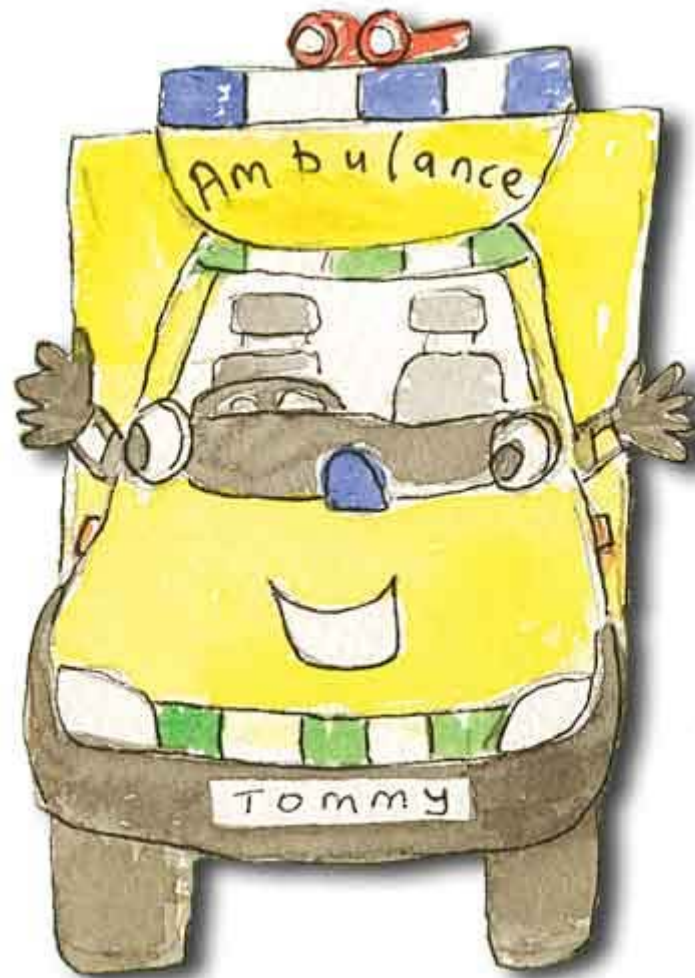


Tommy Two Tones...



...and the Silly Day

by

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"Grandad, tell us a bedtime story." Jacob and Ciara were sitting up in their beds as their grandfather looked in on them to say goodnight. The two children were twins aged six, and they always liked the stories that their grandfather told them.

"You two are going to get me into trouble with your Mum and Dad," grinned Grandad. "Anyway, I've already told you all the stories that I know," he added, but seeing the disappointed look on the twins' faces made him change his mind as it always did.

"Well, maybe there is one story that I haven't told you," he said, sitting down on the side of Ciara's bed so that he was between the two children.

"Is it a true story, Grandad?" asked Jacob.

"Oh, of course it is. All my stories are true," smiled Grandad.

"This one is about an ambulance that I knew," began Grandad. "It was just like lots of other ambulances, except that this one talked a lot more than most of the others did."

"Grandad, that's not true! Ambulances don't talk," interrupted Ciara.

"Well, they certainly do, young lady," replied Grandad. "You've heard them talking to you," he told her.

"When?" laughed Jacob.

"When you've been out with your Mum and Dad in the car," said Grandad. "You've heard them with their sirens going. Well, they're telling you that they're in a rush and would you please move out of the way?" explained Grandad.

"But that's not talking properly, Grandad," said Jacob, sounding disappointed.

"Well, I can understand them perfectly," insisted Grandad.

Anyway, this ambulance was called Tommy Two Tones," continued Grandad.

"That's a funny name for an ambulance," laughed Ciara. "Why was it called that?" she asked.

"The people who made him called him Tommy so that they would know which ambulance he was," explained Grandad. All the ambulances were given names and this one's name was Tommy," he continued. "One day, a group of schoolchildren called at the ambulance station where he lived," went on Grandad. "A little boy asked the Ambulance Station Officer if Tommy made a noise.

"Yes, of course he does," replied the Ambulance Station Officer, turning Tommy's siren on.

'WEEE, WOW WOW WOW,' it went, making all the children jump and then making them laugh.

"But that's two noises," pointed out another boy.

"That's right," said the Station Officer. "His siren has two different tones," he explained.

"Then his name should be Tommy Two Tones," cried a little girl.

All the children began to laugh, calling out "Tommy Two Tones, Tommy Two Tones."

"Now come on you two, settle down to sleep," said Grandad, getting up off Ciara's bed.

"But where did Tommy Two Tones live, Grandad?" asked Jacob.

Grandad sat down on the bed again.

"Tommy Two Tones lived in a town called Puddleditch. Puddleditch, like any other town, had shops, schools, houses, a hospital, a fire station, a police station, and of course an ambulance station where Tommy Two Tones lived with all his ambulance friends".

"There was Rusharound Romeo, Sarah Sierra, Charlie Chuckles and Julie Jukebox, all ambulances like Tommy Two Tones. There were also the two Fast Response teams, 'ERIC' the motorbike, whose name stood for 'Early Response Incident Cycle,' and Ernie, the Fast Response Vehicle. Everyone called ERIC "Eric the Vital Cycle" because he could move faster than any of the ambulances. There was even a helicopter ambulance called Miss QT. Last of all was Big HL, which stood for Hotel Lima. He was the Major Incident Vehicle, or mobile control unit. He only left the station if there was a major incident and he never picked up patients."

"Of course, all the ambulances had crew members, who were called paramedics. Tommy Two Tones' crew were Ken and Kirsty, and together they had lots of adventures".

"Ooh, tell us about one of their adventures, Grandad," called Ciara. Grandad thought for a moment.

"Well, there was the time that Tommy Two Tones had a silly day," he said.

"What's a silly day, Grandad?" put in Jacob, sounding very puzzled.

"Oh, that's the sort of day where people do all sorts of silly things without really meaning to," explained Grandad, who began to tell Jacob and Ciara their first Tommy Two Tones story...

Tommy Two Tones was driving through the town of Puddleditch where he lived with his crew, Ken and Kirsty.

"Let's have a game," suggested Kirsty. "Let's see who can spot the most children doing silly things," she said.

"Yes, let's. I'm good at that game," agreed Tommy Two Tones. He was coming up to a pelican crossing that was just beyond a row of cars parked on the roadside. Tommy Two Tones noticed three children walking along the pavement. One was pointing to someone they knew on the other side of the road.

"Here we go," said Tommy Two Tones. "The first point for doing something silly goes to me," he laughed, because he expected the three children to try and cross the road by the parked cars.

But they didn't.

The three children walked up to the pelican crossing and waited for the lights to change and the little green man to flash.

"You were saying, Tommy Two Tones?" grinned Kirsty.

"Sorry, old son. No points there," laughed Ken.

As they drove on, Tommy Two Tones spotted PC Parker, the Puddleditch policeman, coming down the road on his pushbike. He moved over to the middle of the road to turn right, without looking behind him to see if it was safe. He didn't even give a clear hand signal. There was a terrible screech of brakes as all the cars behind him came to a sudden stop.

PC Parker got off his bike looking very angry, and took out his notebook and pencil.

"Don't you know it's against the law to knock a police officer off his bike when in the performance of his duty?" snapped PC Parker.

But the car drivers were looking rather angry as well.

"And don't you know that it's against the rules of the road to pull out without checking what's behind you?" growled the first car driver.

"And you didn't give a hand signal, either," snapped another driver.

PC Parker was starting to look embarrassed, because he knew that they were right, so he got on his bike and rode off.

"No points there, either," said Kirsty. "PC Parker isn't a child, and we did say 'children' doing silly things," she added.

Suddenly the air was filled with the sound of loud Rock and Roll music, and round the corner came Julie Jukebox on an emergency.

Julie Jukebox didn't have a proper siren. She didn't want one. She much preferred to play Rock and Roll Music instead. Not many people got out of her way, but everyone loved to dance when she was passing by.

"Hello, Tommy Two Tones," called out Julie Jukebox. "I'm off on a silly emergency," she cried. "Somebody stood on a rake that was lying on the ground and it's hit them on the head."

"Now that really is silly," said Ken. "Garden tools can be very dangerous," he added.

"No points there, because we didn't see it happen," said Kirsty.

Next, the Ambulance Control Officer's voice came over Tommy Two Tones' radio.

"Can you go to number two, Dark Castle Lane? There's an emergency there," said the Control Officer.

"That's where Miss Rich lives," exclaimed Kirsty. "I wonder what the matter is," she added.

Miss Rich was one of the wealthiest people in Puddleditch. She liked living alone with her pampered cat, Blancmange. Puddleditch had a lot of funny and interesting people living in it.

Miss Rich could hear Tommy Two Tones' siren in the distance, so she knew that he was coming. 'WEEE, WOW WOW WOW,' went the siren as he came through the town. Soon Tommy Two Tones pulled up outside the house.

"Can you tell us what the matter is, Miss Rich?" asked Kirsty as she met Miss Rich at the front door of her house.

"It's not me. It's Blancmange," wailed Miss Rich. "She had a terrible shock. I dropped a plate in the kitchen, it made an awful crash, and now my Blancmange is shaking all over," cried Miss Rich.

"Could you take her to the vet's for me?" she asked.

"Miss Rich, we do not take animals in ambulances," said Kirsty sternly. "This is a very silly call," she added.

"But just look at my beloved Blancmange," howled Miss Rich. "Whatever shall I do?"

Ken and Kirsty looked across to Miss Rich's pampered cat, which was sitting on a fence without a care in the world, staring at Tommy Two Tones, who was staring back at her.

"No points for Miss Rich's cat," said Ken. "Animals being silly don't count," he said as he drove Tommy Two Tones back to the Ambulance Station.

Tommy Two Tones could see another ambulance coming along the road towards him with its blue lights flashing. Then he could hear a siren, only like Julie Jukebox, it wasn't a siren exactly. This time, the ambulance was quoting Shakespeare.

"Courage, man, the hurt cannot be much," shouted out the ambulance.

"It's Rusharound Romeo," declared Tommy Two Tones. "I wonder if he's got a silly job to go to as well."

"It's a very silly job," sighed Rusharound Romeo as he rushed past Tommy Two Tones. "Someone's got their feet stuck in a drain cover," he shouted.

A short time later, Tommy Two Tones saw a boy and a girl taking a dog for a walk along the busy road.

"Aha! This is where I score some points," cried Tommy Two Tones. "I just know that their dog will not be on a lead," he said. "It's really dangerous to have a dog without a lead near a main road," he pointed out.

"Yes, Tommy Two Tones, I agree. That is silly," confessed Kirsty.

But as Tommy Two Tones passed the boy and girl, Tommy Two Tones, Ken and Kirsty could all see that in fact, the dog was on a good strong lead and that the boy had a good strong hold on it.

"No points again," sighed Tommy Two Tones.

"I don't believe what I'm seeing," cried Kirsty, pointing to a man walking along the pavement with a penguin without a lead. "This day is getting sillier and sillier," she groaned.

Now Puddleditch didn't just have a policeman. It also had a postman, Mr Stamp, and a milkman, Mr Roper, just the same as any other town. But not every other town had a milkman pouring milk into a big red pillar box or a postman who was leaving letters on people's doorsteps. But that's what Mr Roper and Mr Stamp were doing...

"Oh, Grandad, don't be so silly," scolded Ciara. "Milkmen don't put milk into letterboxes," she cried. "That's being too silly," she added.

"But you see, that's the sort of place Puddleditch is," replied Grandad. "You just don't know what's going to happen next," he smiled.

"Now, what's all this then?" said the children's grandmother as she walked into the bedroom. "You're supposed to be asleep," she grinned.

"Grandad's been telling us a silly story about an ambulance called Tommy Two Tones," said Jacob.

"Oh, I could tell you lots of stories about Tommy Two Tones," laughed the twins' grandmother, just as their mother came into the room to see what was going on.

"Come on, you two. Let Grandad Ken and Nana Kirsty have some peace," she said.

"But what about Tommy Two Tones? We want to hear more," cried Jacob and Ciara.

"And so you will," said Nana Kirsty. "There's lots more Tommy Two Tones adventures to tell. But we'll save them for another night," she smiled, putting out the light.

But for now,

Good night!