

## BRADLEY VISITS THE QUEEN

Long ago, when knights and dragons still roamed the land and adventure awaited even the most ordinary of folk, there lived an astonishing cat. Bradley Benjamin Esquire leapt over castle walls. He hypnotised mice with a single glance and sang with friends on a Saturday night. He spoke with birds. He spoke with bees and he even spoke with human beings.

Yes! Bradley was a remarkable cat—a cat with magical powers.

Bradley lived in a small stone house in a small village far from London Town. One morning, Bradley curled up on his favourite cushion in his favourite window. He snored softly and wiggled his nose. Sunlight shimmered along his dark fur and bounced off his long tail. A rumbling sound shattered his dreams. Bradley opened his blue eyes. “Someone interrupted my nap,” he said. “I must investigate.”

Now, Bradley was a remarkable cat—a cat with magical powers. He tossed his head, he flicked his tail and his eyes glowed like fire.

And *whoosh!* Before you could blink 3 times, Bradley appeared on the village green.

He didn’t have long to wait.

Clip-clop! A big brown horse named Marigold trotted along the dusty road.

She wore her best hat and her bridle gleamed in the morning sun.

Clip-clop! Marigold pulled a wobbly old wagon.

A man dressed in green overalls sat high on the seat holding the reins

But Bradley spoke to the horse.

“Marigold, where are you going so early in the morning?” asked Bradley.

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The old horse looked down her nose at Bradley. “We have important supplies for the royal household. We must reach the palace before good Queen Bess sits down to tea.”

“Royal blood flows through my veins,” said Bradley. “I shall travel to London to visit the Queen.”

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And *whoosh!* Before Marigold could object, Bradley appeared in the rear of the wagon. Bradley curled up on a plump purple pillow and yawned. “Let us proceed,” he said.

Bumpety-bump! Marigold pulled the wagon along rough roads and up steep hills.

The wagon swayed and bounced.

Bumpety-Bump! The wagon rattled along stony streets and clattered across creaky bridges.

Bradley snored softly and wiggled his nose.

At long last, Marigold arrived at the palace. Seven steadfast soldiers with seven steely swords defended the gate. “You cannot enter here!” said the captain of the guard.

Bradley sprang to the seat of the wagon. “But I must visit the Queen,” he said.

“Leave now!” said the Captain. “Only the Royal Dog may enter here.”

Now, Bradley was a remarkable cat—a cat with magical powers. He tossed his head, he flicked his tail and his eyes glowed like fire.

And *whoosh!* Before the seven steadfast soldiers could raise their seven steely swords, Bradley appeared in the palace doorway. Bradley padded down a long passage to a purple door with a sign that said: *Throne Room*.

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Woof! Woof! A big black beast paced in front of the door.

The beast wore a shiny collar with *Royal Dog* engraved upon it.

Woof! Woof! The Royal Dog raised himself up on his hind legs and bared his sharp teeth.

He saw that Bradley was not afraid but he growled anyway.

“I have come to visit the Queen,” said Bradley. “Royal blood flows through my veins.”

“The Queen cannot see visitors today,” said the Royal Dog. “She is reading a book.”

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And *whoosh!* Before the Royal Dog could bark 3 times, Bradley appeared in the Throne Room. He waited and watched as events unfolded.

Click-clack! The Queen threw her book into the air and ran in circles around the room.

Her purple robe billowed behind her.

Click-clack! The Queen jumped up on her foot stool.

Everyone clapped but the Queen stamped her feet and screamed.

The Royal Dog rushed into the room to find the Queen standing upon her throne and Bradley sitting with a satisfied look on his face.

“Your Majesty, whatever is the matter?” asked the Royal Dog.

“A horrible creature scurried across the room,” said Queen Bess.

“A creature? What kind of creature?”

“I frightened a little mouse under a chair,” said Bradley.

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The Queen shivered. “Such vile creatures--and there may be more!”

“Your Majesty, we must call the exterminator,” said Royal Dog.

“That will not be necessary,” said Bradley.

Now, Bradley was a remarkable cat—a cat with magical powers. He tossed his head, he flicked his tail and his eyes glowed like fire.

And *whoosh!* Before Queen Bess could sit down for afternoon tea, every mouse had scampered out of the Palace. The Queen rewarded Bradley with a gold medal to wear around his neck and invited him to live in the palace.

Meow! Meow! Bradley fished in the royal pond and hunted in the royal garden.

Bradley even snoozed in the turret window.

Meow! Meow! Bradley enjoyed his new life as Royal Mouser

But whenever the Queen was away, he dabbled in new adventures.

And everyone lived happily ever after because ...

Bradley was a remarkable cat—a cat with magical powers.