

The King and the Moon

Once in the Caribbean, there was a king who always got what he wanted – the finest foods, the fanciest clothes and the newest gadgets. Everything the king owned had to be the biggest and the best.

But there was one thing he wanted that he couldn't have. More than anything, the king wanted to touch the moon. Every night, he stood on his balcony and stared at the silvery-white sphere hanging in the sky and wished that he could reach it. One day, he decided enough was enough.

“Am I not the richest and most powerful man in these islands?” he thought.
“Of course I can touch the moon!”





He summoned the royal carpenter.

“I have an important job for you,” said the king. “I need you to build a tower that’s so high I can touch the moon.”

The royal carpenter’s mouth fell open. He knew it was impossible, but he didn’t dare question the king.

“I want it as soon as possible,” said the king. “How do you plan to do it?”

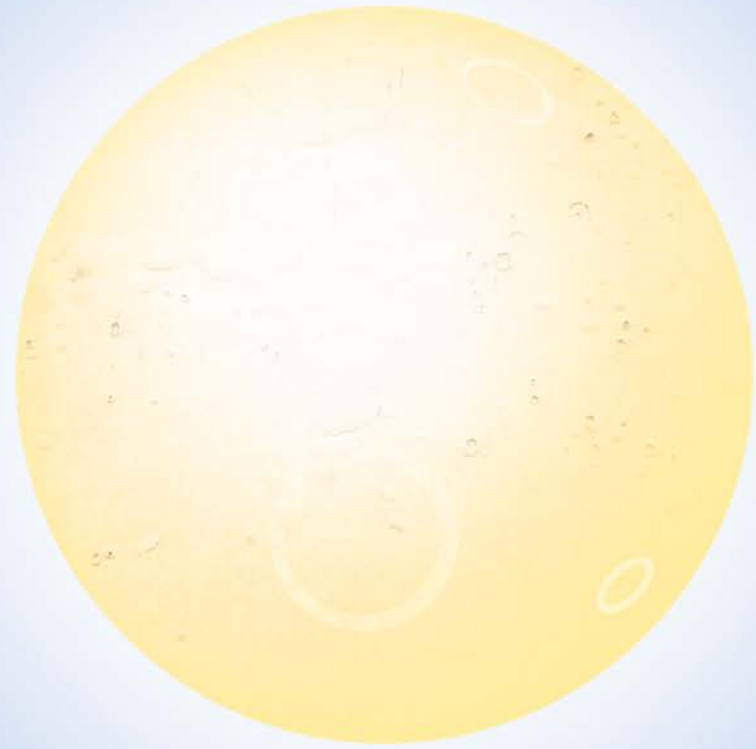
The royal carpenter gulped. He had no idea how to build a tower so tall. Tables, chairs, shelves, boxes – yes! But a tower that reached the moon? Not a chance!

“Maybe I could build a ladder?” he pondered. “But how would we lift it and lean it against the moon? And what if it snapped?”

The carpenter thought for a long time, while the king paced back and forth.

“Perhaps if I made lots of wooden boxes, we could stack them up and you could climb up them like steps?”

He knew it was risky, but it was the only idea he had.



The king clapped his hands with glee. “Perfect! Get started straight away.”



The carpenter toiled day and night, building boxes for the king’s tower. However, after a week, he had used every bit of wood in his workshop. There were nowhere near enough boxes to reach the moon.

“Chop down every tree!” said the king. “I must touch the moon.”



FIND IT!

This story comes from the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean. Can you locate it on a map and find out what its flag looks like? What is its capital city?



So the carpenter chopped down every tree on the island. After two weeks, there were no trees left and there still weren't enough boxes to reach the moon.

"I command every person in the land to bring me their boxes!" cried the king.

The next day, every family in the land stopped what they were doing to deliver boxes to the palace. There were boxes big, small, plain, colourful and carved. When you put them with the boxes the carpenter had made, it looked like there might just be enough to reach the moon.

"At last," said the king, rejoicing. "Guards! Build these boxes into a tower for me immediately. Tonight, I shall touch the moon!"

That night, everyone in the land gathered to watch the king touch the moon. The royal carpenter had a front row seat, but he couldn't bear to watch.

The king set off. **Up, up, up** he went, clambering up one box after another until he was as high as the clouds... **Up, up, up** he went, climbing higher and higher into the night sky until he was among the stars... **Up, up, up** he went until the big, beautiful moon was within his sight.



When the king reached the top of the tower, he leant forward to touch the moon but it was just beyond his reach. He stood on his tiptoes and stretched his arms, but it was no use – the moon was still a few centimetres away.

“I need another box up here!” shouted the king.

“We don’t have one!” called the carpenter. “We’ve used every box in the kingdom.”

“Just pull a box from the bottom and pass it up to me.”

The carpenter hesitated. He knew the king’s order made no sense.

“What are you waiting for? Do it now!” yelled the king, losing patience.

The carpenter took a deep breath and pulled a box from the bottom of the tower, then he ran away as quickly as he could.

Just as he suspected, the tower wobbled and wobbled, and trembled and toppled. Soon the boxes came crashing down, along with the king, who was a crumpled heap in the middle of it all.

Somehow the king survived the fall, but his dreams of touching the moon were crushed, along with his desire to always get his own way! ☹

