

KING KONG TED

Bang, bang, wallop. Bang, bang, wallop.

'What is that terrible noise?' Marietta's mummy asked.

'It's not me,' Marietta answered from her bedroom. 'It's Toronto Ted. He's in a frightful temper.'

'Well,' Marietta's mummy called, 'tell him to be quiet.'

But he wasn't quiet.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, wallop,' came the noise. This time twice as loud. Bang, bang, bang, bang, wallop, wallop...'

Obviously, Toronto Ted, Marietta's teddy bear, was very angry. It was a most extraordinary noise. As though someone was knocking all the feathers from a pillow with a tennis racquet. You would not have believed that a usually mild-tempered teddy bear could exert such strength. Marietta was angry as well, because she had been sent up to her bedroom and she wasn't even really sure she had been naughty.

Marietta had just recovered from a nasty cold. She was now very much better but her mummy thought she should eat yoghurt, because she believed yoghurt is GOOD FOR YOU. Some people like yoghurt. Other people don't. Marietta wasn't very keen on it but ate it sometimes..

First her mummy gave her a banana yoghurt.

Marietta took one spoonful and declined to eat any more.

'Very well,' said her mother. 'Try one this one. It tastes of greengage.'

Marietta shuddered. She didn't like that one much, either.

Her mummy gave her an odd look. You see she was worried, because Garry- that's Marietta two-year old brother- had scarcely touched his dinner and she thought he might be going to catch cold. Mummies can probably cope with one child who won't eat, but they do get worried when more than one child stops eating.

'I'm going to give you one last chance,' she said quietly to Marietta. And placed a pot of strawberry-flavoured yoghurt in front of her.

Marietta didn't dislike strawberry-flavoured yoghurt as much as she disliked the other flavours. She put her spoon in the pot of yoghurt and then seeing Toronto Ted slip from her chair onto the floor, bent down to pick him up. As she did so, her spoon slipped out of the pot of yoghurt and Ping! a great big blob of yoghurt flew through the air and landed on Garry's face. Little Garry at first looked utterly amazed and then burst into tears, because he wasn't feeling very well.

Now the trouble started.

Marietta's mummy said: 'That's enough. You can go straight up to bed.'

Marietta wailed. 'But it was an accident.'

'Accident or not, I'm not letting you waste all those pots of yoghurt. They cost a lot of money. You're much too fussy about your food. When I was a girl...'

And she talked for a long time about how when she was a little girl they never wasted anything and never threw anything away. Marietta was hoping that while her mummy spoke about the far distant past she would forget all about sending Marietta up to her bedroom. Perhaps she would have done, but then the telephone rang.

'I'll go,' said Marietta, eager to leave the table. And then catastrophe! As she dashed away, she knocked the pot of strawberry yoghurt over. It went all over Toronto Ted. It smothered his face and eyes. It spread all over his chest. It even covered his paws with gooey pink yoghurt.

'That's enough!' Marietta's mummy cried, angrily. 'Go straight up to your bedroom.'

Marietta burst into tears and ran out of the room, dragging Toronto Ted behind her. This, of course, made even more mess. There was yoghurt all over the carpet, all over the wall- even on the door.

'Leave Toronto Ted,' her mummy shouted.

Marietta stopped in the doorway.

Then her mummy relented a little and said: 'I'll bring Ted up to you as soon as I've wiped him with a cloth. She knew Marietta hated to be without Toronto Ted..

So that's how Marietta came to be in her bedroom with Toronto Ted on a rather nice sunny April afternoon. She had stopped crying, but she felt very unhappy. Of course, she *had* wasted three pots of yoghurt.

But why did people make things that didn't taste nice. In a sensible world everything which is good for you would have a nice flavour.

She stared out of the window. In the distance she could see the slim CND tower. Her daddy had told her it was the highest tower in the world. She looked down into the garden. The wind was blowing the heads of the daffodils together- they looked as if they were gossiping away to each other. Marietta wondered if they were saying how naughty she had been. The tails of the squirrels curled and uncurled as they scrambled up the trunks of the trees. Horses trotted around the meadow, tossing their manes and looking very playful. She wished she could go out and swing on her swing. But she would have to wait until her mummy forgave her. The funny thing was that she couldn't remember exactly what she had done wrong. All she could remember was that it was something to do with yoghurt...

She lay on her bed next to Toronto Ted. He was still a little damp from being wiped with a wet cloth. But at least he wasn't yoghurt any more.

'Naughty-naughty,
Yoghurty-yoghurty,
Pocharty-pocharty,
Yoghurty-yoghurty,'

Marietta repeated to herself. The funny poem made her laugh.

She gave a big yawn and shortly afterwards fell asleep. Crying had made her tired.

There had been a movie on the television about a huge monkey called King Kong. He was hundreds of feet high and had escaped from a cage after falling in love with a very pretty girl called Fay Wray. The huge monkey carried Fay up to the top of the tallest building in New York. Because he loved her so much, he didn't want anyone to take her away from him. And every time the soldiers tried to rescue her he banged on his chest so hard that it sounded like a drum and chased them away.

When Marietta woke up and saw Teddy lying beside her, she said: 'Hello, King Kong Ted.'

She imagined that King Kong Ted carried her up to the top of the CND tower and roared defiance at anyone who tried to take her away from him. If anyone told her she had been naughty, he would bang his chest and shout: 'GO AWAY! MARIETTA IS A GOOD GIRL. I'M KING KONG TED AND MARIETTA IS MINE.'

Then the soldiers came and fired their guns. But they couldn't hurt King Kong Ted, because he was too tough and strong.

They went away in a bad mood.

Then the navy came and fired their guns at King Kong Ted. But he caught the shells and threw them back at them. They went away in a bad mood.

Then the air force planes came over and fired their machine guns, but King Kong Ted caught the bullets in his teeth and grabbed hold of the airplanes and threw them to the ground

Then he banged his chest again and shouted: 'Nobody is going to hurt Marietta.'

Marietta was so absorbed in her imaginary game with Toronto Ted that she banged him against the headboard again and again and again. And that was what was making the noise: 'Bang, Bang, wallop. Bang, bang, wallop.'

Wondering what it was all about, Marietta's mummy peeped into Marietta's bedroom.

The noise had stopped. Marietta had placed Toronto Ted right up on top of the closet, just as though he was on top of a very tall tower. In her imagination he was banging his chest and saying: 'Marietta is really a very lovable little girl and didn't mean to be naughty'

Which, of course, was exactly what her mummy wanted to hear.

So Marietta was allowed to play on her swing in the garden.

And she swung to and fro with Toronto Ted sitting beside her.

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