

A STORYBOOK PLAYHOUSE ADVENTURE

Luke and the Rainy-Day Castle



A little rain. A little imagination. A castle full of friends.



The rain tapped on the windows.
It drummed on the roof.
It splashed in the puddles where Luke had
hoped to play.

Luke pressed his nose against the glass.

“What can we do on a day like this?”

Behind him, Ellie lifted a purple blanket.

“I think,” she said, “we can build something.”



They pulled two chairs beside the sofa.
They stretched the blanket across the tops and
tucked its corners beneath the cushions.

Luke stacked pillows into towers. Ellie made a
flag from a scarf.

One last cushion became a very important
door.

Luke crawled inside.

“This,” he announced, “is a castle.”



Not an ordinary castle.

The blanket ceiling shimmered with tiny golden stars.

The pillow towers stretched higher.

Beyond the cushion door, a winding path appeared between hills of soft green velvet.

Luke blinked.

Then a little knight poked his head through the entrance.

His helmet wore a pink feather.

His feet wore bunny slippers.

“Good afternoon,” said Sir Sniffles. “Am I late for the adventure?”



“Just in time!” said Ellie.

She placed a paper crown upon her curls and settled onto the biggest cushion.

“I shall be Princess Ellie.”

Luke picked up a cardboard shield.

“And I’ll be the knight who guards the castle.”

Sir Sniffles bowed so low that his feather tickled his nose.

“Ah... ah...”

He caught the sneeze in a handkerchief.

“A very promising beginning,” he said.



Something rustled behind the curtains.

A mint-green nose peeked out.

Then two purple wings.

Then Pip.

He wore a crooked grin and carried a little bag stuffed with shiny buttons.

“I am a dragon,” he declared, “and I have come to borrow your princess!”

“Borrow?” asked Luke.

“For a dragon adventure,” Pip explained.

Ellie leaned forward.

“Does your dragon lair have snacks?”



“Excellent snacks,” said Pip.

“Then you may capture me.”

Ellie climbed down from her cushion throne and followed him behind the curtains.

“Help! Help!” she called cheerfully. “A dragon is taking me away!”

“Very convincing,” whispered Sir Sniffles.

Luke lifted his shield.

“We must rescue the princess!”

From somewhere beyond the curtains came a giggle.

“And bring my crown! I dropped it!”



Luke tucked the paper crown safely into his pocket.

Sir Sniffles unrolled a map. It showed the castle, a river, a forest, and a purple mountain.

Unfortunately, it also showed a large jam stain.

“Is that the dragon’s lair?” Luke asked.

“No,” said Sir Sniffles. “That was breakfast.”

They turned the map the right way up.

Beyond the cushion door, the quest began.



Their first challenge was the River of Splish. It rushed across the kingdom in ripples of bright blue.

Luke looked closer.
Was that the blue blanket from the sofa?

Sir Sniffles tested the bank with one bunny-slippered toe.

“Much too splashy for rabbits.”

Luke found three sturdy cushions. He placed them across the river, one after another.

“A stepping-stone bridge!”



Luke crossed first.

Step.

Stretch.

Hop!

Sir Sniffles followed, holding his feather to keep it from wobbling.

Halfway across, his slipper slipped.

“Oh, biscuits!”

Luke reached out and caught his hand.

Together, they climbed onto the far bank.

Sir Sniffles looked down at his slippers.

“Both rabbits accounted for. Onward!”



Next came the Whispering Forest.

Tall coats swayed like branches.
Scarves curled overhead like leafy vines.

Somewhere deep inside, a tiny voice
whispered:

“This way.”

Luke stopped.

“Did the forest speak?”

“This way,” it whispered again.

Sir Sniffles listened carefully.

“I believe,” he said, “the princess is helping us
rescue her.”



At the edge of the forest stood a wall of enormous blocks.

Across it lay a small wooden sign.

TO PASS THIS WAY, BUILD SOMETHING TALL.

Luke studied the blocks.

He stacked a wide one at the bottom.

Then another.

Then a smaller one.

Sir Sniffles added the last block.

The tower wobbled.

Both knights held their breath.

It stayed!

Behind the wall, a golden doorway opened.



Through the doorway rose Mount
Tumblemore.

Its slopes were soft.

Its peaks were fluffy.

Its tallest summit looked remarkably like a pile
of laundry.

Luke climbed on hands and knees.

Sir Sniffles scrambled behind him.

At the top, they spotted a warm pink glow
beneath the dining table.

Purple wings fluttered at its entrance.

“The dragon’s lair!” whispered Luke.



The lair was wonderful.

Blankets hung in scallops from the table.
A string of little lights sparkled overhead.

Pip's treasure lay in neat piles: shiny buttons,
ribbon, smooth pebbles, and one especially
beautiful spoon.

Princess Ellie sat on a cushion beside him.
They were sharing crackers from a tiny plate.

"You found us!" she said.

Pip quickly stood in front of the entrance.

"Oh! Yes. Ahem."



“I am Pip, Keeper of the Cozy Cave!”

He spread his wings.

Luke raised his cardboard shield.

“We have come for Princess Ellie.”

Pip puffed out his chest.

“Then you must face my mighty dragon challenge.”

Sir Sniffles swallowed.

“Does it involve running?”

“No,” said Pip.

“Excellent.”

“It involves making the princess laugh.”



Sir Sniffles stepped forward.
He bowed grandly.
His pink feather dipped.
His helmet slipped over his eyes.

He tried to straighten it and accidentally sat
on a squeaky cushion.

PFFFFT!

For one quiet moment, nobody moved.

Then Ellie burst into giggles.

Luke laughed.

Pip rolled onto his back, his little feet waving
in the air.

Sir Sniffles lifted his helmet.

“I meant to do that.”



“The princess is rescued!” declared Luke.

He took the paper crown from his pocket and placed it gently on Ellie’s head.

“Thank you, brave knight,” she said.

Pip’s wings drooped a little.

“Does that mean the adventure is over?”

Luke looked at Ellie.

Ellie looked at Sir Sniffles.

Sir Sniffles brushed cracker crumbs from his armor.

“We still need to get everyone home,” Luke said.

“All of us?” asked Pip.

“Especially you.”



They climbed down Mount Tumblemore.
They slipped through the Whispering Forest.

At the River of Splish, Luke steadied the
cushions while Ellie helped Pip across.

Sir Sniffles followed with the snack plate.

Soon the castle flag came into view.

They crawled through the cushion door and
tumbled together into a warm, laughing heap.

Outside, rain still tapped against the windows.

Inside, there was room for everyone.



Ellie settled beside Luke beneath the purple blanket.

Pip curled around a pillow.

Sir Sniffles tucked his bunny slippers neatly beneath him.

“That was a very good rescue,” Ellie said.

“A very good river,” said Sir Sniffles.

“A very good snack,” murmured Pip.

Luke listened to the rain.

Earlier, it had sounded like a day with nothing to do.

Now it sounded like footsteps on a castle roof.

He smiled.

“Tomorrow,” he whispered, “we could build a ship.”