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Opening extract from

Ogres Don't Dance

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Published by

Andersen Press Ltd

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First published in 2014 by
Andersen Press Limited
20 Vauxhall Bridge Road
London SW1V 2SA
www.andersenpress.co.uk

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data available.

ISBN 978 1 84939 715 5

Printed and bound in Great Britain
by CPI Group UK (Ltd), Croydon CR0 4YY



Ogden the Ogre was trundling back home after a particularly successful supper. He had eaten two fat schoolteachers, a juicy greengrocer and a delightfully crunchy nun.

As the sun set behind the snow-capped mountains, the big, green ogre left the lonely village far behind, heading for home and sleepy wink-winks. He loved his new, cosy cave in the woods. This was just as well, because he had been chased out of his last home by a horde of stick-flinging humans. Stick-flinging humans can be









very tricky, so Ogden had chosen a cave deep in the forest, hidden away.

Very well hidden . . . Ogden crinkled his green brow, and sniffed the air. Something was wrong. Very wrong.

Ogden the Ogre was lost.

He peered through the dark trees. Wherever had his cave gone?



'Uh-oh!' he sighed. 'Ogden so full and sleepy!'

There was nothing else for it. He rubbed his hairy belly and lay down on a bracken patch to snooze. All was quiet; the birds snuggled into their nests and the moles snored deep in their holes.

But not for long.

'Cha-cha-cha! Cha-cha-cha!'

Ogden sat up with a jolt. What was that?

'Rumpty, pumpty, bump-bump-bump!'

Ogden got up and squinted into the distance.

'Trumpa-pumpa, la, la, la!'

'Happy sounds!' Ogden smiled a crinkly smile and clapped his huge green hands. He forgot how tired he was. The funny noises made him want to jiggle and wiggle



and shake his big behind.

He spotted a brightly lit building nestled amongst the knobbly oak trees, and slowly tippy-tiptoed up to a window. There, inside a large room, were lots and lots of . . . humans.

Some of the humans were strumming strings and blowing things.

'Make happy sounds!' Ogden gasped, pointing.

And dozens of humans were whirling across the floor in time to the happy sounds, wearing dazzling clothes of every colour.

'Ooh, sparkles!' Ogden cooed.

There were humans jumping up and down. There were humans holding one another while they pranced around the room. There were humans tap-tapping

their feet. Ogden had never seen humans do these kinds of things before. What was going on?



Ogden tickled his bald head, and thought some thoughts.

The humans smelled extremely tasty to Ogden, but he was already so very full. And if he ate these humans, there would be no more happy sounds and sparkles.

Ogden felt confused.

Just as the happy sounds finished, he let out a loud **burp**. All the humans looked at the window, and Ogden quickly ducked out of sight.

'Uh-oh!' he said. 'Ogden run away quickly-quick!' He scarpered into the forest. After many twists and turns, he finally found his cave. He went to sleep and dreamed smiley dreams about the happy

sounds, the sparkles and the jumping up and down.

★

The next evening, Ogden hummed as he strolled back to his cave from the village. His tum was extremely full. He'd nibbled a niggly nanny and gobbled a grumpy grandpa. Now it was time for sleeps and dreams. But as he passed the bracken patch, he heard a noise floating through the forest. It was a noise he recognised:

'Rumpa-thumpa, oom-pah-pah!'

Ogden smiled a crinkly smile.

'Happy sounds!'

He followed the noise, and found himself back at the brightly lit building, where he peeped through the window, quietly. There were the humans again! Jumping up

and down! Chasing each other around the room, in sparkly clothes!

Ogden spied a little man standing on a stage at one end of the room. As the happy sounds came to an end, the man shouted at the other humans.

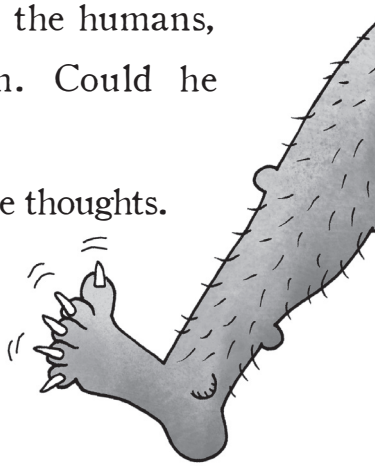
'Take your partners for the final dance!'

'Dance,' Ogden whispered. He frowned as he thought some thoughts.

'Ogden want to dance.'

The happy sounds started again. As Ogden looked through the window, he began to tap his feet, his long toenails click-clicking on the path. He wanted to go in there – not to eat the humans, but to dance with them. Could he dance too?

Ogden thought some more thoughts.





'Ogres don't dance.' Ogden sighed, and shuffled back to his cave, scuffing his big, gnarly feet on the ground.

★

The next night, Ogden's tum was gurgly. He'd munched a mouldy farmer with a prickly-tickly beard. Ogden burped, loudly. No more supper for him today.

On his way home, he began to think a thought. And the thought wouldn't go away. He wandered through the forest until he reached the brightly lit building where the happy sounds had been coming from the evening before. 'Dance!' He wrinkled his big chops into a grin.

The sounds became louder and louder as he got closer. Almost as if a spell had been cast on him, his huge feet began to tap, his hairy shoulders began to shake, and his big

behind jiggled in time to the music. Ogden knew what he had to do. This time, there was no going back.

He spied a door, crept up to it and flung it open. 'Who will dance with Ogden?' he bellowed.

All the humans stopped dancing and the happy sounds stopped too. Ogden turned to a lady with a peacock feather in her hair. He grinned an ogre grin, baring his huge teeth. And asked in his politest voice: 'Will you dance with me?'

'Aaaargh!' screamed the lady and fell over in a dizzy swoon.

Everyone shouted, 'Run for your lives!' and scurried around in circles, their arms in the air.

'Is this another dance?' said Ogden, waving his arms too.