

Tattie and the Treasure

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Chapter 1

Tattie Bogle sighed wistfully, again. It was another cold, rainy day at Crabbit Castle, and Tattie was bored. Not many people visited the ruined castle any more and these days it was almost impossible to scare the few humans who did wander by.

Tattie Bogle's grandfather had told him stories of the old days, when visitors to the castle would run screaming back down the hill at the sight of him, their eyes bulging in terror. Tattie loved to hear how they would whimper with fright at the feel of Grand-dad's hairy hands upon their legs, and how grown men would shriek like little girls when he

bared his long yellow teeth and rolled his eyes at them.

Nothing like that had ever happened to Tattie. He sometimes managed to scare smaller children, but even that was becoming much harder to do. You had to believe in magic to be able to see magical creatures, and it seemed to Tattie that very few humans believed any more.

Tattie was about to heave another discontented sigh, when he heard the sound of voices. Humans! He crept out from behind his favourite rock, and watched as a family made their way up the hill towards the castle, chatting happily as they walked. The mum and dad wouldn't see him. But the girl... she had a faraway, dreamy look which made Tattie think she might be able to see magic.

Tattie lurked behind a wall until the family entered the ruin, then crept quietly along behind them as they walked through the few corridors and rooms still standing. The castle had fallen into ruin many years before Tattie was born. It had once been a fine building, and Tattie knew that his ancestors had haunted it proudly.

‘Come here sweetheart, look at this,’ the man called.

The girl ran over to look at the castle well, which her dad was now leaning over. Tattie would have loved to push him in, but there was an iron grille placed inside the top of the well. He had nearly managed to push a human into the well a while ago. The man had overbalanced at Tattie’s hard shove, but had saved himself just in time, then had

marched back down the hill, muttering angrily that he was going to sue. Tattie didn't know who Sue was, but the castle owners must have known her, because the grille was put in place the very next day.

The girl had now climbed up the stone spiral staircase while her parents stood by the well. She stopped on the first floor to gaze through a ruined window which looked onto the overgrown courtyard.

Here we go, thought Tattie, and he touched his knobbly finger to his even knoblier nose, disappeared, and then reappeared in the courtyard, right in the middle of a large patch of bluebells. He stared up at the girl. She could see him! She gaped at him, eyes wide and face shocked. Tattie waited in triumph for her to scream for Mummy, burst into tears,

run wailing back down the staircase, but she just stared at him, rubbed her eyes and stared again. She could definitely see him, so why wasn't she screaming? Just as Tattie pulled his most frightening face, she disappeared from view.

Aha, now she's gone running to get Mummy, thought Tattie. He scurried forward to hear the tears and the terror, but just as he reached the arched doorway, the girl came hurtling out of it. She ran right into Tattie, sending him flying backwards onto a large jaggy nettle.

'Ow!' he yelled.

'Oh my goodness, I am sorry!' gasped the girl. She looked shocked, but not nearly as shocked as Tattie – no human had ever spoken to him before!

‘Get away from me!’ he cried, pedalling his feet backwards and pushing himself further into the jaggy nettle.

‘It’s OK,’ said the girl. ‘I won’t hurt you.’

Now it was Tattie’s turn to stare with wide, shocked eyes. She actually thought *he* was scared of *her*! He carefully pulled himself off the nettle, blinking back the tears threatening to well in his orange eyes, and hobbled over to the other side of the plant, keeping its prickly leaves between himself and the girl.

She was looking at him now with a horrible expression. Her lips were pulled up at the sides, and her cheeks had gone all puffy. Tattie had seen human smiles before, and this was one of the biggest and most hideous he’d ever seen.

‘What’s your name?’ she asked, in that same sickeningly kind voice.

‘My name’s Tattie Bogle, and don’t talk to me!’ Tattie snapped.

‘My name’s Annie,’ the girl replied, ignoring the ghastly grimace on Tattie’s face. She looked thoughtful for a moment, and then she said, ‘I don’t mean to be rude, but... what are you?’

Tattie glared at the girl. He was amazed and annoyed that she wasn’t scared of him, but he was also a little bit curious. He didn’t know very much about these human creatures.

‘I, little girl, am a Bogle,’ he said, in very regal tones. Annie looked at him blankly.

‘I am a spirit of wildness and chaos,’ Tattie continued. ‘A terrifying creature of magic!’ Tattie expected some response

from this, and sure enough Annie's eyes widened again, but not in fear.

'Oh well, of course I realised you were magic,' she said politely, aware that Tattie was feeling slightly miffed. 'It's just I've never seen a... Bogle before. Do you live here?'

'This is my castle, yes,' sniffed Tattie. 'My family have lived here for many generations.'

'Oh, how lovely!' said Annie, moving around the nettle to kneel beside Tattie, who edged further away. 'That means we'll be friends!'

'Why would *we* be friends?' asked Tattie in disbelief.

'Because my dad is going to be working here!' said Annie. 'The castle is going to be repaired so that lots more people can come and visit it. My dad's in

charge. There's going to be a story in the newspaper tomorrow all about it!

Tattie's eyes were growing larger by the second as Annie spoke. She began to feel slightly alarmed – she wasn't sure if a Bogle's eyes always stayed put, and Tattie's now seemed to be almost dangling from their sockets.

Eventually he spluttered 'I... what... I will not have lots of people coming to Crabbit Castle. It is my job to defend this castle from prying humans. For generations my family have protected the treasure–'

He broke off with a panicked look at Annie. 'I mean... not that there is any–' But it was too late.

'Treasure? You've got treasure here?' Annie breathed, her eyes widening.

‘No,’ said Tattie. ‘Anyway, it belongs to the castle, not to any horrible humans. It’s also far too well hidden for *you* to ever find it.’

‘I might find it,’ said Annie. ‘I’ll be up here a lot with my dad, so I’ll have plenty of time to look.’

‘You’ll never find it because... well... because... even I don’t know where it is,’ finished Tattie, suddenly looking despondent. ‘The story has been passed down through my family, but... well... the important bits seem to have been forgotten. I don’t even know what the treasure is. I only know it’s my job to guard it, and the castle.’

At that moment a voice called ‘Annie! Come on, time to go.’

‘That’s my mum. I’d better go,’ Annie said, getting to her feet. ‘It was very nice

to meet you, Tattie. I'll see you again soon, and I'll help you look for the treasure.' Before Tattie could object, she added 'I hope you didn't hurt yourself too badly on that nettle.' She smothered a grin at the offended look on Tattie's face, then turned and ran back to her mum.

'Hurt myself... cheek of it... I'm a monstrous creature, imagine thinking a nettle could hurt me,' he muttered to himself as he hobbled along, rubbing his bottom as he went.

Chapter 2

The following day, when Tattie was collecting dandelions and dock

leaves for lunch, he heard voices coming up the hill. Hopping onto his rock, he saw Annie and her dad. He groaned aloud as he noticed a flicker of light hovering near Annie, following her as she walked. The humans hadn't noticed it, but Tattie knew exactly who it was.

As they neared the castle, Annie waved to Tattie from behind her dad's back, and ran over to join him.

'Hello, Tattie!' she said brightly. 'How are you today?'

'Didn't I tell you not to talk to me?' snapped Tattie. 'Do not address me as Tattie, do not ask me how I am, in fact do not talk to me AT ALL.'

'Don't you get fed up with no-one to talk to?' asked Annie, sitting down on Tattie's favourite moss-covered rock. 'It must be awful all on your own. Or are

there other bogles here with you?’ She looked around as though expecting a host of bogles to suddenly appear from behind the rocks.

‘No, there are no other bogles. I’m the only one here,’ said Tattie. Annie thought he didn’t sound very happy about it.

‘Well... don’t you get lonely?’ said Annie.

‘Yes, he does get lonely, he’s just too grumpy to admit it,’ said a small musical voice. Annie spun around, but she couldn’t see anyone.

‘Who said that?’ she asked the air.

‘She did,’ grumbled Tattie, pointing at the shimmering patch of air which had followed Annie up the hill. As Annie watched, the air before her seemed to wobble like a jelly, and she found herself staring at a small fairy standing on a

stone beside her. ‘That’s Hedge,’ Tattie said, with a disapproving stare at the fairy.

Annie was momentarily lost for words. The fairy did not in any way fit Annie’s mental picture of how a fairy should look. She wasn’t wearing a long sparkling dress, but instead wore a rather muddy pair of green dungarees with holes at the knees, and what looked like a leaf wrapped around her head as a hat. She did have beautiful iridescent wings on her back, though they too seemed to be covered in thick patches of mud.

‘Wow!’ Annie said eventually. ‘You’re a... a real fairy!’

Hedge smiled rather shyly at her. ‘You’re a real human. I’ve wanted to meet a human for such a long time, and I

thought if Tattie was talking to you, you must be a very nice one—’

‘I was not talking to her,’ interrupted Tattie. ‘She was talking to me, and I told her not to!’ Neither Annie nor Hedge paid any attention to him.

‘Why are you called Hedge?’ Annie asked the little fairy. ‘Don’t fairies usually have flowery sorts of names?’

‘They usually do,’ agreed Hedge, looking a little embarrassed, ‘but my mum likes unusual names. She likes human things, and she thinks hedges are one of the best things humans have ever invented.’

‘Humph, that’s not saying much, is it?’ snorted Tattie. ‘Honestly... fairies!’

Before Annie could work out just who Tattie was insulting, Hedge spoke again.

‘Never mind Tattie,’ she said. ‘He doesn’t like fairies because our magic is stronger than his, and there are more of us. That’s why humans see us more often than they see him.’

Tattie scowled at Hedge. ‘You aren’t even meant to be up here, are you? You’re supposed to stay down at your fairy fort, away from my castle.’

Hedge raised her eyebrows at Annie. ‘We used to come and visit Tattie, but he’s so grumpy that everyone stays away now. I’m the only one who comes up any more, and Mum keeps telling me not to bother.’

‘Well, I’m glad you came up,’ said Annie. ‘It’s so nice to meet you.’

Tattie glared at Hedge. Although he didn’t want Annie hanging around the castle, he somehow felt that if she was

going to be here, then he had more right to her attention than Hedge did. Luckily for Tattie, Hedge suddenly turned and looked down the hill as a musical chirrup sounded. Annie would have dismissed it as a bird singing, but Hedge fluttered into the air at the sound.

‘Oh, that’s my mum calling,’ she said. ‘I’d better go – I’m supposed to be collecting seeds just now.’

She turned to hover in front of Annie.

‘Goodbye Annie,’ she said. ‘I hope I’ll see you again soon.’

‘I hope so too,’ replied Annie. She turned back as she realised Tattie was muttering something.

‘Bye Hedge, you’re so lovely Hedge, hope to see your stinky little wings again Hedge...’ he said in a low mocking tone.

‘You really don’t like fairies then, Tattie?’ Annie asked.

‘It’s not that I don’t *like* them,’ said Tattie, throwing one last scowl at Hedge as she waved at Annie before disappearing into the warm summer air. ‘They’re just all a bit too... good for my liking.’

‘Come on then,’ said Annie. ‘Let’s go look for your treasure.’ She got up and set off across the courtyard, leaving Tattie staring after her. After a moment he decided that he might as well follow her, just in case she found the treasure on her own.

They searched for nearly an hour, behind every stone, under every bush, and in every nook and cranny they came across, but with no idea what they were looking for, they had little chance of

success. Tattie trailed a few steps behind Annie and, as they looked, Annie kept up a constant stream of chatter.

She told Tattie that they'd just moved to the town so that her dad could take the castle job, that her dad used to live around here as a child, that her mum was expecting another baby, that they had a big ginger cat at home... Tattie wasn't used to anyone talking to him, especially not for so long, and so he didn't realise he'd stopped listening until Annie turned and faced him.

'Didn't you hear me?' she said. 'I asked you where your family are?'

'Oh,' said Tattie. 'I... I don't really have a family. My parents and grandparents left a long time ago. I think they got fed up with the castle being empty.'

‘Why didn’t you go with them?’ asked Annie.

‘Someone had to stay and look after Crabbit Castle, just in case the treasure turned up,’ Tattie replied. ‘So I was left behind.’ He suddenly looked small and lonely.

Annie wasn’t sure what to say. She couldn’t imagine her parents going anywhere without her.

‘If you ever feel a bit... fed up with being here, you can come and visit me,’ she said. ‘We live right at the bottom of the hill, last house in the street.’

Tattie looked at her smiling face. He had never gone any further than halfway down the hill, and never wanted to go any closer to humans than that, but he thought it might be quite rude to say that,

so he just gave a little nod and said nothing.

Eventually Annie's dad came looking for her. 'Come on, you,' he smiled. 'I've been hearing you chatting away to yourself for ages, sounds as if you like it up here. Time to get home for some dinner though'.

As her dad walked ahead Annie said quietly, 'I'll be back to help you look again tomorrow, Tattie. See you later.'

Tattie watched Annie going down the hill. Once she was out of sight, he wandered back to his mossy bed. He would have expected to feel relief now that the human had gone, but for some reason he felt quite empty instead.