

This extract is taken from <https://www.theickabog.com/the-bandalore/>

Chapter 24 **The Bandalore**

Daisy was about to turn eight years old, so she decided to invite Bert Beamish to tea.

A thick wall of ice seemed to have grown up between Daisy and Bert since his father had died. He was always with Roderick Roach, who was very proud to have the son of an Ickabog victim as a friend, but Daisy's coming birthday, which was three days before Bert's, would be a chance to find out whether they could repair their friendship. So she asked her father to write a note to Mrs Beamish, inviting her and her son to tea. To Daisy's delight, a note came back accepting the invitation, and even though Bert still didn't talk to her at school, she held out hope that everything would be made right on her birthday.

Although he was well paid as carpenter to the king, even Mr Dovetail had felt the pinch of paying the Ickabog tax, so he and Daisy had bought fewer pastries than usual, and Mr Dovetail stopped buying wine. However, in honour of Daisy's birthday, Mr Dovetail brought out his last bottle of Jeroboam wine, and Daisy collected all her savings and bought two expensive Hopes-of-Heaven for herself and Bert, because she knew they were his favourites.

The birthday tea didn't start well. Firstly, Mr Dovetail proposed a toast to Major Beamish, which made Mrs Beamish cry. Then the four of them sat down to eat, but nobody seemed able to think of anything to say, until Bert remembered that he'd bought Daisy a present.

Bert had seen a bandalore, which is what people called yo-yos at that time, in a toyshop window and bought it with all his saved pocket money. Daisy had never seen one before, and what with Bert teaching her to use it, and Daisy swiftly becoming better at it than Bert was, and Mrs Beamish and Mr Dovetail drinking Jeroboam sparkling wine, conversation began to flow much more easily.

The truth was that Bert had missed Daisy very much, but hadn't known how to make up with her, with Roderick Roach always watching. Soon, though, it felt as though the fight in the courtyard had never happened, and Daisy and Bert were snorting with laughter about their teacher's habit of digging for bogies in his nose when he thought none of the children were looking. The painful subjects of dead parents, or fights that got out of hand, or King Fred the Fearless, were all forgotten.

The children were wiser than the adults. Mr Dovetail hadn't tasted wine in a long time, and, unlike his daughter, he didn't stop to consider that discussing the monster that was supposed to have killed Major Beamish might be a bad idea. Daisy only realised what her father was doing when he raised his voice over the children's laughter.

'All I'm saying, Bertha,' Mr Dovetail was almost shouting, 'is where's the proof? I'd like to see proof, that's all!'

'You don't consider it proof, then, that my husband was killed?' said Mrs Beamish, whose kindly face suddenly looked dangerous. 'Or poor little Nobby Buttons?'

'Little Nobby Buttons?' repeated Mr Dovetail. '*Little Nobby Buttons?* Now you come to mention it, I'd like proof of little Nobby Buttons! Who was he? Where did he live? Where's that old widowed mother gone, who wore that ginger wig? Have you ever met a Buttons family in the City-Within-The-City? And if you press me,' said Mr Dovetail, brandishing his

wine glass, 'if you press me, Bertha, I'll ask you this: why was Nobby Buttons' coffin so heavy, when all that was left of him were his shoes and a shin bone?'

Daisy made a furious face to try and shut her father up, but he didn't notice. Taking another large gulp of wine, he said: 'It doesn't add up, Bertha! Doesn't add up! Who's to say - and this is just an idea, mind you - but who's to say poor Beamish didn't fall off his horse and break his neck, and Lord Spittleworth saw an opportunity to pretend the Ickabog killed him, and charge us all a lot of gold?'

Mrs Beamish rose slowly to her feet. She wasn't a tall woman, but in her anger, she seemed to tower awfully over Mr Dovetail.

'My husband,' she whispered in a voice so cold that Daisy felt goosebumps, 'was the best horseman in all of Cornucopia. My husband would no sooner have fallen off his horse than you'd chop off your leg with your axe, Dan Dovetail. Nothing short of a terrible monster could have killed my husband, and you ought to watch your tongue, because saying the Ickabog isn't real happens to be treason!'

'Treason!' jeered Mr Dovetail. 'Come off it, Bertha, you're not going to stand there and tell me you believe in this treason nonsense? Why, a few months ago, not believing in the Ickabog made you a sane man, not a traitor!'

'That was before we knew the Ickabog was real!' screeched Mrs Beamish. 'Bert - we're going home!'

'No - no - please don't go!' Daisy cried. She picked up a little box she'd stowed under her chair and ran out into the garden after the Beamishes.

'Bert, please! Look - I got us Hopes-of-Heaven, I spent all my pocket money on them!'

Daisy wasn't to know that when he saw Hopes-of-Heaven now, Bert was instantly reminded of the day he'd found out his father was dead. The very last Hope-of-Heaven he'd ever eaten had been in the king's kitchens, when his mother was promising him they'd have heard if anything had happened to Major Beamish.

All the same, Bert didn't mean to dash Daisy's gift to the ground. He meant only to push it away. Unluckily, Daisy lost her grip on the box, and the costly pastries fell into the flowerbed and were covered in earth.

Daisy burst into tears.

'Well, if all you care about is pastries!' shouted Bert, and he opened the garden gate and led his mother away.

Thursday 16th July 2020

Write a note, in the role of Bert to Daisy. After you have got home, you realised that you had a lovely time with Daisy and that she had really gone out of her way to make friends with you again. What would you like to say to Daisy and what could they do next to repair their friendship?