

# Let's Make a Story

## The Enormous Turnip

Adapted by Jeff Capel

Hello, I'm going to tell you a story about a man I know. He's quiet old now - like me - and he lives in my village. In fact he lives in my house; in fact he's my husband. I'm his wife. He's normally a nice old man, and he's quiet, kind, hard-working. But then sometimes he gets an idea in his head and - well - everything changes.

One morning my husband came downstairs and said, 'Mary' - that's my name see, Mary- 'I've got an idea.'

'Oh no, not another idea!' I thought. 'What is it this time, Ken?' I said. That's his name, see, Ken.

'I'm gonna grow a really big turnip'

'Very nice, dear, and why you gotta do that?'

'Because Arthur Potts has grown a turnip the size of a football and going around saying that it's the biggest turnip in the whole world. Well it won't be when I grow mine - mine's gonna be enormous.'

I didn't say anything; there was no point.

I don't know what the matter was with the people in my village. All they wanted to do was grow enormous vegetables. They even had competitions, every few weeks they all would carry their vegetables in to the village hall to see who had grown the biggest.

Imagine you're one of the people in my village. You've grown some enormous vegetables and you're going to carry them into the village hall. Think about the shape of vegetables: carrots are long and thin, while onions are completely round. Remember the vegetables in this village are very big and heavy so think about how our arms and legs move and how our faces change when we struggle to pick up something really enormous. How are you going to carry them? You're very proud of you vegetables. Get ready to pick them up and then with the music carry them in to the village hall...

...struggling through the door and heaving them on to a table...

And stop and sit in a space by yourself ready to listen to the next part of the story.

Now the worst show-off in the whole village was Arthur Potts. Arthur Potts' vegetables were always bigger than anyone else's. If there was a competition for enormous vegetables Arthur Potts would always win it. But my husband, Ken, dreamed that one day he would beat him.

'Ah, yes, Arthur Potts better watch out this time 'cause I'm going to grow a really, really enormous turnip!'





The next day I watched Ken dig a little hole in the ground and carefully plant a turnip seed. On top of the seed he sprinkled some of his special growing powder which he made himself out of potato peelings and old socks.

'Just you wait, Arthur Potts!' he said. 'You think you'd grown a bigger turnip - you just wait till you see this!'

So every day Ken sat in the garden watching the turnip grow.

Weeks went by and then one day Ken said, 'Right, Mary, today's the day. Today's the day I've got to pull up my turnip. Here I go!'

So I watched from the kitchen window and saw Ken go down the garden and look at the turnip's leaves. He stood still for a while and then he took a deep breath and bent down. He grabbed the turnip leaves in both hands and he got ready to pull.

Imagine that you're Ken about to find out just about how big his turnip is. Make a still picture of Ken getting ready to pull. What expression is on your face? Are you excited or are you getting ready to use your strength? Be ready to say out loud what you're thinking or what you're feeling if you're tapped on the shoulder. Get ready to make your still picture now.

Now find a partner and sit down in a space together.

Ken pulled at the turnip as hard as he could but nothing happened. So he tried again and pulled and pulled and pulled! But still nothing happened.

'It won't come out!' he said. 'I think it's too big, come and give us a hand will you?'

I put my coat and hat on and went down the garden. Ken grabbed hold of the turnip and I grabbed hold of Ken we pulled and pulled and pulled as hard as we could. But nothing happened: the turnip wouldn't move.

'I told you it was a big'un. We need help! Go and give Sheila a ring.'

Sheila is our daughter she lives at the other end of the village, so I phoned her up and she came round with her little boy Charlie. So now there was four of us: old Ken holding the turnip, me holding Ken, Sheila holding onto me and little Charlie holding on to Sheila.

'Right, pulllll!' shouted Ken and we pulled and pulled and pulled as hard as we could. But nothing happened.

'Right, that's it,' I said, 'if the turnip won't come out it will just have to stay in the ground. I've got other things to do. I can't spend all day trying to pull out enormous turnips!'

Ken wasn't very happy when he heard that: he was determined to get that turnip out of the ground and he wasn't going to give up now. We had quite a discussion actually.

In a moment you are going to work with your partner. One of you will be Ken and the other will be me. If you're Ken try to get me to carry on to pull up the turnip; if you're me then explain to Ken when you think he should just give up. Start talking to each other and be ready to share your conversations with everyone else.



Get into groups of four or five now and sit together in a space.

I told Ken his turnip would have to just stay stuck in the ground but he wouldn't listen.

'There's got to be a way to get it out,' he said.

Ken thought for a minute. 'Right, fetch the dog.'

I went and fetched Reggie the dog. Reggie loves any kind of game with pulling in it and when he saw what we were doing he wagged his tail and joined in.

So now there were five of us: old Ken holding the turnip, me holding Ken, Sheila holding onto me, little Charlie holding on to Sheila and Reggie the dog pulling away at little Charlie's belt.

'Right, one, two, three, pullllll!' shouted Ken and we pulled and pulled and pull as hard as we could but nothing happened.

'Get the cat!' said Ken.

Spike the cat was fast asleep by the fire. He wasn't very happy about being woken up but when I offered him a nice piece of fish for his tea he agreed to come and help. So now there were six of us: Old Ken holding the turnip, me holding Ken, Sheila holding onto me, little Charlie holding on to Sheila, Reggie the dog holding on to Charlie and Spike the cat pulling at Reggie's tail.

'Right, one, two, three, pullllll!' shouted Ken - and we pulled and pulled and pulled as hard as we could but nothing happened

'That's it,' I said. 'Your turnip isn't going to move, it will have to stay in the ground. Arthur Potts has the biggest turnip in all the world and I don't care.'

'No,' said Ken. 'One last try - please.'

'But there is no one left to pull.' I said 'We've got you, me, Shelia, Charlie, Reggie and Spike the cat and we still can't shift it. There is no one else left.'

Just then Spike the cat saw a mouse and quick as a flash caught it in his mouth.

'Stop!' said Ken 'Let that mouse go and you can have two bits of fish for your supper.' Spike, who is a very greedy cat, dropped the mouse straight away.

'Now, Mouse, help us pull out this enormous turnip and I promise you that this cat will never harm you.'

'But it's just a mouse,' I said. 'How can a mouse help pull up this enormous turnip?'

'We've got to try' said Ken. 'Every little helps.'

So now there was seven of us - old Ken holding the turnip, me holding Ken, Sheila holding onto me, little Charlie holding on to Sheila, Reggie the dog holding on to Charlie and Spike the cat pulling at Reggie and the little mouse pulling at the cat's tail.

'Right, one, two, three, pullllll!' shouted Ken and we pulled and pulled and pulled as hard as we could - and suddenly the enormous turnip came flying out of the ground and we all fell over backwards. What a sight we must of looked.



'See,' said Ken, gently stroking the mouse. 'I told you, every little helps.'

In your groups you're going to make two still pictures. They are going to tell the story about what happened when Ken and his helpers tried to pull out the enormous turnip. One of you will be Ken and the others in your group can decide which of us helpers they want to be.

In the first still picture we will see Ken and some of his helpers trying to pull out the turnip - each of you holding on to each other in some way and pulling with all your might.

The second picture will show what we looked like after the turnip had come out of the ground and we had all fallen over. Remember still pictures - so you don't actually have to fall over.

Ken was right: the turnip was enormous! Everyone in the village came to see it and even Arthur Potts agreed it was the biggest turnip in the world.

Arthur said he was bored with turnips now and had moved on to carrots - in fact, he had just grown the biggest carrot the world had ever seen. I looked at my husband Ken but he wasn't there - he'd gone and I knew where. He'd gone into town to buy carrot seeds!