

## 11 Billy Is Lost

Billy was very excited when he woke up one Saturday morning. He was excited because he and his Mum and his big sister were all going to London for the day. They were going to the tower of London and then on to see Madam Tussaud's. Billy bounced out of bed, pulled on his clothes, and went downstairs where he found Mum in the kitchen making some sandwiches.

"We'll have a picnic in Hyde Park," she said.

Billy thought that this sounded great fun, even though he didn't know what Hyde Park really was. Billy and his sister ate their breakfast while Mum finished packing the lunch, and they were all soon heading toward Driptown station.

When they got there the platform was crowded. Billy noticed that people sounded quite excited as they talked with each other. Soon the train arrived and Billy and his sister and his Mum climbed aboard. They just managed to find three seats together.

"Phew!" thought Billy. "I wouldn't like to have had to sit on my own. I wouldn't like to loose Mum in this crowd!"

Billy pressed his nose against the train window and watched as towns and villages and countryside flashed by, he thought that this was great! In London the underground trains were even more fun. Long dark tunnels, noisy rickety trains, and great long moving staircases! Billy felt like an intrepid explorer.

Eventually they reached the Tower of London. Billy stared up at the tall towers and began to remember all the stories he had heard about the people who had been locked up in the tower. He was quite surprised when he found that the Beefeaters were all rather friendly and Jolly.

"I'm sure they're not much good at locking people up," he thought to himself. "They all seem too kind!"

They waited in the queue and saw the Crown Jewels. They found out all about how people lived hundreds of years ago. They climbed dark and narrow winding staircases to get to the top of some of the towers and they watched the Ravens hopping round on the grass outside.

"If they ever leave," said Mum, "they say that the Tower of London will all fall down.

Billy looked up at the tall towers and hoped that nothing would frighten the Ravens away while they were there!

They had a snack, and then went on to the armoury. These are lots of rooms where you can see the suits of Armour and the swords and the spears that soldiers used to use. Billy was really looking forward to this bit. He was very interested in everything on display and spent a long time looking at each thing, imagining people wearing them or fighting with them.

Billy spent a very long time looking at one particular suit of Armour, but when he turned around he got a terrible shock. Mum was gone! and so was his sister! Billy looked up and down the room. There were lots of people but none of them looked like his Mum. Billy swallowed hard:

"They've left me!" he thought to himself, "They've left me in the tower of London!"

Suddenly all those stories about people who had been locked up in the tower started to come flooding back into his head, and then Billy remembered what had happened to most of them, they had lost their heads!

Billy swallowed even harder.

"Mum must have had enough of me!" he thought. "She's left me because she doesn't want me any more. She'd rather have me locked up in the tower than have me at home!"

Billy walked out of the room he was in and into the next, and then the next. He didn't look at any of the shiny suits of Armour or swords, none of them seemed interesting any more. Eventually he found himself outside. He began to remember all the naughty things that he had done, all the times that his Mum had got annoyed with him. Like the time when he had glued his sister's wardrobe doors shut with super glue, or the time that he had turned the Television up-side-down, and then managed to convince Gran that there was something wrong with her eyes, or the time he had broken Mum's best blue and white vase, and then of course, no one will ever forget the time he made that big ink stain in the middle of the dining room carpet!

"That's why she doesn't love me any more," he thought to himself. "I've done so many bad things, she doesn't want me anymore."

Suddenly he saw a Beefeater striding toward him.

"He's coming to lock me up!" thought Billy, so he turned round and ran as fast as he could through the crowd. He wanted to shout. "Help!" but he couldn't find anyone to shout it to.

Billy ran until he found a quieter spot. He sat down on some grass to get his breath back, and started to wonder what he was going to do. Suddenly though there was a voice from behind him:

"Excuse me Laddie," it said, "is your name Billy?"

Billy looked around, and to his horror it was a Beefeater standing right behind him. Billy looked quickly to see if he had a head chopping axe in his hand. He wanted to get up and run away but somehow he just couldn't move.

"Ye... ye.... ye.... yes, B.. B.... B..... Billy, that's me." said Billy. He shut his eyes and prepared himself for the worst.

Suddenly though Billy heard another voice, a very familiar voice.

"Billy! Billy!" it was Mum running toward him at full speed. "Billy where have you been? We've been so worried about you!"

Billy's Mum gave him a great big hug, even his big sister was pleased to see him. The Beefeater walked away with a big smile on his face and Billy's Mum held Billy very tightly for nearly five minutes, but Billy didn't mind.

Billy held his Mum's hand and they walked on.

"Mum," said Billy, "Do you....." he looked up at his Mum's face, "Do you....."

Billy wanted to say:

"Do you love me?" But when he looked at his Mum and could see that she had been crying, he knew the answer anyway.

"Do you....? Do you.....? Do you think I can have an Ice Cream?" he asked. And I think you can probably guess what Mum's answer was.

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