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Titch and Mitch 1: Shipwrecked

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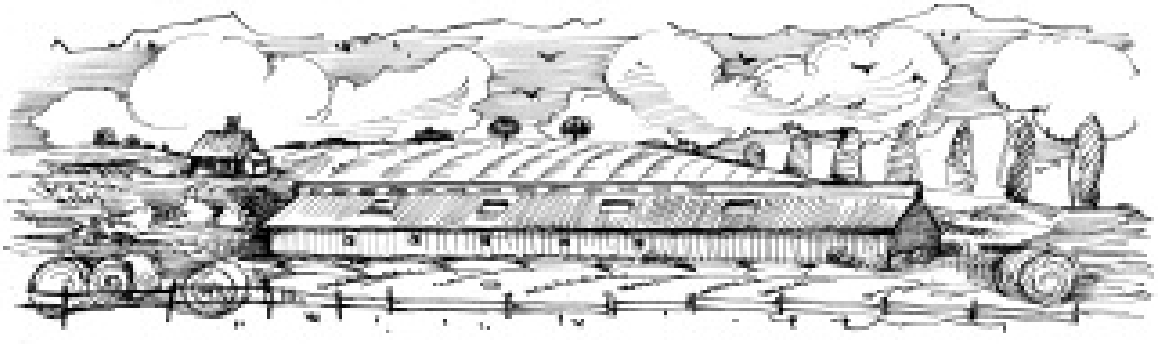
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Wiffen, The Intelligent Turkey



IT WAS A VERY FINE AND SUNNY MORNING when Budgie, the yellow seagull, came to visit Titch and Mitch. She sat on their sofa and told them stories about her visits over to the mainland and soon they wanted to go and explore the land she talked about.

They had been keen to use the magic bicycle that Misty the fairy had given them to fly the short distance to the mainland. Budgie told them to avoid all the places where human people lived because it could be awkward to land right amongst them. "Oh and by the way," she said, "don't land on a road. They are the worst places in the world and very

dangerous."

Titch said, "Shall we go and visit Misty? She gave us directions to find the secret valley where the fairies live and said we could go and visit her any time."

"Oh Titch," said Mitch with great excitement, "I'd love to visit the Valley of the Fairies. Let's go today."

"OK, you make a picnic and I'll get the bicycle out."

By mid-day the two pixies were sitting on their magic bicycle ready to set off. Titch was sitting at the front planning the route, and Mitch sat behind, wearing his pointed green hat adorned with the long hawk's feather. After final checks that everything was secure, they called out together, "Up, up and away."



The bicycle soared into the air and with Mitch clutching Titch around the waist they set off across the sea. The journey

thrilled them. They had never flown so high in the sky before and when they arrived over land they looked down to see fields, woods and the houses where the human people lived. They were joined on the journey by lots of very curious birds flying all around them. Some came far too close and made the pixies nervous.

"Shoo," called out Titch as a very large seagull



brushed against the handlebars with the tip of its wings and made the bicycle wobble.

Realising that the two strange pilots had no food to give them, the birds got bored giving chase and soon left them alone to marvel at the new and unexpected sights on the ground.

"I'm hungry," said Mitch after a while, "Can we stop soon and have some lunch?"

"Sure, let's find a nice quiet spot," replied Titch.

Mitch looked down and spotted a large building with a long, flat roof. "Oh, let's stop on that roof. It should be safe there."

Titch zoomed down and landed on the roof alongside a square window, which was slightly open.

The first thing the two pixies did was to go and peep through the window. They were astonished to see lots and lots of turkeys of various sizes milling around inside.

Titch looked at Mitch with a puzzled expression on his face. "Why are so many turkeys all squashed up together in one enormous shed?"

"I don't know," shrugged Mitch. "It's the middle of the afternoon. Why don't they pop out for a play or a fly around?"

They peered through the window again. "They've

got wings but none of them are flying," said Titch. "Maybe they can't get out."

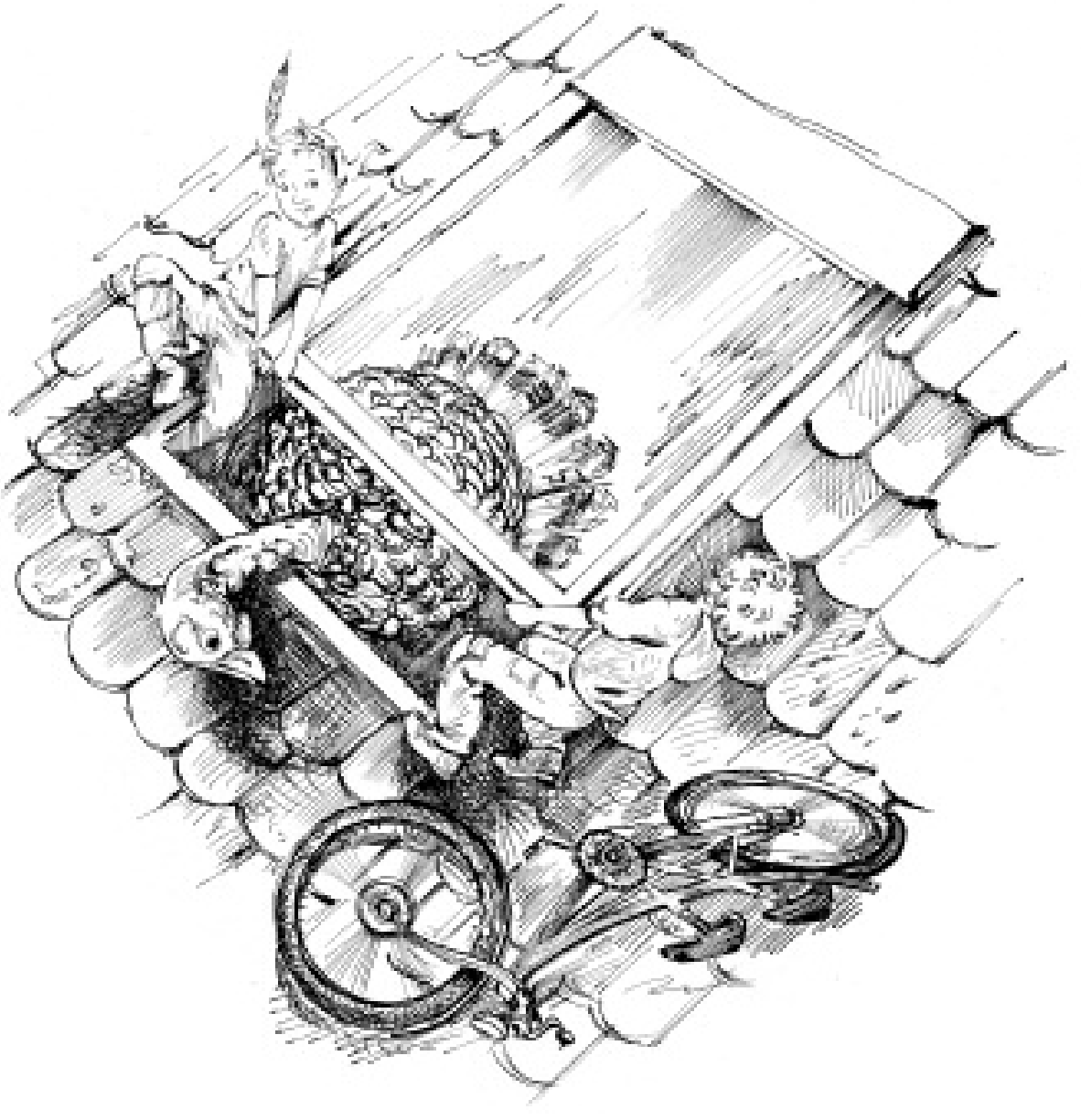
Sitting down at the edge of the roof, they started to eat their sandwiches and think about all those trapped turkeys, when suddenly there was a loud clatter on the window from the inside of the shed. Both of the pixies jumped up in the air at the noise. "What's that?" cried Mitch.

They ran to the open part of the window and found a turkey struggling to get out through the tiny gap. It was far too big to squeeze through the narrow opening and eventually it stopped flapping. As it fell away from the window, they heard it call out, "Open the window. I'll be back."

It was quite a struggle but eventually they stood either side of the narrow opening and with their arms outstretched, they heaved the window open a few more inches.

"What now?" said Titch, "I can't keep this up for long."

He didn't have to wait long, almost immediately the same turkey appeared and flew straight at the new, bigger opening and for a moment it got stuck again. There was a lot of flapping and a lot of squawking then finally, with a big effort, the turkey



popped out through the gap and landed at their feet.

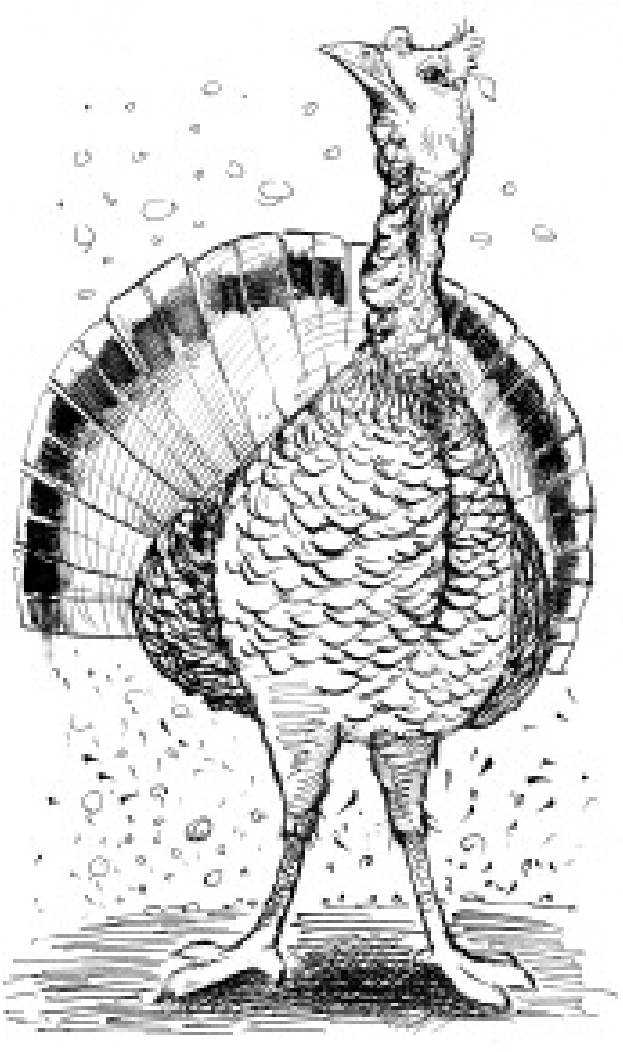
"Hurrah!" shouted the turkey. "I'm out, I'm out, I'm out." It danced around them a few times and finally stopped to get its breath back and looked at

them closely.

"Hey, you look just like human people, but so much smaller. Who are you?"

"We are pixies," said Mitch. "We haven't seen many human people. Do you know any?"

"Indeed I do. There are some over there in a big house. They own this turkey farm." He waved the tip of his wing vaguely in the direction of a house they'd noticed on their way in to land. "There's one I call Blob. He keeps the turkeys locked up all the time."



"Oh my goodness," said Mitch horrified. "Shall we open the window again and let them all out."

"A waste of time. They wouldn't bother. That lot wouldn't move anywhere away from all that food. All they do all day is eat, drink, eat, drink, and

then they do it all over again."

"Why did you get out then? Aren't you the same as they are?"

The turkey puffed out his chest, raised his head up high and said, in a very important sounding voice, "I should think not! My name is Wiffen and I am the most intelligent turkey in the whole, wide world."

"How do you know that?" Titch was curious.

"Because I have spent my entire life in this huge shed with hundreds of other turkeys. Hardly any of them can speak at all, and those that do only say, 'Gobble, gobble, gobble.' I've tried to communicate with them, but it's a waste of time. They just peck at the ground and eat and then peck at the ground again. If there's anything on the ground, they peck it. It really is



soul destroying, but thanks to you two beautiful little pixies, I'm out and I'm not going back."

"Don't you have any friends down there?" Titch pointed to the window behind them.

"I certainly do not. Mind you, there is a guard dog called Perry. He's a good friend. Every night he sneaks into the shed to keep warm and sleeps by the inside door which is always kept locked by Blob. I sleep with all those turkeys on the other side of that door and sometimes we chat away right through the night."

Wiffen stretched his wings and made all his feathers stick straight out. He was bigger than the two pixies with a bright red wattle and beady eyes that blinked furiously when he was excited. On the top of his head there was a ring of small, white feathers that looked as if he wore a crown. He strutted along the edge of the roof and looked all around him.

"I wonder where I shall go to live. I suppose I could go anywhere in the world."

"How far can you fly?" asked Mitch, doubtfully.

"I don't know. I haven't been anywhere."

Peering over the edge of the roof, Wiffen said, "Oh look, I can see Perry. He's right down there."



Waving a wing, he called out, "Hi Perry, look at me, I'm up here!"

Titch and Mitch looked over the edge of the roof and there below was a large Old English sheepdog sitting on the ground beneath them.

Just at that moment, a man came round the corner of the shed. He was a short fat man with a red face and a bushy, black moustache. In his thick, hairy arms he carried a bale of hay.

Wiffen squawked and with his eyes blinking furiously said, "That's him. That's Blob. Don't let him see me." He jumped up in the air and lost his balance. For a while, he danced along the side of the roof flapping his wings then, with an even louder squawk, he fell right over the edge.

Titch and Mitch rushed to grab him but it was too late. Wiffen flapped and squawked all the way to the ground.

"Fly!" The two pixies shouted encouragement to the frightened bird as they watched him plummet.

It was lucky for Wiffen, but not so lucky for Perry, that the turkey landed on the unsuspecting guard dog.

Perry yelped with surprise and ran away as fast as he could, sending Wiffen tumbling in the dust.



The man called Blob dropped his bale of hay and rushed towards Wiffen with his hands outstretched and shouting furiously. As soon as Wiffen got to his feet and saw Blob almost on top of him, he shrieked with fright and ran away. Helped by flapping wings he managed to stay in front of the red-faced man, but although he tried very hard, he couldn't fly up into

the air to escape.

The terrified turkey ran round the corner of the shed and disappeared from view. Titch and Mitch raced across the roof to the other side and saw him running between the shed wall and a rusty wire fence. Shouting down to Wiffen, they tried hard to give him encouragement. "Run! Fly! Go faster!"

Blob soon ran out of breath, turned round and called out to Perry. "Come here you horrible dog. You're supposed to be a guard dog. Get after that turkey and bring it back here."

The long-haired sheep dog took up the chase, and



the two pixies watched as Wiffen raced out into a lane with his wings flapping and his feet stamping the ground madly. Sometimes he was flying with his feet just off the ground and sometimes he was running with tired wings drooping along in the dust. Finally, Wiffen crashed straight through a rickety fence, sending a shower of splinters flying through the air. Still giving chase, Perry dashed through the hole after him.

"Come on Mitch," said Titch excitedly. "Let's go and help Wiffen. That dog will soon catch him up!"

Jumping on their bicycle, they called out the magic words, "Up, up and away!"

Immediately they were up in the air and, with Titch steering, they chased after the two creatures now racing off into the distance.

Making the bicycle skim low over the ground they followed the trail left by the turkey and the dog. Eventually they hopped over a hedge and there beneath them was Wiffen, sitting on the ground with his wings stretched out, his legs apart and leaning against the trunk of a tree. Alongside him, and gasping for breath, was Perry, who lay on his side in a state of complete exhaustion.

After hovering a few moments they gently landed





close by, but Perry made them nervous so they kept their distance. After all, compared to the pixies, the dog was huge and looked rather fierce. They stayed on their bicycle and called to Wiffen, "Are you all right?"

Wiffen gulped a few times, blinked and said, "I'm worn out. Some flying practice is needed. But I'm out of that place at least, and I'm not going back."

The two pixies stared at Perry anxiously. The big dog cocked his head on one side, looked at Wiffen with big, brown eyes and said in a deep voice, "And neither am I."

"That's right Perry, you stick with me. With my brains and your muscle, or rather your big teeth, we can take on anybody." Wiffen got to his feet and