

Meerfus Meets Duncan

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Meerfus had been a wand-making magician for a long time. He had always done it all alone, ever since going off on his own. There was no one to help him organize his scrolls or sweep out his laboratory. It was a hard life that kept him busy, but it was like art, too. His work kept him very occupied, and people paid well for what he made. Still, as he got up there in years, he started looking for someone to train as an assistant.

Now not just any goofy kid would do as an assistant. Magic did not come naturally to everyone, and even if it did, there were different kinds of magic. Many kids who started to realize they had magic were tempted to play pranks, goof around, and get in trouble. Some saw it as a way to get what they wanted – a power over common people. Meerfus needed someone good-natured and still talented magically.

He had been traveling the countryside, looking for a specific kind of egg to use in one of the wands he was making. The current customer wanted a wand that would make his chickens lay colorful eggs, so he could charge more. It seemed silly, but eggs of different colors sold much better than white and brown ones. So, Meerfus was traveling around, looking for the right eggs to use.

Meerfus was in a town, talking to a farmer who had a breed of ducks that laid bluish-green eggs, and he was trying to negotiate a deal for a few of them. Not only did Meerfus enjoy omelets, but he did need an egg for the wand after all. This farmer smelled a sale and was trying to get as much money as possible for the eggs, when Meerfus noticed the man's son.

The boy was all of six or seven years old, playing in the grass. That was not peculiar, nor was the fact that he was playing with a grasshopper. What was strange was the way the boy was using a twig to coax the grasshopper into performing acrobatics! Yes, the grasshopper was flipping and flopping as the boy giggled and teased it.

"Don't mind my boy, Duncan. He's got a strange mind and silliness about him." The farmer grunted. He wasn't impressed.

"Tell you what. I will give you one GOLD coin if you give me a dozen of your eggs, and then you send this boy to work for me when he turns ten."

"Duncan? You want my son? Whatever for?" The farmer was amazed.

"Sir, I believe he is talented in the magical arts, and it is a talent I would like to see grown. I have need of an apprentice - an assistant. He will be fed, clothed, and taught, just as he would if he were to go work for a blacksmith or any other tradesman."

"My boy the magician..." The farmer laughed and stuck out his hand.

Meerfus shook the man's hand, left a gold coin in it, and walked over to introduce himself to Duncan.

It was a short but important conversation. Meerfus showed the boy a trick with a wand of his own making, one that could make the grasshopper speak. When the boy's eyes lit up, he asked a very important question, one that told Meerfus he'd made the right choice: "How can I learn to do that?"

Meerfus grinned at him. "I'll teach you, but you need to wait a couple years." He left the promise and the wand of voices with the boy. True to his word, he'd come back three years later. The rest was history.



Meerfus Meets Duncan

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What kind of wand was Meerfus collecting things to make?
 - A. painting houses
 - B. coloring eggs
 - C. laying golden eggs
 - D. sweeping floors
2. What kind of eggs did Meerfus try to buy?
 - A. chicken eggs
 - B. quail eggs
 - C. duck eggs
 - D. turkey eggs
3. What did Meerfus notice when he was trying to buy eggs?
 - A. a boy doing small magic with bugs
 - B. a boy killing bugs
 - C. a farmer with bad teeth
 - D. a hog that was dancing
4. What offer does Meerfus make the farmer?
 - A. to teach his son to read
 - B. to pay a lot for eggs every week
 - C. to train his son as an apprentice
 - D. to cure his bad breath
5. How does Duncan react to Meerfus' display of magic?
 - A. He is scared of the old guy.
 - B. He is very interested in how to learn more.
 - C. He gets very shy.
 - D. He runs away and cries.

Meerfus Meets Duncan

Story By: Andrew Frinkle

Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What kind of wand was Meerfus collecting things to make?
 - A. painting houses
 - B. coloring eggs**
 - C. laying golden eggs
 - D. sweeping floors
2. What kind of eggs did Meerfus try to buy?
 - A. chicken eggs
 - B. quail eggs
 - C. duck eggs**
 - D. turkey eggs
3. What did Meerfus notice when he was trying to buy eggs?
 - A. a boy doing small magic with bugs**
 - B. a boy killing bugs
 - C. a farmer with bad teeth
 - D. a hog that was dancing
4. What offer does Meerfus make the farmer?
 - A. to teach his son to read
 - B. to pay a lot for eggs every week
 - C. to train his son as an apprentice**
 - D. to cure his bad breath
5. How does Duncan react to Meerfus' display of magic?
 - A. He is scared of the old guy.
 - B. He is very interested in how to learn more.**
 - C. He gets very shy.
 - D. He runs away and cries.