

## BETHANY AND THE TURNIP

Down in Yorkshire on the very edge of a small village stands a row of handsome stone built houses. Being on the edge of the village has its advantages. To the front is a large grassy field, while to the rear, each house has a small yard backing onto dusty back lane that runs from the main road quarter of a mile away, turns right along back of the houses to a dead end at the last house. From that point on it turns into an equally dusty footpath that wanders on through the countryside. On the other side of the lane are the gardens that make ideal, play areas for the children.

But today the gardens and the back lane are deserted. Except for the figure of a small girl in the yard of number fifteen, the second door from the end of the lane. She stands there sighing, her elbows resting on the top of the gate, chin in her hands, staring wistfully along the lane.

Bethany is small and pretty, with blond hair, a bright and lively girl, who normally has a big cheeky grin and a warm loving nature. But like all children she could be naughty and this afternoon she was driving her mum mad.

Bethany was bored and feeling a little sorry for herself because she had no one to play with. Mum was busy doing the washing, Chloe was away on a school trip and none of the other children in the lane were playing

out. Taking a last look along the lane she gave a big sigh, turned from the gate, walked across the yard to the back door. 'Mum! Mum! I've got nothing to do.'

'Oh Bethany there's loads to do,' said mum. 'You can play on the swing and the slide.'

'No! I don't want to,' said Bethany, stamping her foot, 'anyway, I've been playing on them all morning and I'm sick of them. I want to do something else.'

'Well, why don't you get out your pram and doll then?'

'No I don't want too.' She said putting on her sulky voice and sticking out her pet lip.

'I'll tell you what, why don't we put on the DVD of Beauty and the beast you like that don't you?'

'No!'

'OK,' explained mum, 'I've played with you all morning, but now I've got to get on with the washing. So why don't you go and read in your room, for a bit.'

'But, mum, I don't want to read, I want to play outside.'

'All right, then why don't you go along the lane and see if any of your friends are coming out to play. But just in the lane, don't go wandering off.'

Bethany cheered up as she headed off along the lane. Surely someone will come out to play, she thought. But her good mood disappeared when she knocked on the last door to find that Tom, like the rest of her friends was busy with something else.

Fed up she walked back along the lane, kicking an old piece of stone in front of her. When she reached the end of the lane she took one last kick and the stone flew down the path.

Turning to go back into the house, she stopped and decided to go along the path and kick the stone back to the lane, well, she thought, it'll be something to do.

As she walked along the path next to the field, she heard a high squeaky voice. 'Where are you going, girl? Wait for me,' she looked around: there was no one there.

She started to walk on, but had gone no more than six paces, when the voice came again. 'Hold on! Wait for me.'

Turning, she looked all around, there was no one to be seen.

She was about to carry on walking, when the voice came for the third time, 'I won't be long, wait for me.'

The voice seemed to be coming from the field of long grass on her right. Moving closer she stood on her tiptoes and peered over the top of the very high grass. She could see movement as if someone who was shorter than the grass was coming towards her.

Suddenly a head popped up above the grass, and disappeared again. She got such a shock that she stepped back quickly, caught her heel on a clump of grass at the edge of the path, and promptly sat down.

She was still sitting there, when the grass parted and a face grinned out at her. My, what a funny face it was. With big round eyes, a small button nose, a wide smiley mouth, and green floppy hair, 'Hello,' it said and stepped out of the grass onto the path.

Bethany gasped in surprise; it was a turnip with two long thin legs, two equally skinny arms - and the green hair that she had seen, was actually green floppy leaves.

'H-Hello' Bethany replied with a slight hesitation. 'Who are you?'

'I'm Tammy,' the turnip replied, 'What's your name?' Then without waiting for her to reply, rushed

on. 'I'm lost, I was hoping that you could help me find my way back home'.

'I'm called Bethany, I'll try to help if I can,' said Bethany, 'but I really haven't any idea where turnips live.'

'In a field, said Tammy, quick as a flash.

'I know that! Silly,' said Bethany. 'But I don't know where the turnip field is. Don't, you know which way you came?'

'No not really, I've been walking round and round in circles, in that field of long grass, for ages and ages trying to find my way out, said Tammy.

'Come on then, we'll see if we can find out,' said Bethany. 'But you better hold my hand, in case you wander off and get lost again.'

Hand in hand, they set off to try and find the turnip field. Coming to a fork in the path, they were deciding which way to go, when a rabbit hopped into view down the left hand fork.

'I'm lost,' said Tammy. 'Do, you have any idea where the turnip field is?'

To Bethany's surprise, the rabbit spoke, 'Sorry I can't help, you, I don't. But if it's any help, I can tell

you where it's not. It's not down there,' she said, pointing back along the path she had just come down.

'Thank you - er,' said Bethany.

'Rosemary, Rosemary Rabbit,' said the rabbit.

'Well thank you very much, Rosemary,' said Bethany, a little surprised that she was actually talking to a rabbit. But then after all she had been talking to a turnip, hadn't she.

'Come on,' said Bethany to Tammy, 'We better try this way.'

Saying goodbye to Rosemary, they headed up the right hand fork in the path. As they walked the path started to climb uphill, and run through a small stand of trees.

Coming around a bend in the path, they bumped straight into a fox hurrying in the opposite direction. Picking themselves up off the ground, Bethany said, 'Why don't you look where you're going? Rushing about like that, you could hurt someone.'

'Me, look where I'm going, I like that. What about you two, standing in the middle of the path, so that no one can get past,' said the fox angrily, as he picked himself up and brushed the leaves from his legs.

Bravely, Bethany asked the angry fox, 'Do you know where the turnip field is? Please?'

'No I don't know, and anyway, I don't like turnip's,' the fox snapped, and he hurried off down the path.

'How do you know you don't like turnips, if you've never met one,' Tammy shouted after him. But the fox didn't even look around, as he hurried away.

'Never mind, Tammy,' said Bethany, 'He's just a grumpy old fox, and he doesn't know anything.'

They continued along the path until they came to a field with cows in. Bethany climbed up the gate and leaning over the top, shouted to the nearest cow, 'Do you know where the turnip field is? Please.'

'What? I can't hear you,' said the cow.

'The...turnip...field...where... is...it?' shouted Bethany, loudly and clearly.

'What? I still can't hear you,' said the cow.

She must have been hard of hearing, because she walked over mumbling to herself, 'I don't know, this younger generation, can't talk clearly, they always mumble so you can't hear them.' As she reached the gate she said, 'Now, child talk slowly and clearly without mumbling and repeat your question.'

'Please - could - you - tell - me - the - way - to - the - turnip - field - Mrs cow?' Bethany asked in a very clear voice.

'That Better, I can hear you now,' said the cow, 'but I'm Miss not Mrs, and my name's Cora. Now back to your question, I've been there, I know I have, but it was such a long time ago, I...'

At this point, Cora broke off as Tammy climbed up the gate next to Bethany. Cora moved along the gate, stuck out her rather large tongue and licked the whole of his face with one slurp. It was horrible and slimy; Tammy lost his grip on the gate, fell to the ground and rolled into a ditch.

'Oh, dear me, what was that?' asked Cora.

'That - was - Tammy - he's - a - turnip,' said Bethany, still speaking clearly.

'Are you sure? Because the turnips that I remember, weren't like that with legs and arms, they just sat in long rows in a field and didn't move at all,' said Cora.

'Yes - I'm - sure - he's - a - turnip,' replied Bethany, nodding her head.

'Well, as I was saying, I think that the turnip field is on the south facing side of a hill. This path should

take you there, but I'm not certain. Try asking someone else, down by the river,' said Cora.

'Thank you very much, Cora,' said Bethany as she pulled Tammy out of the ditch. 'We'll ask that duck down there.'

'Your mumbling again, child,' said Cora. 'I'm not Dutch and I wouldn't dream of going in the muck down there.' With that she wandered back across the field muttering, 'Nice girl, but I do wish she would talk clearly.'

Leaving Cora With her friends, they followed the path down to the river. Tammy walked over to the duck and said, 'Do you know where the turnip field is?'

'What?' asked the duck.

'Do you k...'

'Never mind that,' said the duck, 'I heard what you said the first time, but you didn't say the magic word.'

'But I don't know any magic word, I'm a turnip not a magician, said Tammy with a frown.

Bethany nudged him, 'The magic word,' she said. 'You know- 'The-Magic-Word.'

Grinning Tammy said, 'Oh, that magic word. Please, do you know where the turnip field is? Please.'

'That's better,' said the duck. 'Now, before we get into all that, why don't we get to know each other, I'm called Don. Tell me your names.'

'Pleased to meet you, my name's Bethany and, this one, who forgets to say please is Tammy.'

'Pleased to meet you,' said Don. 'I've a good idea where the Turnip field is, that is, not quite exactly, but I can get you very near. You can ask again when you get closer.' And he continued. ' This path follows the river until it comes to a bridge. At the bridge turn right and follow that path till you come to another right turn. Now this is where you will have to ask again, as I'm not sure if you need the first or the second turning.'

' Thank you very much for your help, Don,' said Bethany as she set off down the path, with Tammy tagging along behind.

'Oh, young Turnip,' Don called after them with a smile on his face. 'Don't forget to say please next time.'

'I will,' said Tammy, as he waved goodbye.

When they arrived at the bridge they saw a frog  
'Hello, frog,' said Bethany.

'Freddy,' said the frog.

'Pardon,' said Bethany.

'My name, its Freddy.'

'Oh, I see,' said Bethany, 'This is Tammy, my name's Bethany, and we were wondering if you know the way to the turnip field'

'I used to know a turnip once,' said Freddy, 'He had a beard, a black patch on one eye and a wooden leg. His name was Long John Turnip, him and his parrot used to sail down the river and out into the sea. They said he was going to dig up buried treasure. But I didn't believe it, how can how can anyone dig a hole in the sea.'

'So you'll know the way to the turnip field, then,' said Tammy.

'What Turnip field?'

'The one that Long John Turnip came from.'

'Oh, That one, I never did asked him where he came from. But I think he might have come from that direction,' said the frog, pointing over the bridge.

'But that's opposite to the way the duck told us to go,' said Bethany.

'What duck?' asked the frog.

'That duck, along there by the river'

'So you asked the duck and he told you the way to the turnip field.' said the frog starting to sound a little angry.

'Y-Yes,' Bethany replied timidly.'

'Well I like that! You have me standing here for half an hour talking about turnips. Wasting my time. When the duck has already told you the way to go,' he exclaimed, and with a sniff of his nose, he hopped off down to the river.

Bethany looked at Tammy, shrugged her shoulders and carried on walking until they came to the first turning on the right. At the side of the path was a small goat, with a long rope tied to collar round his neck, the other end of the rope was fastened to a post hammered into the ground.

Going over to him Bethany smiled nicely and said, 'could, you tell me if this is the turning, that will take us to the turnip field, please.'

'Turnips! Turnips, Oh Yummy, I do love turnips,' said the goat, licking his lips, as he stared at Tammy.

'Would your friend like to come a little closer, so I can eat him. No! No! I mean meet him.'

The two friends move backwards along the path keeping their eyes on the goat. Once they were far enough away to feel safe, they turned and hurried along the path.

Behind them the goat called, 'Girl, ask your friend if he would like to be my tea. No! No! I mean would he like to come to tea.'

Ignoring his calls they continued on their way and soon came to the second turning. Sitting on a fence post was a little fat mouse. Going over to him Tammy said, 'Is this the turning to get to the turnip field, please.'

'What's a turnip?' asked the mouse.

'Me, I'm a Turnip,' said Tammy, 'Have you seen any thing that looks like me?'

'Oh, why didn't you say so in the first place,' said the mouse, 'There's a Field full them, what did you call them, turnips, was it?'

'Yes, but where?'

'There,' he said, pointing to the next field along the path, 'There are hundreds of them in that field.'

As they drew near to the gate into the field, a crowd of turnips came running out waving their arms in the air. The tallest one shouted. 'Where have you been, our Tammy? Our Mum's been worried about you, and who's this with you?'

After introducing Bethany to his brother Tom, Tammy said, 'I got lost and Bethany helped me to find my way back home.'

' Thanks Bethany, we've been searching for him all day,' said Tom, 'Come on we better let mum know he OK, she's had search parties out looking for him.'

As they walked through the field, the crowds of turnips seemed to get bigger and bigger and they were all waving and cheering. Bethany noticed that a group of large strong turnips were travelling in front of them clearing a pathway through the crowds. While others, equally strong, linked hands and lined each side of the pathway, holding it open so they could walk through in comfort.

Nearing the middle of the field, they suddenly found themselves in a square flat area, surrounded on all four sides by cheering Turnips.

In front of them in the centre of the square, was a throne on which sat a round plump turnip with a very severe frown on her face. With a nod of her head, she

signalled to the large turnips and they marched over to escort Bethany, Tammy and Tom to a spot in front of the throne.

'Curtsy,' whispered Tom from the side of his mouth, as both he and Tammy gave a low bow to the queen.

As they straightened up, a large smile lit up the queen's face, she held out both arms and Tammy ran over to be given a big hug from his mum the queen of the turnips. Tammy and his mum talked together for a while, then the queen beckoned Bethany over and said, 'I would like to thank you, my dear, for bring back Prince Tammy, goodness knows what would have happened to him, if you hadn't found him.'

At this the whole crowd of turnips cheered, 'Hip! Hip! Hurrah! For Bethany.'

Pleased at the return of her son, the queen declared that the day was a holiday. The crowd cheered and began setting up stalls round the sides of the square.

Soon the stalls were bursting with all kinds of things with strange sounding names. Every thing began with a T, Lemonade was Temonade, Lollies were Tollies and Ice cream was called Tice cream. There were also Tream Tuns and Tweets, plus much more and despite their strange sounding names they all tasted delicious.

In one half of the square they set up a fairground with even stranger sounding names. There was a Turnipabout, a Big Turniper and a Turnipyboat. In the other half they set up a Turnippole, with ribbons hanging down from the top, where everyone grabs a ribbon and dances around the pole. In addition there were games, like, Leap Turnip, Turnips knock, Pin the tail on the Turnip, Pass the Turnip, Musical Turnips, and many more.

Bethany had a wonderful time and really enjoyed her self, but all too soon it was time to go home. Turning to Tammy she said, 'Tammy, I'll have to go home; my mum will be looking for me. I had better go and say goodbye, to the queen.'

'We'll come with you,' said Tom, and the three of them walked over to where the queen sat on her throne.

'Your Majesty,' said Bethany, as she curtsied to the queen. 'I'm sorry, but if you don't mind, I have to go home now.'

'Could you wait just a minute, while I make an announcement,' said the queen, and giving a signal to one of the other turnips, she stood up. The turnip raised a trumpet to his lips and gave three large blasts, and the crowd turned to the queen. Once they had settled down the queen announced in a loud voice,

'I Queen Tatina, queen of the Turnips, declare that having saved the royal prince, Tammy from being lost. Bethany shall from this day forth be known as, Princess Bethany.'

The crowd cheered, 'Hip! Hip! Hurrah, for Princess Bethany.'

When the noise had died down, the queen turned to Bethany, gave her a hug and said, 'Thank you again, Princess Bethany, I'm sorry you have to go. I'm sending Tom and Tammy to escort you back to where you first met Tammy. Tom won't get lost, he knows a shortcut so it won't take you long.'

When she finished speaking the queen gave Princess Bethany a big hug, and they set off, with the crowd following them to the end of the field. Waving goodbye to all the turnips, the friends turned onto the shortcut and were soon out of sight. When they arrived back at the path near to Bethany's house, they hugged each other and said goodbye. Tammy and Tom waved and walked off into the long grass. Bethany headed home.

When she reached the end of the lane, Bethany turned to see if she could catch one last glimpse of her friends, but because of the high grass she couldn't see them at all.

Raising her voice she shouted, 'Bye, Tammy. Bye, Tom,' turned and walked on. As she reached her gate, she heard faintly in the distance two voices shouting, 'Bye, Princess Bethany,' and she went in for her tea.

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