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Opening extract from
**The Fantastic World of
Terry Jones: Fairy
Tales**

Written by
Terry Jones

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 THE AMAZING 
TERRY JONES
PRESENTS

HIS UTTERLY ENCHANTING AND THRILLING

**FAIRY
TALES**

THE AMAZING
TERRY JONES

PRESENTS

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**FAIRY
TALES**

ILLUSTRATED BY

MICHAEL FOREMAN



**PAVILION
CHILDREN'S**



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THE CORN DOLLY



A FARMER WAS CUTTING HIS CORN, when he thought he could hear someone crying far away. Well, he kept on cutting the corn, and the crying got louder and louder until he had only one more shock of corn to cut, and it seemed as if the crying were coming right from it. So he peered into the last bit of corn and sure enough, there was a little creature made of corn stalks, sitting sobbing its heart out.

‘What’s the matter with you?’ asked the farmer.

The little creature looked up and said: ‘You don’t care,’ and went on crying.

The farmer was a kindly man, so he said: ‘Tell me what your trouble is, and perhaps there is something I can do.’

‘You farmers don’t care what happens to us corn dollies,’ said the creature.

Now the farmer had never seen a corn dolly before, so he said: ‘What makes you think that?’

The corn dolly looked up and said: ‘We live in the standing corn, we keep it safe and do no harm to anyone, and yet every year you farmers come with your sharp scythes and cut down the corn and leave us poor corn dollies homeless.’

The farmer replied: ‘We have to cut the corn to make the flour to make the bread we eat. And even if we didn’t cut it, the corn would wither away in the autumn and you corn dollies would still be homeless.’

But the corn dolly burst into tears again and said: ‘Just because we’re small and made of straw, you think you can treat us anyhow, and leave us with nowhere to live in the cold winter.’



The farmer said: 'I'll find somewhere for you to live.' And he picked up the corn dolly and took it to the barn and said: 'Look! You can live here and be snug and warm all through the winter.'

But the corn dolly said: 'You live in a fine house made of stone, but just because us corn dollies are small and made of straw, you don't think we're good enough to live in a proper house.'

The farmer said: 'Not at all,' and he picked up the corn dolly and carried it into his house and sat it on the window-sill in the kitchen.

'There,' he said, 'you can live there.'

But the corn dolly scowled and said: 'Just because we're small and made of straw, you think we're not good enough to sit with you and your wife.'

The farmer said: 'Not at all,' and he picked up the corn dolly and carried it to the fireside, and he pulled up a chair and sat the corn dolly down between himself and his wife. But still the corn dolly was not happy.

'What's the matter now?' asked the farmer.

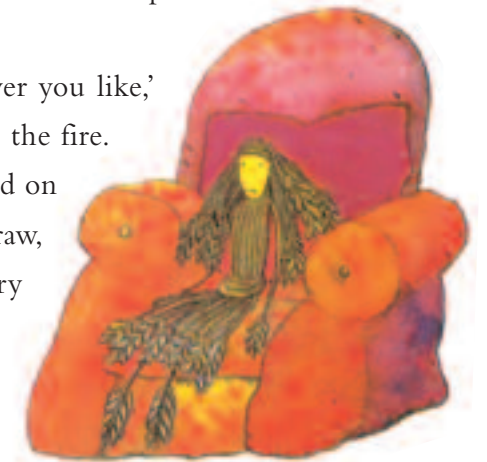
'Just because we're small and made of straw,' said the corn dolly, 'you've sat me on a hard chair, while you and your wife sit in soft chairs.'

'Not at all,' said the farmer, and he gave the corn dolly a soft chair. But still the corn dolly was not happy.

'Is there still something the matter?' asked the farmer.

'Yes,' said the corn dolly. 'Just because I'm small and only made of straw, you've sat me over here, while you and your wife sit next to the fire and keep nice and warm.'

The farmer said: 'Not at all. You can sit wherever you like,' and he picked the corn dolly up and put it next to the fire. And just then a spark flew out of the fire and landed on the corn dolly. And, because it was only made of straw, it burst into flames, and, because it was only very small, it was all gone before the farmer or his wife could do anything to save it.



THE SILLY KING



KING HERBERT XII HAD RULED WISELY and well for many years. But eventually he grew very old and, although his subjects continued to love him dearly, they all had to admit that as he had grown older he had started to do *very* silly things. One day, for example, King Herbert went out of his palace and walked down the street with a dog tied to each leg. Another time he took off all his clothes and sat in the fountain in the principal square, singing selections of popular songs and shouting ‘Radishes!’ at the top of his voice.

Nobody, however, liked to mention how silly their king had become. Even when he hung from the spire of the great cathedral, dressed as a parsnip and throwing Turkish dictionaries at the crowd below, no one had the heart to complain. In private they would shake their heads and say: ‘Poor old Herbert – whatever will he do next?’ But in public everyone pretended that the King was as grave and as wise as he had always been.

Now it so happened that King Herbert had a daughter whom, in a moment of slightly more silliness than usual, he had named Princess Fishy – although everyone called her

Bonito. Rather conveniently, the Princess had fallen in love with the son of their incredibly rich and powerful neighbour, King Rupert, and one day it was announced that King Rupert intended to pay a state visit to King Herbert to arrange the marriage.

‘Oh dear!’ said the Prime Minister. ‘Whatever shall we do? Last time King Herbert had a visitor, he poured custard over his head and locked himself in the broom cupboard.’

‘If only there was someone who could make him act sensibly,’ said the Lord Chancellor, ‘just while King Rupert’s here at any rate.’

So they put up a notice offering a thousand gold pieces to anyone who could help. And from the length and breadth of the land came doctors offering their services, but it was all no use. One eminent doctor had a lotion which he said King Herbert must rub on his head before going to bed, but King Herbert drank it all on the first night, and was very ill. So a second eminent doctor produced a powder to cure the illness caused by the first doctor, but King Herbert put a match to it, whereupon it exploded and blew his eyebrows off. So a third doctor produced a cream to replace missing eyebrows, but King Herbert put it on his teeth and they all turned bright green overnight.

Not one of the doctors could make King Herbert less silly, and he just got ill from their lotions and potions and creams and powders.

Eventually the day of the state visit arrived, and King Herbert was still swinging from the chandeliers in the throne room and hitting people with a haddock.

Everyone was very agitated. The Prime Minister had chewed his nails right down to nothing, and the Lord Chancellor had gnawed through his chain of office, but no one had any idea of what to do. Just then the Princess Fishy stood up and said: ‘Since no one else can help, let me try.’

‘Don’t talk nonsense, Bonito!’ said the Prime Minister. ‘Fifty of the most eminent doctors in the land have failed to cure the King, what could *you* possibly do?’

‘I may not be able to cure the King,’ said the Princess, ‘but if I could show you how to turn an egg into solid gold, then would you do as I said?’

And the Lord Chancellor said: ‘Princess, if you could indeed show us how to turn an egg into solid gold, then we should certainly do as *you* told us.’

‘For shame!’ said the Princess. ‘Then you should do as I say now. I can no more turn an egg into solid gold than you can, but even if I could it wouldn’t prove that I could help

my father.’

Well, the Lord Chancellor and the Prime Minister looked at each other and, because they had no ideas themselves, and because they had no other offers of help, they agreed to do what the Princess told them.

Shortly afterwards, King Rupert arrived. There were fanfares of trumpets; drums rolled; the people cheered, and they looked for King Rupert’s son, but they couldn’t see him. King Rupert was dressed in gold and rode a white horse, and on his head he bore the richest crown anyone had ever seen. The Lord Chancellor and the Prime Minister met him at the gates of the town and rode with him down the main street.

Suddenly, just as they were about to enter the palace, an old woman rushed out of the crowd and threw herself in front of King Rupert’s horse.

‘Oh, King Rupert!’ she cried. ‘Dreadful news! An army of fifty thousand soldiers is marching through your country!’

King Rupert said: ‘Surely that cannot be!’ But just then a messenger in King Rupert’s own livery rode up on a horse and cried: ‘It’s true, your Majesty! It’s more like a million of them – I’ve never seen so many!’

King Rupert went deadly pale and fell off his horse in a faint.

They carried him into the throne room, where King Herbert was standing on his head, balancing a box of kippers with his feet. Eventually, King Rupert regained consciousness, and found his son and the Princess looking down at him.

‘I am afraid we are homeless now, my dear,’ said King Rupert to the Princess. ‘An army of fifty million soldiers has overrun our country. Do you think your father will let us stay here to live?’

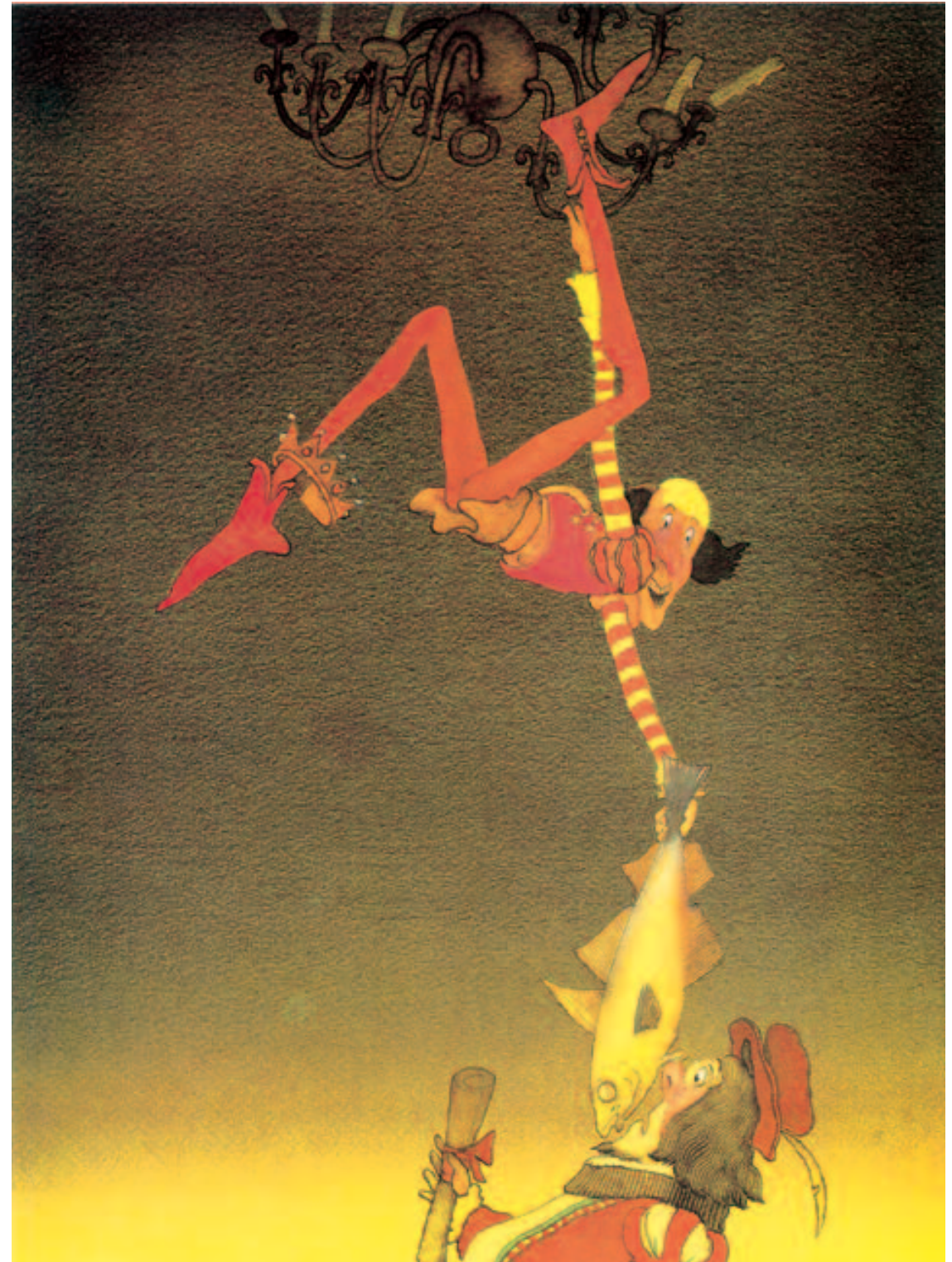
‘Of course he will,’ said the Princess. ‘Only you mustn’t mind if he’s a bit silly now and again.’

‘Of course not,’ said King Rupert, ‘we’re all a bit silly now and again.’

‘That’s true,’ said the Prince. ‘For example, the old lady who stopped you outside the palace was none other than the Princess here, but you didn’t recognize her.’

‘Indeed I did not,’ said King Rupert.

‘And the messenger was none other than your own son,’ said the Princess, ‘and yet you didn’t even recognize him.’



FAIRY TALES

‘Indeed I did not,’ said King Rupert.

‘Moreover,’ said the Princess, ‘you didn’t even stop to consider how you could defeat that army of a million soldiers.’

‘I have no need to consider it,’ said King Rupert. ‘How could I possibly deal with an army of such a size?’

‘Well, for a start you could pour a kettle of boiling water over them,’ said the Princess, ‘for they’re only an army of soldier ants.’

Whereupon King Rupert laughed out loud at his own silliness, and agreed that the Princess should marry the Prince without delay, and he didn’t even mind when King Herbert poured lemonade down his trousers and put ice-cream all over his crown.

