

DUNNO'S ADVENTURES

● Nikolai Nosov



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PREPARATIONS for the ASCENT



KANOL PUBLISHING HOUSE (PVT) LTD.

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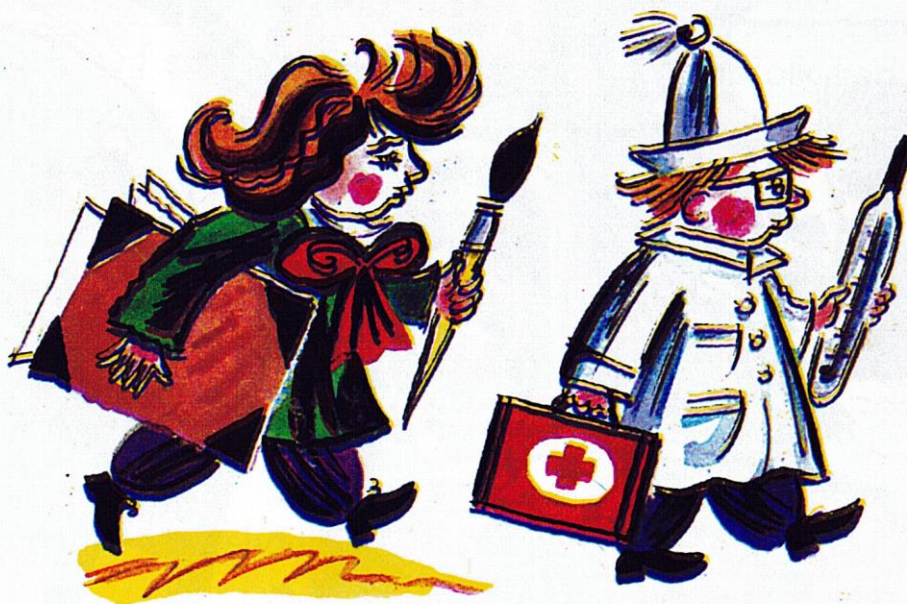


The next morning Doono woke his friends up earlier than usual. They got up and began dressing for the flight. Bendum and Twistum put on their leather jackets. Shot put on his favourite hip boots that buckled above the knee — very good boots for a long journey. Swifty put on his "lightning" suit, which deserves a word of explanation. Since Swifty was always in a great hurry and could not bear to waste time, he designed a suit for himself without any buttons on it. Everyone knows that nothing takes so much time as buttoning and unbuttoning. Swifty's suit did not have a separate shirt and trousers, it was all in one, like overalls, and it fastened with a single snap on the top of his head. When he unsnapped it, the suit slipped off his shoulders and fell at his feet in the twinkling of an eye.

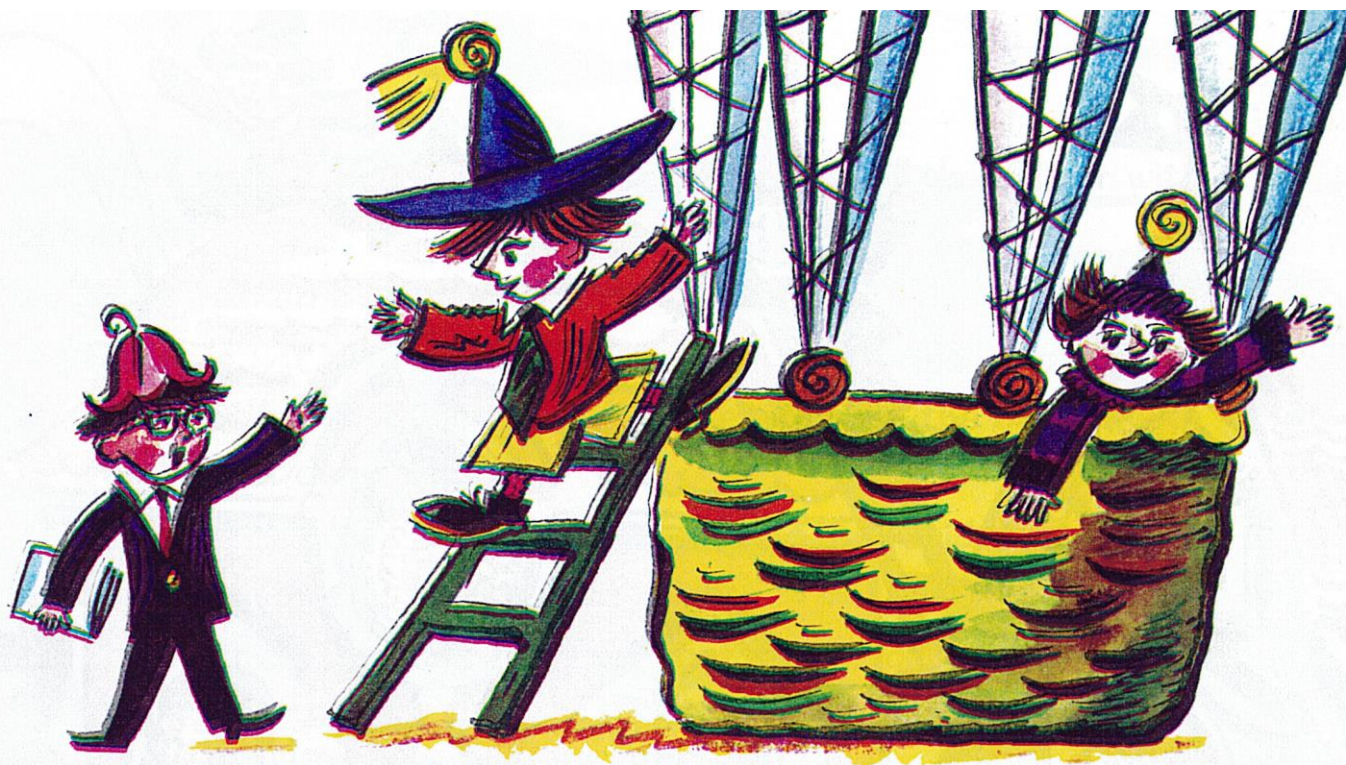


Roly-Poly put on his best suit. The thing he loved above all else was pockets. The more pockets there were in a suit, the better he liked it. The jacket of his best suit had ten pockets in it: two breast pockets, two slit pockets (one on either side to keep his hands warm), two patch pockets, below these, three inside pockets, and a secret pocket in the back. His trousers had two pockets in front, two behind, one on each side, and one on his right knee. The only people who wear such seventeen-pocketed suits in ordinary life are cameramen.

Treadly-Sweeter put on a checkered suit. He always wore checkered suits. His trousers were checkered, his jacket was checkered and his cap was checkered. Whenever the Mites spied him coming down the street they would shout: "Look! Here comes the chessboard!" P'raps put on a ski suit which he was sure would be comfortable for travelling. Prob'ly put on a striped jersey and striped trousers, and tied a striped scarf round his neck. In a word, he was all stripes, and from a distance he looked more like a mattress than a Mite. They all dressed up in the best they had — all, that is, but Scatterbrain, who had the habit of throwing







his things just anywhere and so could not find his jacket on this memorable morning. He couldn't find his cap either, but at the last moment he found his winter cap with ear-flaps on it under the bed.

Blobs, the artist, resolved to draw everything he saw during the flight. Long before it was time to set out he had put his paints and brushes in the basket of the balloon. Trills took his flute with him. Dr. Pillman put his medicine bag under one of the benches in the basket. That, of course, was a very sensible thing to do, for someone was sure to fall ill on such an unusual trip.

Before the clock had struck six, almost all the townsfolk had gathered round the house. Many of them had climbed up on to the fence or the roofs of the houses.

Swiftly, who was the first to get into the basket, chose the most comfortable seat for himself. Dunno got in next.

"Look!" cried the onlookers, "they're taking their seats!"

"What do you mean by this?" said Doono. "It's much too soon! Get out!"

"Why?" said Dunno. "Why shouldn't we take off?"



"Why!" scoffed Doono. "Because we have to fill the balloon with hot air first."

"Why?" asked Swifty again.

"Because hot air is lighter than cold, and so it rises. As soon as we fill the balloon with hot air it will rise and take the basket with it," explained Doono.

"So we still have to pump hot air into it!" said Dunno in a disappointed voice as he and Swifty climbed out of the basket.

"Look!" cried someone from the roof of a neighbouring house.

"They're getting out. They've decided not to go after all!"

"Naturally," came a voice from another roof. "As if anyone could sail up into the air in a balloon like that! They're just trying to fool us!"

While this was going on, Doono told his friends to fill some sacks with sand and put them in the basket. Swifty, Mums, and P'raps did it.

"What are they doing?" asked the perplexed onlookers. "Why should they put sacks of sand into the basket?"

"Hey, what do you need those sacks for?" called out Sinker, who was sitting astride the fence.



"To throw down on your heads when we're up in the air!" called back Dunno.

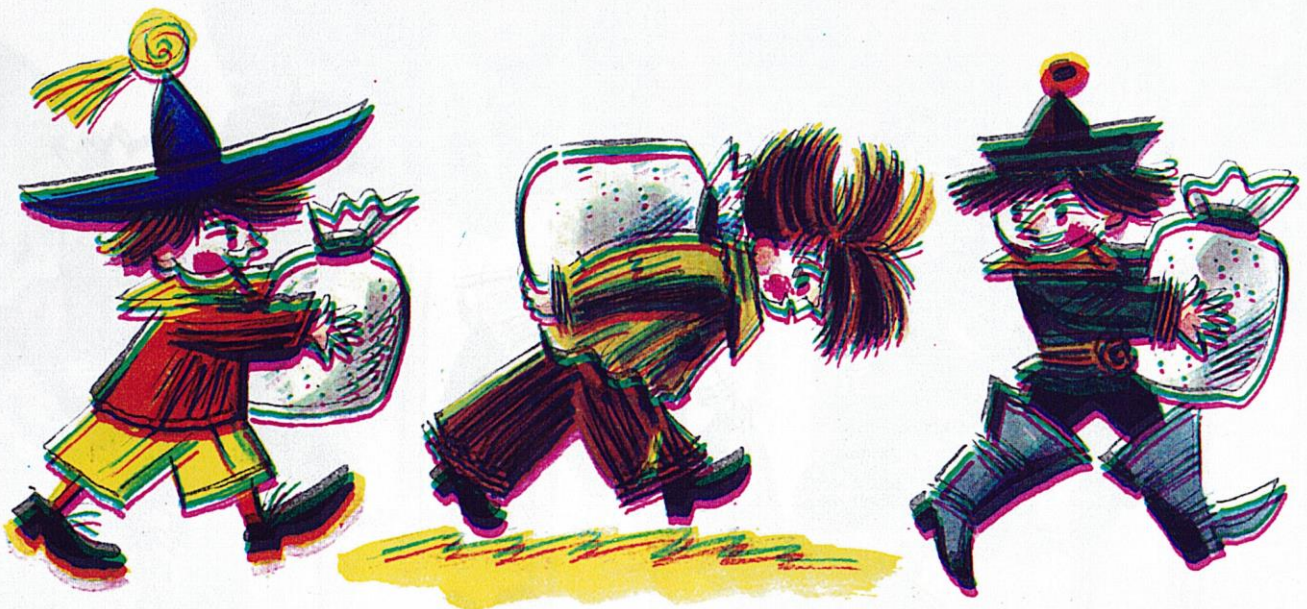
Dunno himself had no idea what the sacks were for. He just gave the first answer that came into his head.

"You've got to get up there first!" retorted Sinker.

"They're scared, so they're putting in sacks of sand instead of getting in themselves," said a little Mite named Midge, who was on the fence next to Sinker. Everybody laughed. "Of course they're scared. But there's nothing to be scared of. The balloon won't rise."

"What if it does?" said a little girl-Mite who was peeking through a chink in the fence.

While they were arguing as to whether the balloon would rise or not, Doono had his friends build a big bonfire in the middle of the yard, and the onlookers saw Bendum and Twistum carry a great copper boiler out of their shop and hang it over the fire. Bendum and Twistum had made this boiler to heat air in it. It had a lid with a hole in it that fastened down tightly, and it also had a hole in the side. A pipe was connected to this hole in the side, and at the other end of the pipe was a pump for pumping air into the boiler.



When the air became hot it escaped through the hole in the lid.

None of the onlookers knew what the boiler was for but each had his own guess.

"They must be going to make porridge, so that they can have a good breakfast before setting out," said a girl-Mite named Daisy.

"I should think so!" said Midge. "You'd want a good breakfast, too, if you were setting out on such a long journey!"

"True, it may be their last —" sighed Daisy.

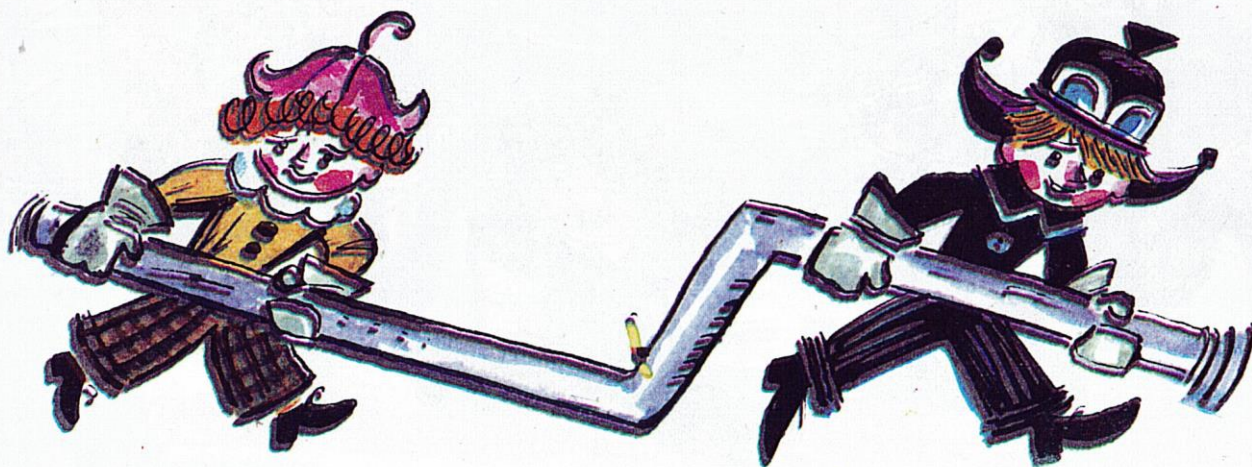
"Last what?"

"Meal. They'll go up in the air, the balloon will burst, and that will be the end of them."

"Don't worry, it won't burst," said Sinker. "It'd have to rise first, but it's been lying here on the ground for over a week and nobody's gone up in it yet."

"But they're just about to," said Pee-Wee, who had come with Tinkle to see the ascent.

This started a heated argument. If one person said the balloon would rise, another said it wouldn't, and if one person said it wouldn't,



another said it would. There was such a yelling and screeching that no other sound could be heard. On one of the roofs two little boy-Mites got so angry that they began to fight and had to be separated by throwing cold water over them.

By that time the air in the boiler was hot, and Doono said it was time to fill the balloon with it. But before the balloon could be filled with hot air, it had to be emptied of cold air. Doono untied the string and the cold air began to escape with a loud hiss. The onlookers had been too busy arguing to watch what was happening, but now they turned round and saw the balloon growing smaller and smaller. It became as limp and puckered as a dried apple and settled on the bottom of the basket. In the place where there had just been a fine big balloon, there was now nothing but a birch-bark basket with a net over it.

As soon as the hissing stopped there was an outburst of laughter. Everybody laughed — those who had said the balloon would rise as well as those who had said it would not. Dunno's friend Gunky laughed so hard that he fell off the roof and bumped



his head. Dr. Pillman had to run for his medicine bag and paint the bump with iodine.

"So that's how it goes up in the air!" the onlookers cried. "A fine balloon Doono thought of! Spent a whole week making it and it burst in a second! What a joke! Oh dear! How very funny!"

But Doono paid no attention to them. He ran a pipe from the boiler to the balloon and told his friends to start pumping. Fresh air was pumped into the boiler and hot air found its way into the balloon ; the balloon began to swell and rise out of the basket.

"Look!" cried the onlookers. "It's swelling again! Are they crazy? Do they want it to burst a second time?"

Nobody believed that the balloon would rise. But it kept getting bigger and bigger, until at last it lay on top of the basket like an enormous melon. Suddenly everybody saw it rise slowly and draw the net tight. The townsfolk gasped with surprise. They could see for themselves that this time nobody was pulling the balloon up with ropes.

"Hurrah!" cried Daisy, clapping her hands.



"Stop shouting!" growled Sinker.

"But look, it's rising!"

"It hasn't risen yet. It's tied to the basket, and it'll never pull up the basket with all those Mites in it."

But at that very moment Sinker saw the balloon lift the basket off the ground. He was so taken by surprise that he shouted at the top of his voice:

"Hold it! Hold it! It'll fly away! What are you thinking of!"

But the balloon did not fly away, because the basket was firmly secured to the hazel bush. It just lifted the basket ever so little off the "ground."

"Hurrah!" came from every side. "Hurrah! Hurrah for Doono! Hurrah for the balloon! What did he blow it up with? Steam?"

Now none of them doubted that the balloon would rise.









You can read about more adventures of
Dunno and his friends from Flower Town in
UP IN THE AIR IN A BALLOON
and **UP IN THE CLOUDS**


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