

Bob the Mole Tries to Fly

Chapter 1: The Kite

Bob was a Mole. Bob liked being a Mole, but he wanted to fly. One day, when he was eating breakfast, his mother said, "Do you want to go to the beach today?"

"Sure!" he said. He decided then that he would bring his kite because maybe, if he jumped, he could hang on and be swept up, up, and away!!!!!!

On the way to the beach, Bob was so excited he couldn't keep still. His kite, a blue one, was sitting in the trunk, waiting...

Then they were there. The beach. White sands, roaring waves, kites dancing in the sky. It was time for action.

He whipped out his kite, said bye to his mother, and began to sprint across the beach. He took a running leap, and he made an arc in the air, several feet up, but was not airborne. He hit the ground hard, and fell over into the ocean. He got totally soaked. When he climbed out, his mom said he looked like a drowned rat. Oh well. Maybe he would try something different.

Chapter 2: The Idea

The kite failure had not daunted Bob's wish. He still wanted to fly. But he didn't know how. Maybe he could be an astronaut. Then he would be sure to fly. But being an astronaut meant hard work, and lots of studying. Bob didn't have the patience. Or, he could be a pilot. But he was too young. Then he had an idea. A good one. He needed a hot air balloon. But how would he get one? He would have to build it himself!

The next day, he went to the store to buy some materials. He bought straws, a plastic bag, candles, and a waxed box to sit in. He already had string, a lighter, aluminum foil, and some tape.

Then he researched for a long time. He needed to figure out the procedure.

Chapter 3: Building the Balloon

When Bob woke up the next day, it was only 3:30 am. He had set his alarm four hours early, so that he would be able to work on the balloon before school. He snarfed down a bowl of cereal, and drank a glass of orange juice. Then he ran to his work bench, and began to build.

First he made an "X", out of four straws. Then he cut a square of aluminum foil. He turned on the lighter, and melted the bottoms of four candles, and stuck them on the foil square. When the wax dried, Bob taped the square onto the "X" made of straws. Then he attached the "X" with candles on it to the inside of the plastic bag. Then he attached the box. The hot air balloon was ready.

Chapter 4: Launching the Balloon

Bob had read that there should not be much wind when launching the balloon, so he had to wait for a calm, still day to fly. On Wednesday, there was just a light, warm breeze. These were fine conditions, except for the fact that it was warm. It would be

easier to fly if the inside of the bag was much hotter than the air. On Thursday, it was too windy, though a good temperature. But on Friday, Bob seemed to have struck gold. It was a cool, cloudless day, with a very light breeze. Perfect.

After school, he took half an hour to decorate the balloon. He had already painted the balloon red, with two white stripes near the top. He painted "Bob" in large letters so people would know who was flying the hot air balloon. Then he and his mom ran outside to launch the balloon.

The whole neighborhood had been invited to watch, and cheer him on. It was a highly exciting phenomenon for the neighborhood moles, and the mood was high, as Bob's mom lit the candles, and Bob climbed into the basket, and lowered the visor of his pilot's helmet. Slowly, the balloon began to lift off, gaining altitude, and a cheer went up from his audience. Above it all, Bob just smiled and waved, as he was swept over the countryside.

Chapter 5: The Wild Ride

As Bob floated along, he felt a strange sensation. Pride. He had never had something to be proud of before. It made him feel like yelling: "Look at me! I made a flyable hot air balloon with no help! I'm a genius!!" To him, being proud was a new feeling. He was a humble mole, so this was a feeling he wasn't sure he liked.

As he coasted along, he came upon a small lake. This made him feel nervous. He didn't know how to land, and he wasn't sure he could do it gracefully. As he flew helplessly towards the lake, he realized there had to be a way to steer. As he flew on, Bob moved to the other side of the basket, hoping it would move with his weight, to no avail. He was over the lake now, and the wind was beginning to pick up. This wasn't a peaceful float anymore. It was a wild ride! The clouds were darkening, and Bob was being tossed about like popcorn. The wind pushed him closer and closer to the water, and a light rain was falling. This was bad news to his candles, which flickered, and died.

Chapter 6: Safety at Last

Bob wasn't proud now, he was terrified! As he plummeted towards the lake, he remembered something. His basket was really a waxed, lightweight box. It should withstand water!

When Bob hit the water, he fell out of the box, and landed with a splash in the water. He struggled to keep afloat, as he righted the box, and lept in. Then he snapped off the visor of his helmet to use as a paddle.

As he canoed to the shore, he decided that being proud wasn't a bad feeling, as long as you didn't brag or show off.

When he got to the shore, he rode a bus to a street a couple of blocks away from his house. When he got home, everyone was very happy to see him safe after the storm.

When he lay in bed that evening, he thought: That wasn't a failure. Now he knew what he was capable of. Bob was a Mole. A changed Mole.