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*THE ADVENTUROUS LIVES OF
JIMMY AND KENNY PEBBLES*



AUNT EDIE'S MAGIC POT

CONTENTS

Chapter 1
Chapter 2
Chapter 3
Chapter 4
Chapter 5
Chapter 6
Chapter 7
Chapter 8
Chapter 9
Chapter 10
Chapter 11
Chapter 12
Chapter 13
Chapter 14
Chapter 15
Chapter 16
Chapter 17

Chapter 18

Chapter 19

Chapter 20

Chapter 21

About the Author

Books

Books

Books

***The world is full of
Magic Things
patently waiting for our senses to grow
sharper***

Mark Twain

CHAPTER 1



P HIL'S ENCOUNTER WITH JIMMY & KENNY "JIMMY!"

"What's up, Kenny?"

"Did you hear that?"

"Nope." Jimmy looked at his brother with concern.

"There's somebody in the house!"

Kenny gulped. He strained his ears to hear the sound of footsteps on the wooden floor. He looked around desperately.

"This place is spooky. Let's hide—or we're toast!"

"Shhh..."

There was panic in their faces as they stared at each other. They tiptoed to the next room while praying not to be discovered.

At the same time, investigator Phil Philadelphia was peeking out the window when a car sped down the street. Its tires

screeched as it came to a sudden standstill in front of the building. Phil watched in horror as three men rushed into the abandoned colonial house he was searching. His throat closed up, and his heart pounded in his chest.

His thoughts were racing. "Damn! I can't believe what's happening!"

He took the rickety, decayed stairs to the second floor of the abandoned building. The wooden floor made popping sounds as he rushed upstairs. He pulled the bathroom door open and then closed it quietly behind himself. His intention was to escape through the window behind the shower curtain. He drew back the curtain.

"Holy crap!" he exclaimed when he discovered two boys huddled in the bathtub, too scared to move. They must have been only 10 or 11 years old.

"You scared me to death!" he told the boys.

Phil put his finger up to his lips, motioning for them to be quiet.

"Get moving and stay behind me," he whispered.

Together, they snuck out the bathroom door while the mystery men searched for something or someone in the basement. As soon as Phil and the boys reached one of the rooms at the end of the passage, they dashed down the stairs and out of the house. Then they made their way through the narrow streets to the harbor.

Somehow Phil felt responsible for them even though he did not know a thing about the boys.

“Listen, you two. You’ve got to hide under the harbor staircase until I’m back.”

“Yes, sir. Where are you off to?”

“Shush! Don’t talk so much. I’ll be back soon. Don’t move, okay?”

They nodded. He watched them from the corner of his eye before he mingled with the tourists. He wanted to spend some time at the dock while he asked himself what to do in this unexpected situation. Then he spotted the harbor pub.

Phil wanted to quench his thirst, so he went into the pub. He plopped down on a bar stool and checked out the other guests. Some were lost in their thoughts, while others were watching a football game on the TV screen mounted to the wall. Phil pondered what had been happening in that building. Everything just seemed so unreal.

The waiter gave him a suspicious look.

“Is everything all right, sir?”

“Yes.”

Phil put down his empty glass and threw his money on the counter before he left. The waiter shook his head and mumbled some incomprehensible words. Phil walked along the dockside until he reached the steps.

The two boys were still crouching in the hollow space under the stairs which descended to the shallow water.

“Boys, I still have a job to do. I’ll collect you as soon as I can,” he whispered.

They were getting impatient.

“We’re getting cold. Can’t we just come with you?”

“Not yet. Don’t worry. You’ll be safe here. I’ll be back in half an hour at the most.”

“Promise?”

“Yeah, sure.”

Phil wanted to go back to the colonial house a few blocks away where their nightmare had begun.

It didn’t take long before he was standing opposite the building. He realized the street was not crowded anymore, and the gangsters seemed to have left. He crossed the road and walked straight into the house. The door was half open. He walked from one room to the next.

It’s obvious the men were looking for something, but what was it? he wondered.

Then he heard the sirens of a police car. The car stopped, and several police officers rushed into the house. The cops were yelling.

“Put your hands up and get on the ground!”

“Oh, no! Not again! I’m a police investigator!” he exclaimed.

“Get on the ground!”

They pointed their guns at him while he raised his arms to permit an officer to frisk him. When they found his badge and I.D., they relaxed.

“And why are you here, sir?”

Phil vaguely remembered his past.

“My parents used to live in this house a long time ago. I was just going down memory lane. That’s why I’m here.”

“He is one of us. Let him go.”

Phil turned around as he heard the voice of his colleague and friend Wesley.

“Hey, Phil, this is not a good place to be at the moment. Go home, pal, and take a break.”

“Wes, I’ve got to call you later. Something unexpected has come up.”

“Yeah, sure. I’ll speak to you later.”

Phil left the building and walked straight to the port to check on the kids. They were bored and stuck their heads out of the hollow under the stairs.

“Hey, kids, the sooner we get out of here, the better.”

“Okay. Where to?”

“I’ll tell you in a minute.”

Phil made sure no one was watching before he pulled the children out of their hiding place. They walked to his car as fast as they could.

“I’m curious. What were you doing in that house?” he wanted to know.

“Those scoundrels stole our crystal!” “It’s payback time,” uttered the other one. Phil stared at the boys.

“Hang on a second. Please bring me up to speed on what you’re talking about. I want to know all about it. But not here.”

“Yes, sir.”

Right away, they began talking non-stop until Phil interrupted them.

“Quiet! You are attracting attention.”

“I’m hungry,” muttered the taller boy, following Phil tiredly.

“Me, too.”

Phil rolled his eyes.

What have I gotten myself into by picking up these two guys? he wondered.

Phil, who had never been a father himself, realized that he had to be an example to them—at least for the time being. When they reached his car, he held the door open.

“Get in, boys. We have to hit the road. Where do your parents live? Where should I drop you off?”

Their initial shyness disappeared in an instant.

“Our parents are both dead.”

“Oh, my...”

Phil felt frustrated.

“Call me Kenny,” one boy piped up.

“And what is your name?” Phil asked the other one.

“Jimmy. Jimmy Pebbles. You can drop us off somewhere near the bridge. We live there.”

He seemed to be the leader of the two.

Jimmy was slightly taller than Kenny. His brown hair was firmly combed back. Kenny’s hair was light blonde and hung onto his face.

“I’m Phil,” he told them.

“Are you a gangster?” Kenny asked out of the blue.

Jimmy wasn’t sure either.

“If he was a gangster, then he wouldn’t be so bad at all. Maybe he’s a modern Robin Hood,” Jimmy speculated. He eyed Phil while waiting for his reply.

Phil smiled. “No, I’m a police investigator.”



“You look like a gangster,” Kenny replied.

“Why’s that?”

“‘Cause of all your tattoos!”

“Yep, that’s how I have to look in order not to be discovered. But I like it too. I’m myself in every way. Nobody should pretend to be someone else, unless it’s for a good reason.”

It seemed like they were brooding over it while they took another good look at Phil. He really wasn’t the average-looking police investigator. They both wrinkled their foreheads. Phil was a tall, well-built man. He had gathered his brown hair into a knot on the top of his head. Suddenly, the boys were dead silent.

He glanced in the rearview mirror to take another good look at them. They were wearing long grey cloaks. Their clothes looked like they were from the 1930s. At the harbor, he had already realized their shoes were much too small.

“Are you brothers? You pretty much look alike.”

“Yes,” they replied instantaneously.

“I’m 10 years old, and Jimmy is 11,” explained Kenny.

“What happened to your parents?”

“They had a car accident. Our apartment was cleared out, and we ended up in an orphanage. Sometimes we visit our old neighborhood,” Jimmy replied.

“And that’s when you sleep under the bridge, I guess?”

“Yes,” they answered.

Phil wasn’t sure whether or not to believe the boys. Were they telling him the truth?

He didn’t like the idea of them being street kids, although it wasn’t uncommon in this area.

Then Phil made a bold decision.

“Boys, I’m going to take you over to a friend of mine. You can stay there for a while and eat as much as you want. Is that all right with the two of you?”

“Yeah, thanks. Why not?”

Phil started his engine. His intention was to drive the boys over to his friend Mel, who owned a busy and secretive restaurant called The Yummy Wizard. It was open for lunch