

THE CARNIVAL PRINCE

WHEN THE ROBBER CALLS!



WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY
DANIEL J. O'BRIEN

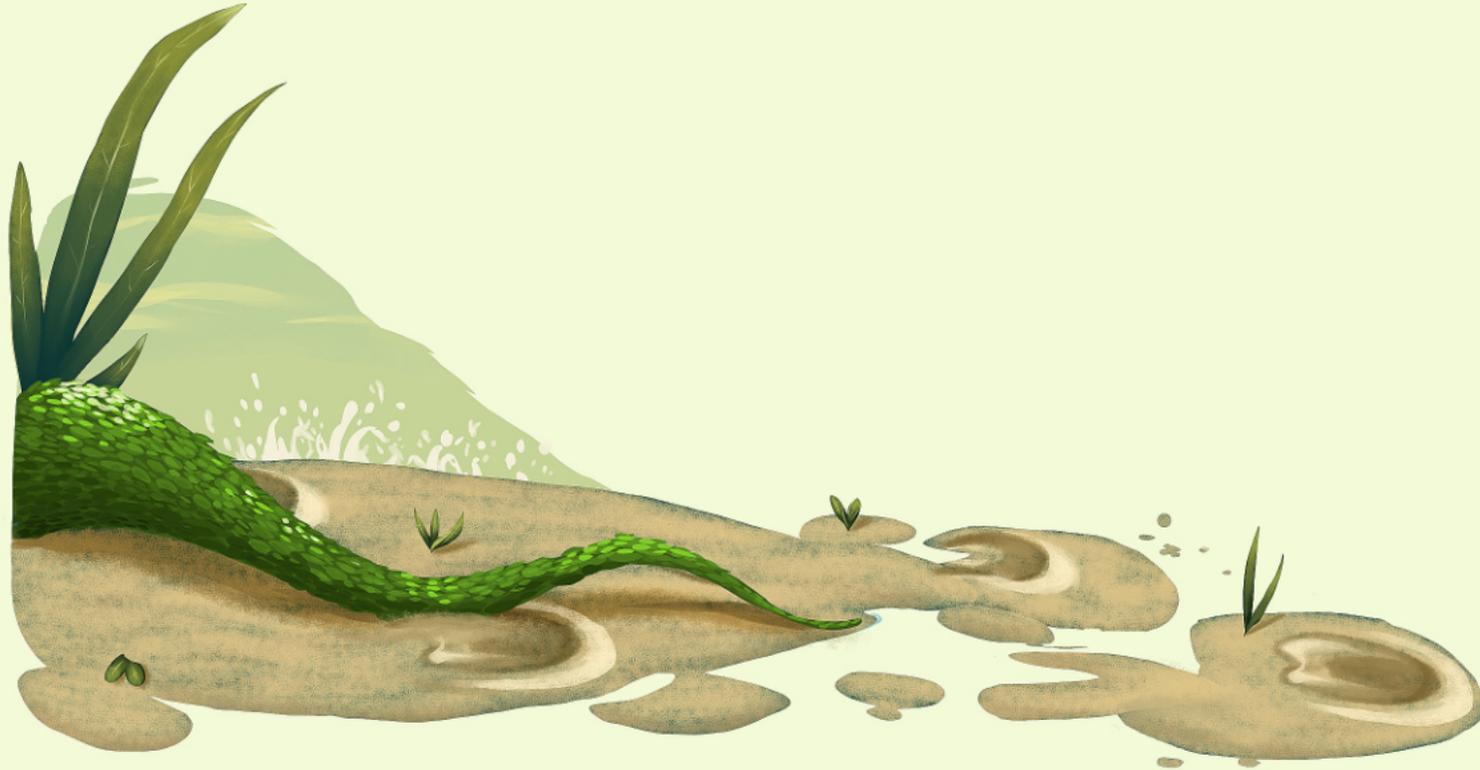
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CHAPTER ONE
TOO YOUNG TO SOCA



It all started with a loving embrace...

Long ago, in the midst of a beautiful *Trinidad* sunset. In a place where the woodland met the surf. Papa Boi and Mama D'Lo, two ancient and powerful creatures of the Islands, sat under the leaves of the *Peewah Tree*. In the morning, they left behind three eggs.



When the sun rose, a *Scarlet Ibis* happened upon the eggs and decided to sit on them until, one day, they hatched!



What sprang forth from the broken shells was very unusual! From the first egg emerged a song as sweet as a freshly baked *currant roll*. It quickly got carried away on the back of the warm Caribbean breeze. The second egg hatched a thick goo as black as *pitch*. It was also quickly carried away by the creeping island tides. But the last egg hatched a full grown boy! His head was topped with dark curly hair and his forehead had two stubby little antlers.



Surprised by what had happened, the Scarlet Ibis panicked and scurried into the woods, leaving a trail of feathers behind her.



The boy with the stubby antlers followed the feathers into the woods. There he found the frightened half naked Scarlet Ibis sitting in a clearing.

Feeling sorry for the shivering bird, the boy put a finger to his chin and tried to think of a way to approach the creature and console her. But the boy did not want to scare the Scarlet Ibis any further.

"Ah ha!", he thought to himself, then proceeded to grab the loose feathers, a few twigs, and some vines. He worked quickly to make a costume. Wearing his creation, the boy with the stubby antlers approached the Ibis, who, upon seeing the boy, laughed out loud. The bird thought the disguise was so silly and could not help but feel at ease.

That day, the boy discovered his creativity was able to inspire joy and laughter, and he was able to make a new friend.



From then on, the boy and his friend
the Scarlet Ibis spent their days exploring
Trinidad. Some days, they splashed with the
manatees in the *Nariva Swamp* until the sun
set behind the thick marsh bush.

CHAPTER TWO

GOOD TIMES



Some evenings, they played *Blind-Man's Bluff* with the ghostly *Douens* amongst the wild forests of *Trinity Hills*.



On lazy afternoons, the boy with the stubby antlers would sit and listen to the migrating ducks tell stories. They quacked about places they had visited and quacked some more about the unique animals they had seen. The ducks told of places where water turned so cold that it froze and where cats became bigger than men!





Using the stories as inspiration, the boy with the stubby antlers would make more costumes for himself and his friends. Then they would parade through the forests, creating quite a scene.

CHAPTER THREE AH COME OUT TO PARTY



With all the good that came with living in the islands, there was a fair share of the bad. In addition to the new friends the boy made, there were other creatures who roamed the island that were not very nice. *The Dragon* and his *Jab Jab* Minions roamed the deepest, darkest parts of Trinidad, causing nothing but trouble.

On one of his terrifying strolls, the Dragon trapped the *Red Howler Monkey* and cut off his tail to make a monkey tail stew. He even trapped the *Porcupine* and plucked its quills to use them as toothpicks.

If the Dragon ever got wind of anyone having fun without him, rest assured he would find a way to ruin a good time!



Time moved forward, and with that came change. The trees grew taller and the creatures grew older, but the boy with the stubby antlers did not. Meanwhile, the bush shrank while making way for the growing towns, and cities. The boy would stand at the edge of the woods looking out at the new world feeling nothing but dread. He was too used to his usual stomping grounds, and the thought of stepping beyond it deeply scared him.



With the cities and roads came *Carnival*; a time to celebrate the culture of Trinidad. People crowded the streets in costumes. They pranced and danced while the sounds of sweet *Calypso* and *Steelpan* played.

Stories of Carnival quickly spread throughout the forests and hills of Trinidad. The spirits of the woods could not help but join the joyous crowds. It was too easy to go unnoticed because everyone was in disguise.

Because of all the fanfare and make-believe, the boy with the stubby antlers thought about how great it would be to create his own costumes and play among the masqueraders. So he promised himself that he would make an amazing costume for next year and finally venture into town.



The following year, dressed as a Douen, the boy with the stubby antlers stood alongside his *Jumbee* friends. At the edge of the woods, they eagerly waited for the sounds of Calypso to fill the streets.

When the music started, the ghosts burst from the woods to join the Carnival revelers, but the boy froze in his tracks. The unfamiliar world he saw and heard petrified him more than ever. So instead of making his way to town, he climbed to the highest limb on the nearest tree. He sat there hoping to catch a glimpse of the festivities.



As Carnival carried on, the boy with the stubby antlers stayed in the tree, thinking, "Maybe next year, ent?"





CHAPTER FOUR GETTING ON BAD

The years crept by and the boy found himself in his usual spot on the highest limb on the nearest tree. At the base of this tree, sat the boy's costume, which was even more elaborate than the years before.

This particular year was looking to be just like rest, when suddenly...

The sounds of the season were interrupted by screams of panic! Smoke started rising above the middle of the town. The boy noticed a small figure emerge from the chaotic metropolis, and it was running right at him!

The boy with the stubby antlers quickly swung down from his perch. As the figure came closer, he could now make out that it was being followed by a long trail of smoke!



In his fiery haste, the person tripped over the boy's costume and hit the floor rolling, putting out the flames that clung to his clothes.

"Are you all right?", the boy with the stubby antlers said in a panic. The man got to his feet and dusted himself off. He blew the whistle hanging from his waist and boastfully replied...



"**I AM D** Midnight Robber! **BOY**, have you not heard of **ME! I AM** public enemy **NUMBER ONE, TWO, AND TREE! AN JUS'** as sure as a *Pot-Hong* has **FLEAS!** I am **D ONLY MAN** who can make **D sun FREEZE!** I am..."

"Excuse!" the boy said interrupting, "What gone on in d town?"

The Robber blew his whistle again and said...



"**TODAY** is Carnival Monday, **BOY!** People came to celebrate in **D STREETS!** While twistin' an turnin' to hypnotic Calypso **BEATS!** Then followed by his mischievous Imps, Came **D horrible DRAGON BEAST!**

It emerged from **D DEEPEST DARKEST** woods, lookin' for a **FEAST!** **D** people got scared, then ran, lookin' for **COVER!**

But your boy **D**

Midnight Robber stood up to **D Dragon**, tryin' to help his fellow **BRODDA!** But **D Dragon** and **D Imps** got **D best** of me, ya **SEE.** Those **NASTY** tings' set me **A BLAZE!** So of course I had to **FLEE!** So now I stand here tellin' yuh, it is only a matter of **FATE...** Ya **BESS** believe it boy, I will soon **RETALIATE!**"

Eyeing the costume at the boy's feet, the Midnight Robber said, "On any other day, I would let yuh be. But **TODAY** is ya lucky day, boy! How would **YOU...** like ta help... me?"

The boy with the stubby antlers smiled nervously and replied, "Ummm, How bout next year nah?"

"**COME NOW,** boy, where is yuh sense of **ADVENTURE?** After today, yuh can **TELL D WORLD** that you and myself, had a great joint venture."

With sweaty palms and a nervous grin, the boy said, "That soundin' real good, but **d** world outside dese woods does frighten me! And now dat **D Dragon** is out dere, I even more frightened!"

The Robber steupsed and replied, "**FINE!** If you will not do it for yaself, think about all **D** people being **TERRORIZED!** Will you let **D Dragon** ruin their day, of dancin' in disguise?"

The boy with the stubby antlers thought of his friends in the forest. As nervous as he was, he could not have the Dragon steal their joy. He took a deep breath and said "Alright... What do you want me to do?"

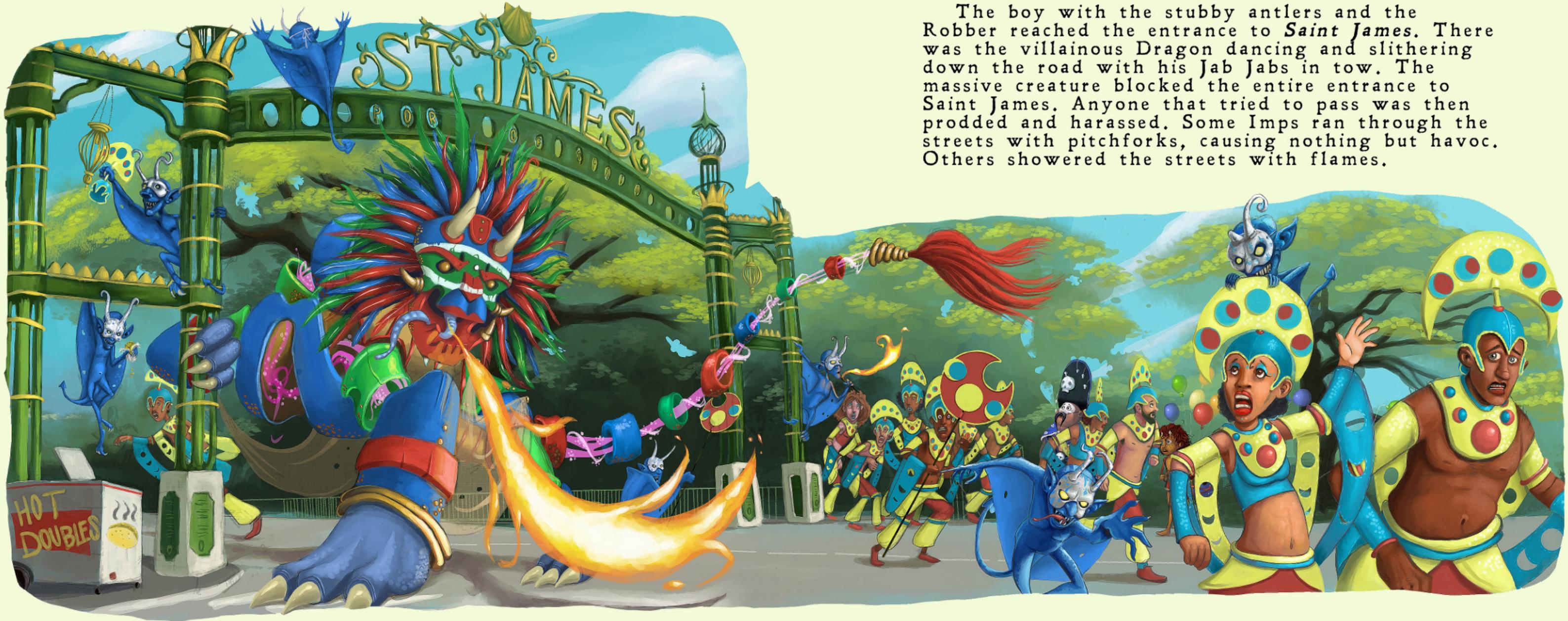
The Midnight Robber let forth a bold laugh, and said, "**HA!** Jus follow me boy, and I will tell you d plan on d way. You and I will become **LEGENDS** on dis very day!"

The boy grabbed his costume and started to follow his new companion back into town. They walked out of the bush, then through the short grass fields of **Queen's Park Savannah**.



CHAPTER FIVE DRAGON DANCE

The boy with the stubby antlers and the Robber reached the entrance to *Saint James*. There was the villainous Dragon dancing and slithering down the road with his Jab Jabs in tow. The massive creature blocked the entire entrance to Saint James. Anyone that tried to pass was then prodded and harassed. Some Imps ran through the streets with pitchforks, causing nothing but havoc. Others showered the streets with flames.





The Midnight Robber told the boy to quickly put on his costume, and hide. The Robber then cleared his throat and yelled, "**DRAGON!**"

The chaos immediately stopped. The Dragon looked in the direction of the Robber and smirked. It said in a hissing, slithering voice, "Not you again! I tttthought ya learned your lessson da first time I set your behind on fiya! Now get out of my way, you terrible pretenda, before I barrbeque and eat you for **SSSUPPA!**"

The Robber gulped and replied, "How **DARE** ya **DOTISH** ting try to embarrass **ME!** I am not scared of your threats! I am here to rid this town of you, and ya **PETS!**"

The Dragon snickered again with smoke billowing from his mouth. The Robber then realized that he was probably about to be set on fire once again, but he continued saying, "**BUT**, because I am bored by ya ridiculous antics, I have brought you a friend that will surely make ya **PANIC!** Dis animal eatsimps for snacks... and Dragons for its main! If you choose to mess with my pal, he will surely bring d Pain!"

"**HAHAHA!** I want to see this so-called monster. I want to gaze upon d thing dat is supposed to be my better," the Dragon snarled.

"Are you sure, **DRAGON?**"
The Robber replied.

"Enough wit' the **BACKCHAT**, Robber!", the Dragon said, standing his ground.

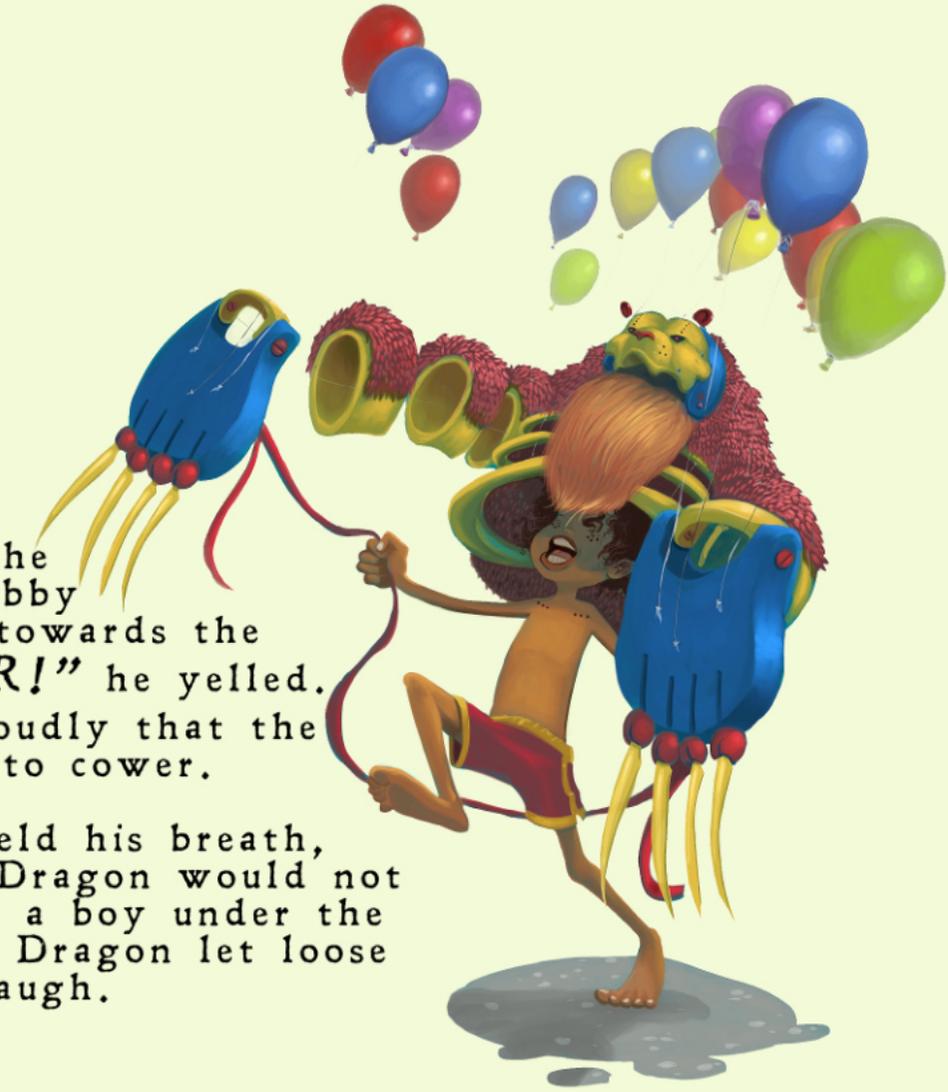


"Fine, then! If you lay ya gaze upon dis mighty **BEAST**, you are surely going to be my **PARTNER'S** feast! Come forth from d shadows, my ferocious friend. Come forward, and lead these idiots to their **END!**"



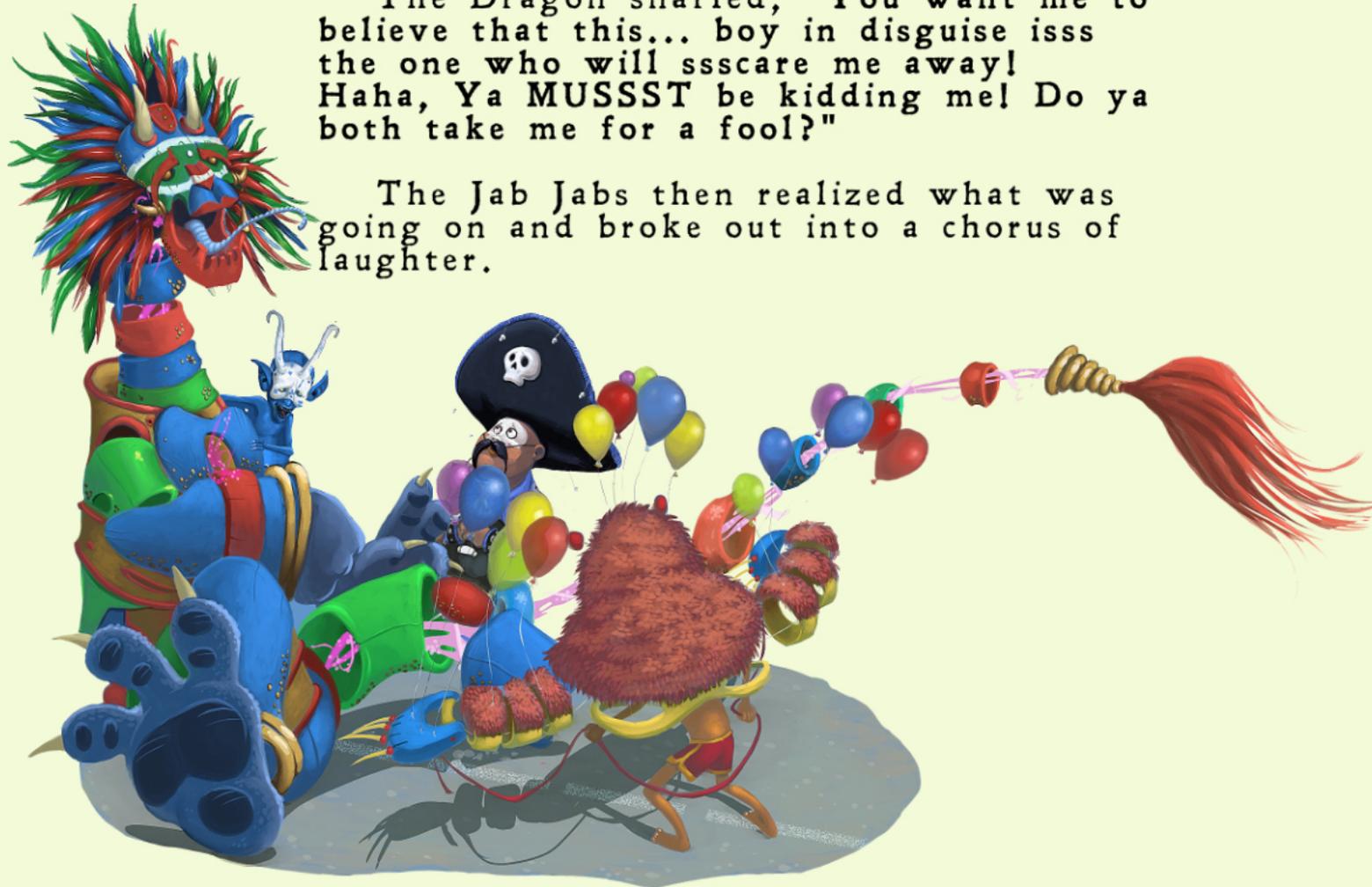
In costume, the boy with the stubby antlers bounded towards the Dragon. "**ROAR!**" he yelled. "**ROAR!**" so loudly that the Jab Jabs started to cower.

The Robber held his breath, hoping that the Dragon would not realize there was a boy under the costume, but the Dragon let loose a bone chilling laugh.



The Dragon snarled, "You want me to believe that this... boy in disguise isss the one who will ssscure me away! Haha, Ya MUSSST be kidding me! Do ya both take me for a fool?"

The Jab Jabs then realized what was going on and broke out into a chorus of laughter.



"Now that you have managed to make complete FOOLSSS of yourselfs," the Dragon hissed. "You can get out of my way!"

With a mighty swoop of his tail, the Dragon knocked the boy and the Robber into a *doubles* cart, causing food and water to spill everywhere.

The Dragon panicked after noticing a puddle of water was forming at his feet. Hoping no one noticed, he did a little dance, then stepped around the puddle and continued down the road. The boy with the stubby antlers noticed what had happened, put his finger to his chin, and started to think.

The Midnight Robber sat in the street with his head hung low. "WELL, we tried our best, but our best was not enough. D Dragon saw through your disguise and called our bluff."

Determined more than ever to beat the Dragon and save Carnival, the boy looked at the Robber with a confident smile and said,

"D party not done yet, Mr. Robber! I think I have a plan. Now... where can we find a lot of ice... my good man?"

Hearing the boy so confidently rhyme, the Robber could not help but dust himself off and smile.



CHAPTER SIX FIRE AND ICE



As the sun set, everyone went to bed sad, knowing their Carnival Monday was ruined. But as the people slept, the boy with the stubby antlers and the Midnight Robber worked furiously through the night.

Bright and early the next morning, the Carnival revelers crowded Western Main Road. They stood there hoping the Dragon would not appear. The masqueraders were about to start the music when they saw the monster come slithering down the road. Feeling defeated, the people cleared the way. Everyone except the boy with the stubby antlers and the Robber. Armed with an object covered with a tarp, they blocked the Dragon's path.

"Grrrrrr." he bellowed. "Not you two again! Why do allyah continue to ruin my fun!"

"Well, morning to you too!" the boy with the stubby antlers said.

"What issss dis all about, boy?" the Dragon hissed.

"Well...you done best d Midnight Robber twice. So now he does hold you in his highest respect. So because of dat, we done made you a special present."

The Robber then asked the Dragon, "Would you like to see the present we made you? After you see it, then we promise we will shoo."





The boy with the stubby antlers peeled back the tarp, revealing a statue that looked like the Dragon. To the unsuspecting eye, it looked like it was made of crystal.

The Dragon smiled, looking very pleased with his new present.

"Very good, little boyyyyy... I appreciate the gifft. Now please move it to d side of the road so I can continue on with my celebration."

The boy with the stubby antlers looked at the Dragon and said, "Hm, you know what nah? We never thought of how we would move dis heavy ting, so it may have to stay where it is. It looks like ya'll stuck!"

The thought of his good time being ruined made the Dragon very angry.

"Stop **MAMAGUYING** me, boy! Just for that, I will **SMASH** your present to pieces and burn what is left to **ASHES!**"

The Dragon used his mighty tail to break the statue into a thousand pieces. He unleashed a mighty flame upon the rubble of crystal. But the crystal did not burn. Instead, it melted! To his astonishment, the Dragon realized the statue was made of ice! Surprised, the Dragon let go a blood-curdling scream!

The boy with the stubby antlers stood in the road with a satisfied grin.

"Aw, Dragon, what's wrong nah? You scared of a little bit of **WATER?**"

The stunned Dragon stumbled about in fear and fell head first into the puddle he created. The Jab Jabs started to cackle!



The Robber said, "**NOW, DRAGON!** You bess be on your **WAY!** Because we have all found out what scares you on dis very **DAY!** Ya Carnival season is over, yuh see? So how about you fly to **Maracas Bay** and go bathe in D **SEA!**"

Then with a smile on his face, the boy added, "If you make it there before dark, maybe you can get some **Bake and Shark!**"

With his tail tucked between his legs, the Dragon quickly took to the sky and flew over the hills. His Jab Jabs followed behind him, laughing the entire way.



The masqueraders excitedly ran into the streets. They lifted the boy and the Robber onto their shoulders and sang their praises. "Thank you, Midnight Robber, and thank you... Hey, what is ya name, boy?"

The Robber then said, "*HMM... BOY, WHAT'S D SCENE?* Now considering we celebrate d Carnival King and *QUEEN*. Hmm... All these cheering voices, have me convinced. How about we call *YOU* boy... *D CARNIVAL PRINCE!*"

The crowd started to roar. They chanted the boy's new name so loud, it echoed though the streets. From atop the people's shoulders, the Carnival Prince blushed.

The sounds of Steelpan and Calypso flooded the streets. The masqueraders danced and celebrated until the last bit of sunlight disappeared. All while still chanting the names of the Carnival Prince and the Midnight Robber.



Epilogue

Legend has it that the praise did not stop there...

If you ask some folks, they will say that Kiddies Carnival was created to honor the Carnival Prince. Others will say, that if you look closely at the parading crowd of children, you might just see a boy with stubby antlers playing among the little revelers.



THE END.
(UNTIL NEXT TIME)



Thank you so much for reading! Are you interested in seeing more work by Daniel J. O'Brien? Then make sure to head on over to, www.TheBasementMonster.com

Backchat (bak'chat): To back talk or to respond in an argumentative manner.

Bake and Shark (bake'n'shark): It's a traditional fast food dish from Trinidad and Tobago. It consists of deep fried shark in between a deep fried dough, called bake. The best-known place to purchase it is at Maracas Beach.

Blindman's Bluff (blahynd'manz'buhf): A version of tag in which the player who is "It" is blindfolded.

Calypso (cal'ip'so): It's a style of Afro-Caribbean music that originated in Trinidad and Tobago. The lyrics are usually improvised, and make fun of local people and politics.

Currant roll (kur'uh'nt'rohl): A flaky dough filled with cinnamon, brown sugar, and currants.

Carnival (kahr'ni'vuhl): The season immediately preceding Lent, often observed with merry making and a masquerade parade.

Dragon (drag'on): A traditional Carnival character that is a representation of the forces of nature. It is depicted as a fiery beast, that comes to bring mischief and destruction to all. Sometimes, the Dragon is restrained by chains held by imps.

Dotish (do'tish): Stupid or silly.

Doubles (dou'bles): A common street food in Trinidad and Tobago. It is a sandwich made with two pieces of flat bread (Baras) filled with curried chick peas.

Douens (dwens): Known to be souls of children who have died before they were baptized. They wear mushroom-shaped hats and have no faces and their feet are turned backwards.

Imp (imp): Also known as **Jab-Jab**, a traditional Carnival character. He wears a simple devil mask with horns over his face. He usually moves about the crowds, causing mischief.

Jab Jab: (jab'jab): A person dressed up as a Devil character.

Glossary (page 2 of 3)

Jumbee (jum'b): A type of spirit or demon in the folklore of some Caribbean countries. Jumbee is the common name given to all types of ghosts.

Mama D'Lo (ma'ma'glo): Also known as "Mami Wata" and "Mama Glo," this is the Trinidadian protector of all river animals. She is usually depicted as a beautiful woman with long hair and a serpent's tail.

Mamaguy (mama'guy): Try to deceive (someone), especially with flattery or untruths.

Maracas Bay (ma'ra'cas ba): One of the more popular beaches in Trinidad and Tobago.

Nariva Swamp (nar'e'va'swomp): It is the largest freshwater wetland in Trinidad and Tobago.

Papa Bois (pa'pa'bwah): He is the father or protector of the forest and its inhabitants. Known as a generous figure, he is sometimes described as a half goat, half man. He protects the forest and those in his care from harm.

Peewah (pee'wa): Also known as the Peach Palm. It is a fruit native to the tropical forests of South and Central America.

Pitch (pich): A black or dark viscous substance obtained as a residue in the distillation of organic materials and especially tars.

PotHong (pot'hong): A mixed dog; sometimes used as an insult.

Queen's Park Savannah (kweenz'pahrk'sa'van'nah): A well known park in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. A lot of Carnival's festivities happen near or around this location.

Red Howler Monkey (howl'er'mon'key): A species of monkey known to reside in the forests of Trinidad and Tobago.

Glossary (page 2 of 3)

St. James (seynt·jeymz): A district of Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The main road is the Western Main Road. It runs from Woodbrook to Cocorite.

Scarlet Ibis (scar·let·eye·bis): The national Bird of Trinidad and Tobago, the red-feathered species of ibis is in the bird family. It inhabits tropical South America and islands of the Caribbean.

Steelpan (steel·pan): Also known as "Steel drums" or "Pans." It is a musical instrument originating from Trinidad and Tobago. Constructed from old oil drums, they're known for their "Ping Pong Ping" sound.

Steups (stoopz): A noise made by sucking air and saliva through the teeth, typically to express annoyance.

Trinidad (trin·i·dad): An island in the SE West Indies, off the NE coast of Venezuela, formerly a British colony in the Federation of the West Indies, now part of the republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Trinity Hills (trin·i·ty·hilz): A range of hills in SE Trinidad. Legend has it that Christopher Columbus was named Trinidad after these hills.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO



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