Hop climbed onto the snail's back. When they got nearer to the Dirty River, Mr. Snail said, "I must leave you now, Hip-Hop. I am not very good friends with my cousin, so it is better if she doesn't see us together. There she is - sleeping in the sun. Good luck!" And the snail departed. Hip-Hop went cautiously up to the turtle. She seemed huge. Her head and feet were hidden in her shell.

"Mrs Turtle," said Hip-Hop shyly, "excuse my worrying you."

A quarrelsome and grumpy voice was heard. "Here I am sleeping peacefully in my home, and still people bother me!"

Now, a head on a long neck came out of the shell. The Turtle opened her eyes wide and looked at him angrily.

"I have said a thousand times that I do not want to be disturbed. I have even put up a notice. Yes, had you been more observant you would have seen it. PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB! MRS GRUMBLE IS RESTING! - Do you understand that Mr Ant?"

"Oh yes, I understand. I'm sorry but I'm not an ant... I'm Hip-Hop."

"Hip-Hop? Oh! What has happened to you? Ha ha ha! One gulp and I could swallow you!"

"No, no, please don't swallow me, Mrs Grumble. If you do, how am I going to find my little sister who is crying on the other side of the Dirty River?"

"Doremi?" said Mrs Grumble questioningly. "Ah yes, I remember, she used to sing beautifully. It was the only song that never bothered my sleep. What a pity that she is all alone over there. - Now she doesn't sing anymore..So tell me, how do you plan to get to the other side?"

"I don't know, Mrs Grumble. The River is so big and wild that I'm frightened. Perhaps... perhaps you could help me" begged Hip-Hop.

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Mrs Grumble changed her attitude at once. She stretched her legs out, lifted her head, and said in a very, very cross voice. "Don't get me involved in all this! I want my peace and quiet. I don't want to get involved in other people's problems. I am not interested in anyone. I have no friends, just because I want to be left alone. When one has friends, one has their problems, their sorrows and their troubles. Look here, what do I care whether Syprilia has been devided in two? For my part, I can swim and I can go where it pleases me. Leave me alone. I want to have another rest."

"All right, All right, Mrs Grumble, never mind," said Hip-Hop and started moving away. "Someone else will help me" ... but he had not gone far, when he heard the turtle calling him.

"Oh! Hey there, Hip-Hop, come back for a second, please. Oh! Mr. Hip-Hop, something terrible has happened!" Our friend, Hip-Hop turned around - and what did he see? Mrs. Grumble, the turtle, was now turned over on her back, lying upside down. She was waving her legs up and down, but it was impossible for her to turn over. Hip-Hop went to her.

"Oh! I was trying to get over this stone and, oh I slipped, and as you can see, I overturned! Please help me, because if I stay like this I shall die of hunger and thirst! Only you can help me."

"Oh what a shame! Poor turtle," said Hip-Hop. "How terrible!" and he went over to help her.

But how could Hip-Hop help this huge turtle now that he was only a tiny creature? The turtle began to cry.

"Please, you are my only friend - I have no others. Nobody likes me because I have never helped anybody. Don't go away, please..."

If there was one thing that Hip-Hop couldn't stand, it was to hear someone crying.

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"Don't cry, Mrs Grumble we will think of a way. I could, you know, blow my flute and become a normal-sized boy, and then it would be very easy for me to turn you over. But, you know, the Bad Spirit must not see me because then my plans will fail. Listen, stay here, and try to relax, and I will be back soon. I think I have found an answer!"

Saying this, Hip-Hop left the turtle lying upside down, and ran towards the forest.

What do you think made Hip-Hop run so fast? Well, don't be impatient. Soon we shall all know.

(Let us turn a page...)?

As I was saying, when one has friends, even the most difficult problems can be solved!

Hip-Hop had a very clever scheme in mind. He would ask his friend the sparrow to come and turn the turtle over with his beak.

But Mr. Sparrow was flying about high in the sky, heedless of what was happening.

"Hey Mr. Sparrow!" Hip-Hop shouted.

But of course Mr. Sparrow couldn't hear, and couldn't even see little Hip-Hop from right up where he was!

Instead of Mr. Sparrow, Hip-Hop's shouting was heard by Mr. Ant who was walking nearby. He approached Hip-Hop and asked him very politely

"Could I help with anything? If I am not mistaken, you are..."

"You are not making a mistake - I am Hip-Hop. As you can see, my little ant, I am now as small as you are".

"How do you do? I am very pleased to meet you," said Mr. Ant, politely extending one of his antennae to greet Hip-Hop. "Please tell me if I can be of use to you."

"Oh no , I don't think that you can," Hip-Hop said thoughtfully. "I want to find some way of getting Mr. Sparrow to come at once, because

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I need him."

"Well, that is easy!" exclaimed Mr. Ant happily, and started rubbing his antennae together. Immediately a whole troupe of ants came running.

"Hip-Hop, let me introduce my family," said Mr. Ant proudly. "This is my wife, and over here are my daughters, my sons, my grandchildren, granny and grandfather and greatgrandfather and great-grandmother, my uncle and auntie, my first cousins, my..."

"How do you do?" said Hip-Hop, taking a deep breath. "I see you are a very large family!"

"Yes a large and very close family" said Mr. Ant proudly. "And these are only the closest of my family. My second cousins, nieces and nephews and great-grandchildren haven't come yet!"

"But,..." said Hip-Hop, "I don't understand. Is this a family gathering?"

"No, of course not. I have asked them all to come and help contact Mr. Sparrow."

Mr. Ant wasted no time. He started talking very fast in ant language, moving his antennae about. The other ants listened carefully and then started running here and there, all over the place.

"Don't worry, my friend Hip-Hop" Mr. Ant said. "In a few minutes Mr. Sparrow will be here. You can't find better messengers than ants."

And truly, in a few minutes, the army of ants had spread to all corners of the forest, passing on the message that Mr. Sparrow was urgently needed.

A butterfly hovering over the flowers heard the message and said "I saw Mr. Sparrow flying around not far from here. I will go and tell him." And flapping her wings as fast as she could she flew to a large oak tree. Mr. Squirrel was having a rest on one of the branches munching an acorn.

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"Hello, Miss Butterfly, why are you in such a hurry today?"

"I must find Mr. Sparrow - and fast. Hip-Hop needs him", said Miss Butterfly.

At once the squirrel jumped from that big oak tree to the next, and then to the next one, calling "has anybody seen Mr. Sparrow?"

"Hip-Hop is looking for him because he needs him urgently!"

A finch, who was feeding her babies in her nest at that moment said "Mr. Sparrow left for the north just a few minutes ago. I'll fly and tell him".

So the kind finch left her little ones with open beaks, waiting for their food, and flew after the sparrow as fast as she could. She caught him just as he was swooping to the earth to pick up some breadcrumbs.

"Mr. Sparrow, hurry. Mr. Squirrel is looking for you!"

The sparrow quickly picked up the crumbs, swallowed them, and flew to the squirrel, who sent him to the butterfly. She in turn, sent him to the ant and at last he reached Hip-Hop.

"Oh, thank goodness that you've come, my good Mr. Sparrow" shouted Hip-Hop - he used all his force so that the sparrow could hear him, since Mr. Sparrow could not see him because he was so small.

"Quickly, hurry! Poor Mrs Grumble, the turtle, has capsized, and we must help her to turn over." And Hip-Hop showed the sparrow where the turtle was.

"Is that why the whole forest is in a turmoil, poor Hip-Hop?" said the sparrow. "For Mrs Grumble, who loves no one and therefore has no friends? and tell me, how is it that you have become as small as a morsel. If you hadn't talked, I would have taken you for an ant and swallowed you! Do be careful - someone might step on you! Leave Mrs Grumble alone. She must be punished because she is bad!"

"Please Mr. Sparrow only you can help", said the turtle crying. "Believe me, I have been punished enough. My shell is so heavy that

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I cannot turn over on my own, I will die of hunger if you don't turn me over"

"Please, Mr. Sparrow," said Hip-Hop, "do it for me and Doremi. Mrs Grumble will help me find her".

Briefly Hip-Hop told the Sparrow his story - How fairy Neptunia had given him the magic flute and how he planned to use the turtle to go and fetch his sister.

"But, my friend Hip-Hop, all this is unnecessary. Since you are so small, I can carry you across the Dirty River to find your sister. You don't need Mrs Grumble."

"I wish things were as simple as that, my dear Mr. Sparrow," said Hip-Hop.

"But we also have to conquer the Bad Spirit, once and for all. To cheat it, I must cross the Dirty River, so that I can force it to go away from our country. You see, you don't understand. It is not enough just to be united and happy, and not cut in two. The Bad Spirit and the Dirty River must go for ever. And they will only leave if you all help me. And first of all, let's start by turning this poor turtle over!"

Finally, the Sparrow was persuaded. He approached the turtle, and got hold of her shell with his beak. Trying not to hurt her, he managed to turn her onto her front again! The poor turtle was so happy!

"Oh," she said, "I nearly got used to seeing the world upside down!" And she gave Hip-Hop a smacking kiss!

HOW THE TURTLE WAS TURNED INTO A BOAT

"Now", said Hip-Hop, "let us get to work! Mr. Sparrow, from you I only want one favour. Please fly over the Dirty River and tell Doremi not to worry because we will soon be together again. But be very careful, so that the Bad Spirit does not get wing of what you are doing, otherwise our plans will be ruined!"

"And I? what can I do?" asked Mrs. Grumble, while Mr. Sparrow was already flying up as high in the sky as he could, pretending to be minding his own business.

"You my good Mrs. Grumble, will be carrying out the most daring part of my plan!" said Hip-Hop. He explained to the turtle that she would have to make room in her shell so that he could sit in side it too. Then she would have to try to swim to the other side of the river. Mrs. Grumble had her doubts.

"But my dear Hip-Hop, the river is so large and wild and deep. I am a small turtle and I only swim in the shallow waters of streams and little lakes..."

"I don't say it is an easy task, my dear little turtle, but it is worth trying, then, don't forget that, even in the Dirty River, we have all sorts of friends who love us, and will help us in case of need."

"Really?" said Mrs. Grumble, admiring Hip-Hop who had so many friends while she had none. Now she was really sorry that, for so many years, she had not tried to make even one friend, because, as she had said, she wanted to be left alone. How stupid! and now Hip-Hop, this famous person, was her friend. Oh no, could she disappoint him now? Without hesitating, Mrs. Grumble said ceremoniously

"Hip-Hop, I am at your disposal!"

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"Well, let us not waste any time then," said Hip-Hop. "We have to get our provisions ready. We will need a little food, because we do not know how long our journey will take. I am sorry, Mrs Grumble, but you must make a little more room inside your shell, where we can store whatever we will need on our way. Now I am off to go and find some food."

"Don't waste any time on that, Hip-Hop," said a voice beside him. Hip-Hop turned round - and what a sight! His friend, Mr. Ant, with all his family, was there, bringing all sorts of goodies: little pieces of sugar, breadcrumbs and cheese for Hip-Hop, and some seeds and greens for the turtle.

"Did you think for one moment that we would let our friends go without food?" asked Mr. Ant, laughing. And Mrs Grumble felt shivers of pleasure run up and down her spine when she heard the words "our friends".

"If we load all these goodies onto poor Mrs Grumble, she will sink," said Hip-Hop laughing too.

At that moment Mr. Sparrow arrived quite out of breath.

"I saw Doremi," he said "She is with Hera, her cat. She said that she was waiting for you and she is not crying anymore. She even sang her song for me to bring to you!"

And the sparrow tried as well as he could to sing the song of Doremi to them:

"MY DEAR BROTHER HIP-HOP, I KNOW THE DIRTY RIVER
WON'T ALWAYS DIVIDE FRIEND FROM FRIEND.
ONCE MORE WE SHALL ALL BE TOGETHER AND HAPPY,
FOR GOODNESS MUST WIN IN THE END!"

As soon as Hip-Hop heard his Sister's message he gave his loudest "Hopa-Hipa-Hop-Hop-Hop!"

Then he waved farewell to all his friends, making signs to them

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to keep his journey a secret.

He scrambled into the turtle's shell - she made room for him very politely.

"Come on, Mrs Grumble," he said, "let's start out exciting journey. Now you must prove that you can really sail your own boat!"

HOW THE BAD SPIRIT SUSPECTED MRS GRUMBLE AND THINGS BECAME DIFFICULT FOR HIP-HOP

It was nice and soft inside Mrs Grumble's shell, although Hip-Hop, to tell the truth, felt very lonely. But he did not dare even to put his little head out to see what was happening, because it seemed that the bad Spirit was very angry. It shook the Dirty River and raised big waves. Poor Mrs Grumble was bobbing like an eggshell.

The bobbing made Hip-Hop feel very sleepy, so he dozed most of the time. He didn't know how long he had travelled. One day two, three? He didn't know whether it was night or day, because inside the Turtle's shell it was always dark. Only, every now and then, he felt very hungry and ate a little crumb. Poor Mrs. Grumble didn't even stop to eat. She was swimming with all her might. She wanted to reach the shore as quickly as possible, because she was terrified of the Bad Spirit. Suddenly Mrs Grumble put her head into her shell. Then she pulled her legs in. Hip-Hop felt her trembling.

"I think the Bad Spirit suspects something," she told Hip-Hop.

"Why, what makes you think so?"

"Can't you feel how we are bobbing? The Bad Spirit is very angry. I think his spies must have reported something to him."

At that moment a thunderous voice, which made both of them freeze with fear, was heard saying "Whoever gets onto the Dirty River without a special permit will be severely punished. The Bad Spirit can sense some stranger near here. There will be investigation!"

Hip-Hop's heart was pounding like mad. Mrs Grumble's was, too.

"What are we going to do Hip-Hop? We are lost. Oh, what a pity! You know, we had nearly reached the other side."

"How near are we, Mrs Grumble?" asked Hip-Hop.

"Hmm... very near. Another hour's sailing."

"I have got an idea," said Hip-Hop. "Can you see a little frog anywhere?"

CONTINUED

Mrs Grumble put her head out of her shell, but put it again in immediately, quite terrified.

"Goodness me, Hip-Hop! The Bad Spirit has sent its soldiers, thousands of leeches, to look for illegal travellers everywhere. Hip-Hop, what are we going to do? I'm so frightened".

"Keep cool, good Mrs Grumble" Said Hip-Hop. "Now, please do me a favour. Put your head out, and look carefully, in case you can see a little rock which you can climb onto. Pretend that nothing is happening. Can you see one?"

"Yes, yes. I see a little rock just over there".

"Fine! Can you get to it?"

"Hmm...I'll try".

"Be carefull", said Hip-Hop to his friend. "No one must suspect that you are carrying me in your shell. As soon as you reach the rock, get onto it and stay there"

And that is exactly what happened. Mrs Grumble kept on swimming as if nothing was wrong, and without heeding the leeches, which started chasing her and shouting at her. But the largest of the black leeches came and got stuck to her shell?"

"Stop!" it calleed. "Stop at once. We must check you. What are you hiding in your shell?"

"Go away, you silly old leech. Don't get stuck onto my shell. You make my house dirty. I am on a visit to my cousin, Mrs Tortoise, who is having a party."

"You are not going to go anywhere! We shall search you", the leech told her.

"What are you talking about? I am going to scream. Help, Help, these horrible leeches are attacking a lady! I want to see your leader at once. I will report you for unbecoming conduct!"

And Mrs Grumble the turtle, who of course was an expert at grumbling, immediately started screaming.

CONTINUED

"I want to see your leader, now! I shall take you to court. I shall report you to the Newspapers!"

"What is going on? What is going on?" was heard in a hoarse thunderous voice.

It was the voice of the Bad Spirit. Mrs Grumble's heart almost came to a standstill from fear. But she kept calm, and turned to face it. Oh, goodness, it was the ugliest beast she had ever seen! Its head was huge and green and from it grew ten feelers like those of an octopus. It had five eyes all round its head and a long red split tongue, and when it opened its mouth, flames came out! Mrs Grumble wanted to scream with fear, but trying very hard to keep calm she said "my handsome lord, you must be the King of the Dirty River. Oh, I have always wanted to meet you. I have always admired your might which reigns over the whole of Syprilia!"

The Bad Spirit was impressed and flattered, and he immediately calmed down.

"What is the matter my dear lady? In what way can I help you?" he asked, making his voice sound as polite as possible.

"If you only would order your silly leeches to leave me alone, I'm on my way to my cousin."

"We leeches you ... old " the large leech was beginning to say. But the Bad Spirit stretched out one of his feelers and crushed it.

"And... where does your cousing live, my dear lady?" he asked.

"There, on that rock over there! Look, they have dirtied my shell! And just when I had the honour to meet you, such a handsome and polite Prince!"

The Bad Spirit felt very happy when he heard these words from the cunning turtle, and turned towards the leeches, saying: "you are useless! Instead of chasing those who look suspicious, you disturb law-abiding citizens. Get lost, quickly! And let the lady go on her visit. She is above suspicion!"

CONTINUED

Our friend, Mrs Grumble did not waste any time. Gathering all the strength in her, she made her way to the little rock, calling to the Bad Spirit "Goodbye my handsome Prince! I will be dreaming of you tonight!?"

Quickly she swam towards the little rock. She stopped to get her breath back after climbing onto it. Then she put her head into her shell and asked Hip-Hop: "Right, what do we do now? We are on the rock, Hip-Hop."

"Congratulations, my dear Mrs Grumble, you were better than a film star! Now we have to send word to our friend, Mr. Sparrow, to come and help us. I am sure he is somewhere high up watching us. I can't come out until it gets dark. Tell me, is there anyone apart from us on this rock?"

"No, not a soul," said the turtle. "all the other creatures hid, terrified. Only a little bee is buzzing around as if she is lost".

"A bee! just what we need! Would you call her to come here?"

Mrs Grumble called the bee, which came over, wondering what was going on.

"Hip-Hop spoke to the bee from inside the shell. "My dear little bee, don't be afraid. I am Hip-Hop and am on my way to Doremi, and I am also trying to get rid of the Dirty River and the Bad Spirit. Do you want to help?"

"Of course I want to help, Hip-Hop", said the bee at once. "I lost my sister, and brothers when this terrible thing happened, and I also lost my beehive and am wandering around without a home, without honeycombs and without a job! Oh, it is terrible not to have anything to do! Of course I will help to make Syprilia a happy country again. Come on, tell me what to do."

So Hip-Hop explained to the bee what he wanted her to do. She flew high up to find Mr. Sparrow. And Hip-Hop was waiting in his comfortable home that is to say the turtles shell, until evening.

HOW HIP-HOP MANAGED TO TRICK THE BAD SPIRIT AND PASS ACCROSS THE DIRTY RIVER

When evening came and it was quite dark, Hip-Hop said to Mrs Grumble: "Now, my dear friend, I must leave you. I hope that we will meet again when the Bad Spirit has been vanquished and has left our country."

"And where will you go on your own, Hip-Hop? As soon as you get out of here, the Bad Spirit will see you and kill you. No, I can't let you go," said Mrs Grumble.

Hip-Hop assured Mrs Grumble that his plan was perfect, and that there was no possibility of the Bad Spirit seeing him in the dark. All the same Mrs Grumble was in tears when she said goodbye.

Hip-Hop first put his little head out of the warm shell, and then he got out completely and took a few steps. A short distance away, his friend the sparrow was waiting for him. He had a nutshell in front of him.

"Come, Hip-Hop, hurry up. You must act fast now, before daylight. I have a nutshell for you here and two toothpicks, just as you asked, I am very curious to see what you will do with them," whispered the sparrow.

Hip-Hop thanked his friend, and lowered the nutshell into the river. Then he jumped into it. The nutshell floated on top of the river like a real little boat. Hip-Hop remembered how he and Doremi had often played boats with nutshells, and how they had sailed them in the streams. Now he himself could use one of these perfect little boats.

Then Hip-Hop lifted up the toothpicks, and used them as oars. The sparrow watched him, very worried. Mrs Grumble the turtle did the same. Both watched to see if Hip-Hop would manage, and held their breath in case the Bad Spirit woke up.

But fortunately the Bad Spirit was sleeping blissfully - he was even snoring.

CONTINUED

Poor Hip-Hop rowed all through the night. His arms became very sore but he dared not stop.

The nutshell was so small and light that it was pulled here and there by the waves. Poor Hip-Hop was quite disheartened. He was afraid he would never reach the other side of the river, although it was quite near. Tears came into his eyes and started rolling down his cheeks and into the dirty River. At that moment a savage voice was heard.

"There is an enemy in the Dirty River, I can feel tears in the water. Tears are only shed by good people. And I cannot stand kindness!"

It was the Bad Spirit. Hip-Hop was lost. At that moment thousands of leeches started to move in the water, and to swim here and there, trying to find the intruder.

"My dear little sister, it seems that I won't make it!" Hip-Hop said and closed his eyes, ready to be drowned in the dark waters of the river. But instead, he felt that he was being carried on, as if he was swimming, and he could not tell how. He opened his eyes - and what did he see? The nutshell with himself inside it was in the midst of a shoal of fish who were hiding it and pushing it towards the shore.

Before he could say a word one of the little fishes whispered "Don't talk Hip-Hop! The bad Spirit can't see you. We shall soon reach the other shore. We want to help you - we are friends."

So our friend kept his mouth shut until they reached the shore of the Dirty River. And after stepping safely onto the shore he opened his mouth and shouted "Hopa-Hipa-Hop-Hop-Hop!"

Then immediately, he got out his flute and blew it. He was tired of being so small and helpless. He blew it once, he blew it twice, he blew it three times - and turned again into a normal - sized boy. Now Hip-Hop was jumping and dancing with joy!

"Hopa-Hipa-hop-hop-hop! Hurry Hurry Doremi. I think we have

CONTINUED.....

overcome the Dirty River."

Poor Doremi, who had been waiting for days now, for him to come - ever since the good sparrow had told her about it - jumped up as soon as she heard his voice, and woke her cat, Hera.

"Wake up, Hera! Hip-Hop has come. Let's run to meet him!" and both Doremi and Hera ran to where they heard Hip-Hop shouting and dancing.

"I don't need to describe the joy and tears of the two when they met! Doremi kept asking how their home was, and Hip-Hop kept asking how she managed all on her own. Hera shyly asked about Hector. And there was so much to talk about that Hip-Hop, Doremi and Hera did not notice what was happening to the Dirty River.

"Well, a great many things were ~~ix~~ happening in the depths of the Dirty River!

HOW THE DIRTY RIVER BECAME A SHINING BRIDGE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH

When our three friends at last turned their eyes again towards the Dirty River, they were flabbergasted! Thousands of small red and blue fairies were flying about, and beautiful music was coming from everywhere, And the Dirty River? Well there was no Dirty River there anymore! In its place a little sky-blue stream was flowing, and across it stretched a little multicoloured bridge! It was amazing how many colours that bridge had! Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, Red, Violet! And the fairies were playing, dancing and laughing on it.

Our little friends rubbed their eyes. They thought they were dreaming. But no! Now one of the little fairies, all dressed in red, came towards them and said politely "Hip-Hop and Doremi, aren't you going to come and celebrate with us? This is a great holiday because the Bad Spirit has been vanquished, and Syprilia is again becoming a happy country, without a Dirty River dividing it in two.

"And where did all you little fairies come from?" asked Doremi

"We little red fairies are the daughters of Lord Sun, and the little sky-blue fairies are the daughters of Fairy Neptunia. The Bad Spirit was holding us prisoners at the bottom of the Dirty River. But now that it's been vanquished and has gone back to live in his iron mountain, we are free again. And when the red fairies of Lord Sun meet with the blue fairies of Fairy Neptunia, our happiness is such that we form multicoloured bridges in the sky, which are called rainbows. Look what a big rainbow we have formed to celebrate your victory Hip-Hop! But do come now, and play and slide with us on the bridge."

CONTINUED

Hip-Hop was so happy that he blew on his magic flute again, and then gave it to Doremi to blow. Doremi gave it to Hera, the cat, and she also blew it. Now our three friends became as small as ants, and were jumping and dancing, and the little fairies took them by the hand and lifted them high up onto the colourful bridge. "Phew!" exclaimed Hip-Hop, and slid down the big curve of the bridge. So did Doremi, also calling "Phew!" and last the cat came - you know how!

Doremi was singing

"RED, ORANGE, YELLOW, GREEN, BLUE AND VIOLET -
EVERY ONE OF THESE COLOURS JOINS TO MAKE
A BRIDGE FROM WATER AND FROM SUN"

As they were sliding down, they heard a well-known voice from the other side "woof, woof! Is that Doremi singing? Hip-Hop where are you?"

It was Hector, their dear dog, who was waiting faithfully for the return of Hip-Hop and Doremi. He could not believe that his friends were so near, but so tiny, like ants. But when they blew their magic flute they became large again. Hector was so happy that he did not know what to do. He wagged his tail, and licked Doremi and Hip-Hop. He even licked Hera, the cat, which he did not usually do. And she turned and gave him very shyly, a big kiss on the nose!

"We missed you Hector" she said. "There was no one to wake us with barks in the morning".'

Hector did not answer but he growled with pleasure.

HOW THINGS WERE NOT AS SIMPLE AS THEY SEEMED AND THE BAD SPIRIT MADE
NEW PLANS

Life returned to it's normal pace in Syprilia. The Dirty River was only a stream again, and people and animals crossed ~~by~~ it by boat and by wooden bridges. - It was so nice to be able to cross from one side to the other! Old friends met, and parents found their missing children. Even people who, previously, had not been good friends, were pleased to see each other. All the inhabitants ^{of} Syprilia suddenly realized that there was room for everyone in their country. They started to rebuilt their homes, which the Dirty River had swept away, and to work the fields that had been flooded. Hip-Hop, his sister Doremi and their good friends, Hector and Hera happily strolled in the forest. And their home always welcomed passers-by and gave them food and shelter. One day, as Hip-Hop was quietly ~~w~~aving breakfast, there was a knock on the door.

"Well, it's Mr. Fastfoot, the Hare!#" said Hector, who always ran first to open the door. "Hello Mr. Fastfoot, I feel like chasing you again, as I did in the old days when dogs chased hares. But you seem out of breath, - what is wrong?"

"Where is Hip-Hop?" I must see him at once. It is a matter of life and death," said Mr Fastfoot.

"What is the matter , Mr Fastfoot?" asked Hip-Hop, and offered the hare a nice juicy carrot. But the hare was so upset that he could not eat. "

"There is a conspiracy underway" he said, "The Dirty River - though there is no Dirty River anymore, - since it is only a stream - but even so ... the Bad Spirit could not accept his humiliation, and now he is gathering all his close collaborators and is getting ready for an attack"

"Come on - you must be joking" said Hip-Hop. "There would be no one here willing to help the Bad Spirit. In any case, he was shut up in the Iron Mountain and is watched over by the good dwarfs".

CONTINUED

"Well, I must tell you that it is'nt so, any longer, Hip-Hop" said Mr. Fastfoot. "The Bad Spirit has managed to get away and has collected some friends who have promised to help him bring down the Dirty River again".

"I can't believe it," said Hip-Hop "All the people of Syprilia were so unhappy when the country was divided. No one would help him".

"My dear Hip-Hop, you forget the people outside our country who are jealous of Syprilia and helped the Bad Spirit previously. And among the people of Syprilia there are also a few who want to bring the Dirty River back again. Come and see for yourself."

So Hip-Hop, Doremi, Hector and Hera all followed Mr. Fastfoot, the Hare to the stream. When they came near it, Mr. Fastfoot told them to take care that none of the Bad Spirit's friends saw them. Suddenly they heard muffled voices.

"Quark, quark. Our plan is ready. We only have to persuade the others to be on our side."

"Quark, quark. I say that we should publish a newspaper."

"No, that is too dangerous. We had better act in secret."

Our friends approached carefully, hiding behind the bushes. A group of toads and frogs were having a meeting near the stream. A toad, who was rather fat, and seemed to be their leader, was talking a bit louder than the others.

He said "You mark my words, there will be many who will support the ~~Black~~^{Dirty} River. Apart from us toads, the leeches are on our side. And so are the mosquitoes, the watersnakes and a lot of others who benefited from the ~~Black~~^{Dirty} River. Then there are the big and little fishes."

"Don't count on the fishes. They have written a leaflet to say that they are happier in the lakes and the sea. They say that the ~~Black~~ Dirty River used to pull them about on its current wherever it wanted."

CONTINUED

It was a little frog who was not too sure about what the leader was saying, who said this, but the toad leader looked at him angrily and said "there should be no fear or doubts among our friends. Don't forget that when the Dirty River returns, all of you will be rewarded by the Bad Spirit."

Hip-Hop got very upset when he heard all this talk. He had no doubt now that Mr. Fastfoot was right. There was a plot being hatched behind the backs of the people of Syprilia. They had to do something and very fast before the plotters could make their plan come true.

HOW THE GOOD ONCE MORE CONQUERED THE BAD

In the big forest of Syprilia there was a big commotion. All the inhabitants had gathered to discuss the worrying news that had circulated: the news that the Bad Spirit and the Dirty River were getting ready to descend again and divide the happy country in two! Truly everybody was there!

Hip-Hop and Doremi with Hector and Hera, were busy writing down everybody's name into a big book! Then there was Mr. Fastfoot and his whole family of hares. There was Mrs Grumble the turtle with her cousin, Mrs Tortoise. There was Mr. Ant with his children and grandchildren, and there was Mrs Bee with all her little friends. There were also the deer, Mr. Buck, and goat Mrs Cinnamon, the donkey Mr. Heehaw, the cow, Mrs Moo, and the hen Mrs Cluck with her husband. In the crowd was Mr. Piggiwig with his two younger sons, His wife was not there because, he said, she had gone with their eldest daughter to see her mother. The three Goose sisters with their cousins, Mr. and Mrs Duck were there. And even Mrs. Mole had come. She had to wear sunglasses because the daylight irritated her eyes. From the Squirrel family, there was Mr. Squirrel with his daughter, Nutty his son, he said was away on business. Mrs Foxyloxy came, wearing her new fur! About the bird world, what shall I say? They were all there, the cuckoos, the swallows, the pigeons and crows, the goldfinches and canaries, the partridges and owls. Mr. Sparrow had done his work well. He had informed everyone. Flying from nest to nest he had even had the wonderful idea of organizing a choir to sing at the end of the meeting, but that was a secret. Only he ~~had~~ and Doremi knew about it. They wanted to surprise Hip-Hop.

But now Hip-Hop was addressing everybody.

"My dear friends," he said, "people of Syprilia, we are gathered here today because of rumours, that the Bad Spirit is getting ready to return to our country with the Dirty River and to cut us in two again.

CONTINUED

It will return fiercer than before and more terrible.

"Shame, shame" everyone called.

"It is even true that there are some plotters amongst us ready to help the Bad Spirit with his dreadful plans."

"Shame, shame," they all shouted again.

"Tell us who they are, and we will tear them up." cawed the crowd wildly.

"No, we must be sensible," said the wise owl.

"We must be crafty" said the cunning Fox.

"We must be fast" said the hare.

"I don't like fast action" complaint the turtle.

"We have to love each other" the lamb pointed out.

"Yes, but plotters must be punished" said Hector decisively.

"who are they? who are they/" called everyone and the bird choir started to sing before even Mr. Nightingale could give the signal.

"THE PLOTTERS MUST BE JUDGED AND GO!

NO MORE PATIENCE - NO, NO, NO!"

"Hip-hop could keep silent no longer. He got up and told them about the plotters and what he had heard the toads and the frogs saying at the riverside.

"Mrs Cow said "We must invite the guilty ones to speak for themselves. Then we must hear what they have to say."

Everyone agreed. In a Democracy everybody has the right to state what he supports and to defend himself. They asked the Pigeon, who is a fast messenger, to go and fetch the toads, and frogs. And he flew off at once.

"While they were waiting, Doremi and the Sparrow got the orchestra and choir ready to sing the song that Doremi had written for the occasion. The song was called 'Resolution!

"THE PLOTTERS MUST BE PUNISHED!

ON THAT WE ALL AGREE.

CONTINUED

THE BAD SPIRIT MUST GO AWAY!

SYPRILIA SHALL BE FREE''

Then everyone clapped their hands and shouted "We all want to live peacefully together!'' "The Bad Spirit and the Dirty River must go back to where they came from."

At that moment the toads and frogs^{arrived} all in a line, one after the other. They passed through the crowd with lowered heads as it shouted:

"Aren't you ashamed to plot against your country? Shame, listening to what outsiders tell you! Death, death to all traitors!"

These last words were spoken by the wild wolf. Hip-Hop stopped him.

"Let us first see what they have to say for themselves".

Shamefaced, the toads and frogs approached the little rock that was to serve as their platform. They pushed each other to go forward and speak, but none dared to. In the end, the small frog, the one who was questioned the leader's words by the River, got up.

He said "I think that Big Toad must stand up and speak. It was he who got us all involved."

"That's a lie, " said the big fat toad, growing pale with fear. "It's not my fault. Some other toads came from far away and said that if the Dirty River came back we would have plenty of food and would become Kings of Syprilia."

"What punishment do the plotters deserve, my friends? asked Hip-Hop.

"Death!" shouted the wild wolf, and the cock agreed with him.

"I want to suggest something else" said the voice of the wise owl.

"We should make the traitors empty all the water from the river, so that no trace of the dirty water remains, and then all the danger of plotting will disappear too!"

CONTINUED.....

"What the owl says is right", agreed all the sensible ones. Only a few young ones wanted a fight and were not happy with the decision.

Hip-Hop said "We give you a week to empty the river, so that not a drop remains. If you do not do this within a week, you will be severely punished."

"What will become of us? We live in the mud and the water. And what will become of the leeches and the mosquitoes who live there?"

"Well, that is your business. You can leave Syprilia - no one is stopping you!" Brayed the Donkey. "Unless, ofcourse, you prefer to live in the clean waters of a stream or a cistern so that we can see what you are doing. As for the mosquitoes and leeches, I think we can live very well without them. Is that not so my friends?"

Mr Heehaw finished his last sentence in such a high bray that the best tenor would have been envious of his he-haw! Everybody laughed and started going home, thankful that an answer had been found.

As for the toads and frogs, they at once started looking for buckets to empty the river with. Well, well, they didn't stop, day or night! And if a mosquito or a leech got in their way, they got bery cross indeed!

HOW HIP-HOP REMEMBERED THAT HE HAD TO FULFILL AN OBLIGATION

Not quite a week had passed from, the day when the toads and frogs had started to empty the river, and already all the water had gone. In its place, a green plain came to be, and on it sheep and deer started grazing. To tell the truth, if it had only been the toads and frogs trying to do this job, they would not have been able to do it even within a year. Someone else helped to finish it so fast. Who? But of course Lord Sun. It could not have been done if he had not put his hot hand to it!

"Can you remember what Lord Sun had told Hip-Hop when he first asked him for help? He had said "I also have my plan for how to get rid of the Dirty River, Hip-Hop. But my plan will take some time."

Now ^{he was} following the little toads and frogs and never left them alone. With his hot hands he managed to dry up even the last drop of the ~~Black~~ Dirty River. Because Lord Sun knew that if one did not dry up the Dirty River to its last drop, ~~the~~ Bad Spirit could not be conquered completely.

That is why Hip-Hop said to his sister "My dear Doremi, we have an obligation. We have to thank Lord Sun for his kind help".

And Doremi said "Yes, Hip-Hop, I agree. But I think we have another obligation - to return something to its owner."

"Something? What?" said Hip-Hop, pretending that he did not understand.

"The magic flute. I don't think that you can keep it, since it does not belong to you. And you don't need it any longer."

"Well, yes, you're right" said Hip-Hop not too readily.

To tell the truth our friend did not really want to return the magic flute. To be honest, nor would any of us who had one, would we?

To be the owner of a magic flute and to be able, by blowing it, to become any size one likes, is no small thing! I think no toy can be compared to a magic flute!

CONTINUED

"All right," said Hip-Hop, "we will talk about it later."

"I don't think so, little brother," said Doremi steadily. "I think that when we borrow something, we should return it as soon as possible. ~~That's the way~~ We must not exploit those who help us. Come on, we are going on a double visit : To Lord Sun and to Fairy Neptunia."

"Hip-Hop got ready with a heavy heart. Hector and Hera asked to come too. Hera was longing to see Fairy Neptunia's Palace. So they all went together. Hip Hop had a long face. He was clinging on to his magic flute. He felt that old lump in his throat.

Hector and Hera realized how he was feeling and Hector said "Why don't you all have a turn with the magic flute, and then I will carry you! You can all sit on my back and I'll take you in no time!"

That was it! At once Hip-Hop blew the flute three times - and at once he became as small as a mouse. Then Doremi, then Hera! One, two, three.' They looked so small and funny! And they were joking ~~and~~ as they struggled to climb up onto Hector's back, who stood there, upright, and then ^{he} ~~they~~ started running like a race horse to Lord Sun's Palace.

They went through towns and villages, they crossed forests and mountains, and Doremi sang in her sweet voice.

"DOREMI, DOREMI! WE ARE ALL GOOD FRIENDS!

RUN DEAR HECTOR, HA³HA-HA!

LET US ALL SING TRA-LA-LA!

DOREMI, DOREMI! WE ARE ALL GOOD FRIENDS!

HOW ALL ENDED HAPPILY AND HOW HIP-HOP SET OUT ON A NEW ADVENTURE

Lord Sun was very pleased to see them and welcomed them to his wonderful palace, which shone with goodness and light. He had all his daughters around him. Thousands of them, who ran about shedding light and warmth everywhere.

"Welcome Hip-Hop, Welcome Doremi," said Lord Sun as soon as he ~~saw~~ them. "Welcome Hector and Hera"

He called his daughters to come and bring fruits of all kinds oranges, apples, peaches, figs and grapes, to offer them to his guests.

"Lord Sun," said Hip-Hop "my sister and I have come to thank you on behalf of all our peoples for helping us to get rid of the Bad Spirit. Now our country is united and our people are happy and love one another again."

"I have brought you some flowers", said Doremi shyly, "because I know you like them" and she handed him a big bunch of golden flowers.

"Now we have to go to Fairy Neptunia," said Hip-Hop quickly, as if perhaps he wanted help from Lord Sun. "We have to return the magic flute, you know." Hip-Hop said the last sentence so sorrowfully that Lord Sun understood what was going on and smiled.

"It is a nice little toy, isn't it Hip-Hop?" he said "Anyway what does a fairy need a magic flute for? She can change from big to small without the need of one. She can even become invisible... I don't think that she really needs it.

"Don't you think so? Really?" said Hip-Hop hopefully

"Well you just have to ask her, I suppose," said Lord Sun.

"Ah! yes that's what I'll do," said Hip-Hop, and turned to his friends. "Let's go quickly," he said.

As soon as the four friends had left, Lord Sun called his fastest daughter, Flash Ray, and said "Flash Ray, I want you to go as fast as you can and take this note to Fairy Neptunia."

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