



Chip and the Clever Switch



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A Cheat Code Story

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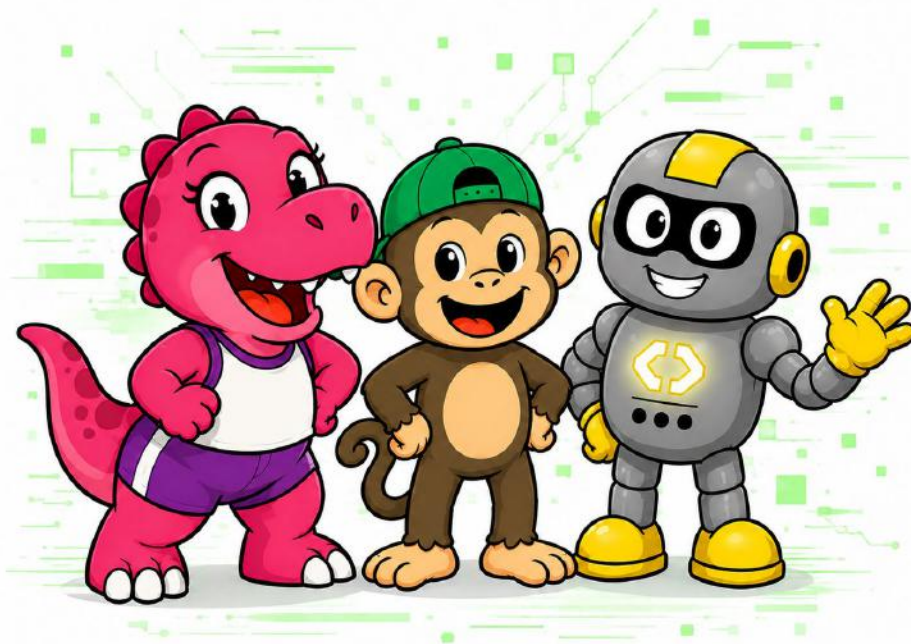
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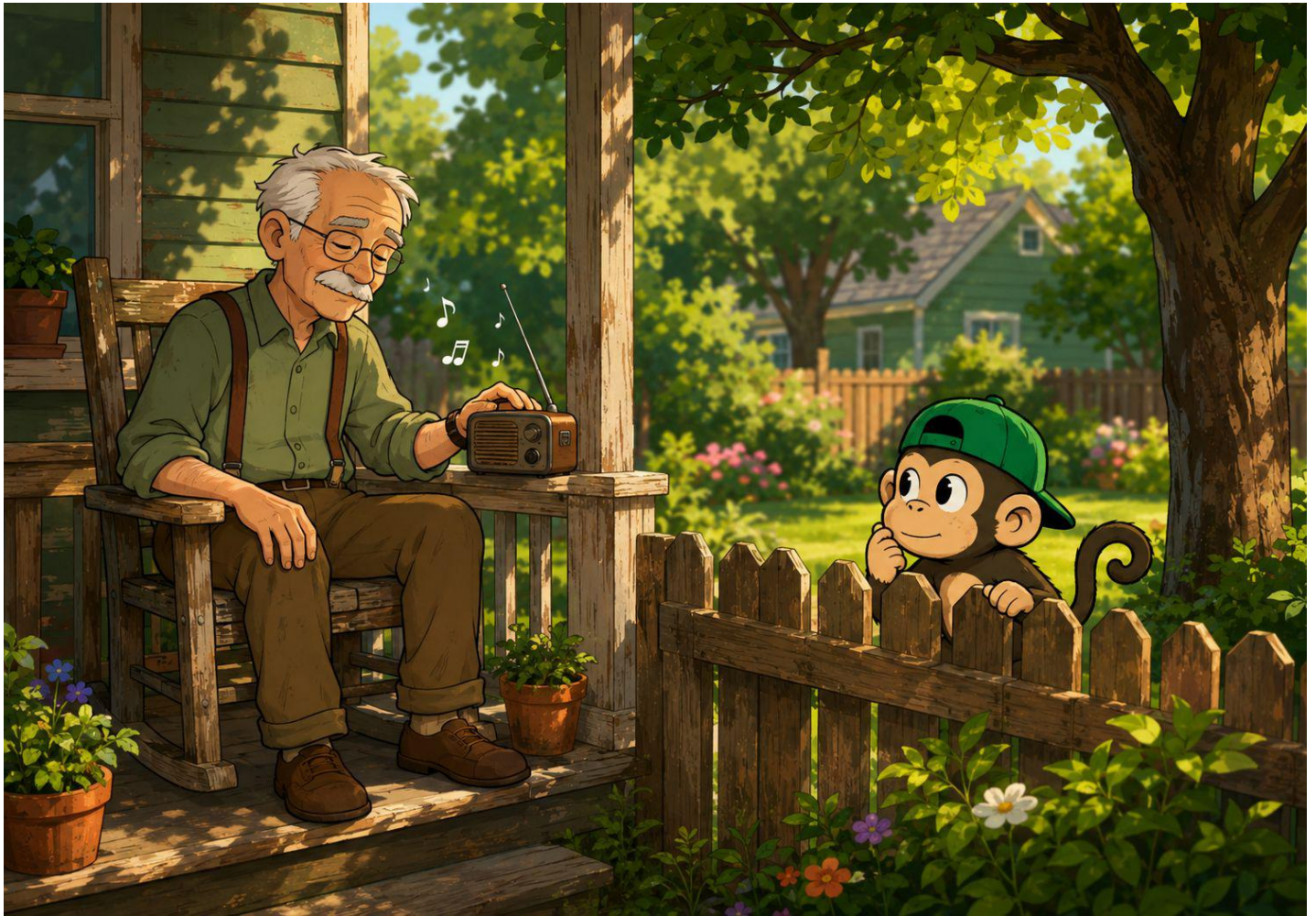
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Clever Switch



Mr. Avery next door sat on his porch every Saturday with his radio on low.

Chip had learned why, one afternoon when he was helping carry groceries. Mr. Avery's whole family used to play music together on Saturdays — guitar, piano, his youngest daughter on the drums. That was before they all moved away.

Now the radio was the only music left.



For three Saturdays in a row, **Chip** had been filling a small tin box with parts.

Rubber bands in three different thicknesses. A handful of short wooden dowels. Binder clips, bottle caps, small bells, a coil of thin wire. A few metal tube casings, each one a different length. A folded square of wax paper. A tiny comb.

He had a plan.



When **Byte** and **Moxie** arrived Saturday morning, **Chip** told them what he wanted to do.

"Mr. Avery misses live music," he said. "I want to play some for him. Real music, from real instruments. Three of us — so we need three."

Moxie picked up one of the small bells and flicked it with her claw. A bright clear ring hung in the air. *"Where do we start?"* she asked.



Chip pulled out his Kodex and snapped it onto his wrist. The screen blinked on. He pressed each key carefully.

The Kodex pulsed — white light blooming green at the edges, pixel sparks drifting up and gone. The brim of his cap glowed softly, then settled.

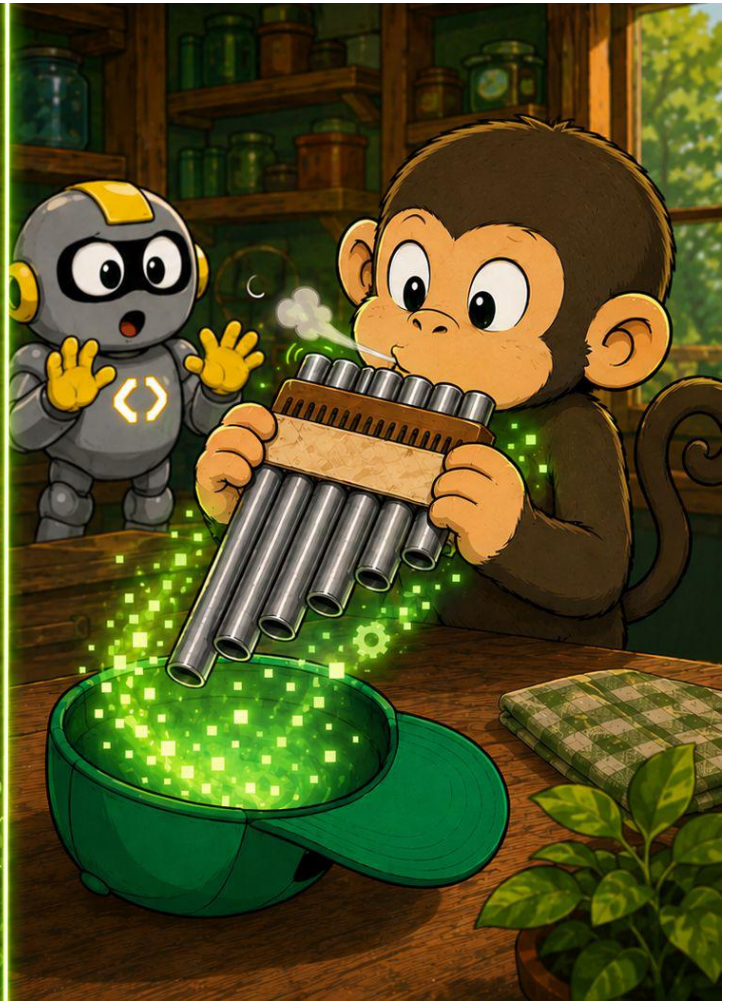
Chip took off his cap and held it open.



Chip dropped the coil of wire into the cap, then the bottle caps, then the small bells, one by one. Each one disappeared inside without a sound.

He reached in and pulled out a tambourine — a clean wire ring with bottle caps and bells mounted all the way around it, each one fastened tight.

He held it out to **Moxie**. "*One*," he said.



Next, **Chip** dropped the metal tube casings into the cap, shortest to longest, then the folded wax paper, then the tiny comb.

He reached in and pulled out a set of pan pipes — six tubes bound neatly together. He blew across the first tube. A low, hollow note floated out. The second — a step higher. Each one clear and distinct.

He handed them to **Byte**. *"Two,"* he said.



Last, **Chip** dropped the wooden dowels, the binder clips, and six rubber bands into the cap

He took his time, then reached in and pulled out a small wooden frame, the rubber bands stretched across. He plucked the thickest band. A low, warm hum. He plucked the thinnest. Clear and bright, like a note from a music box.

"Three," he said, holding it himself.



Byte blew across the pan pipe tubes one by one, low to high, memorizing each pitch. Then he started finding combinations. Then a pattern.

Moxie worked out a steady beat on the tambourine with her elbow — awkward at first, then locked in.

Chip played the box strings.

They ran through it twice before any of them thought about stopping.



They took everything outside.

Chip set the box strings on the grass. **Moxie** found a good spot for the cymbal rack. **Byte** carried his pan pipes carefully with both hands.

Mr. Avery was in his chair. Radio on. Eyes half closed.

They started to play.



On his porch, Mr. Avery opened his eyes.

He lifted his hand and turned the radio off.

He sat forward in his chair and listened.



They played for a long time. When they finally stopped, **Chip** looked up.

Mr. Avery was standing at the fence railing.

"I haven't heard live music on a Saturday in a long time," he said. His voice was steady, and his eyes were bright.



"Will you come back next week?" Mr. Avery asked.

"Yes sir," **Chip** said.

Mr. Avery nodded once and went back to his chair. He didn't turn the radio back on.



Moxie looked at the tambourine in her arms, then at **Chip**.

"You planned this for him," she said. "The whole thing."

Chip shrugged. *"I just wanted him to know he was loved."*

Moxie nodded slowly. *"Can you show me how your hat works, next Saturday?"*

"Deal," **Chip** answered.



That night, **Chip** sat on the back step and looked at the three instruments still set up in the yard.

The box strings. The tambourine. The pan pipes.



Next door, Mr. Avery's porch light was on. Through the fence, **Chip** could see the empty chair, the small radio sitting silent on the railing.

He thought about next Saturday. He was already looking forward to it.



The next Saturday, **Chip** carried the instruments into the yard one by one.

Before he had even set the last one down, he heard Mr. Avery's chair scrape across the porch next door.

He was already moving to the railing to listen.

There's always another moment to share with the
Cheat Code crew. Join us for all their stories!



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