**A Real King**

[Tatti]

Tatti did not sleep for very long in the pink box in the shop with the green and

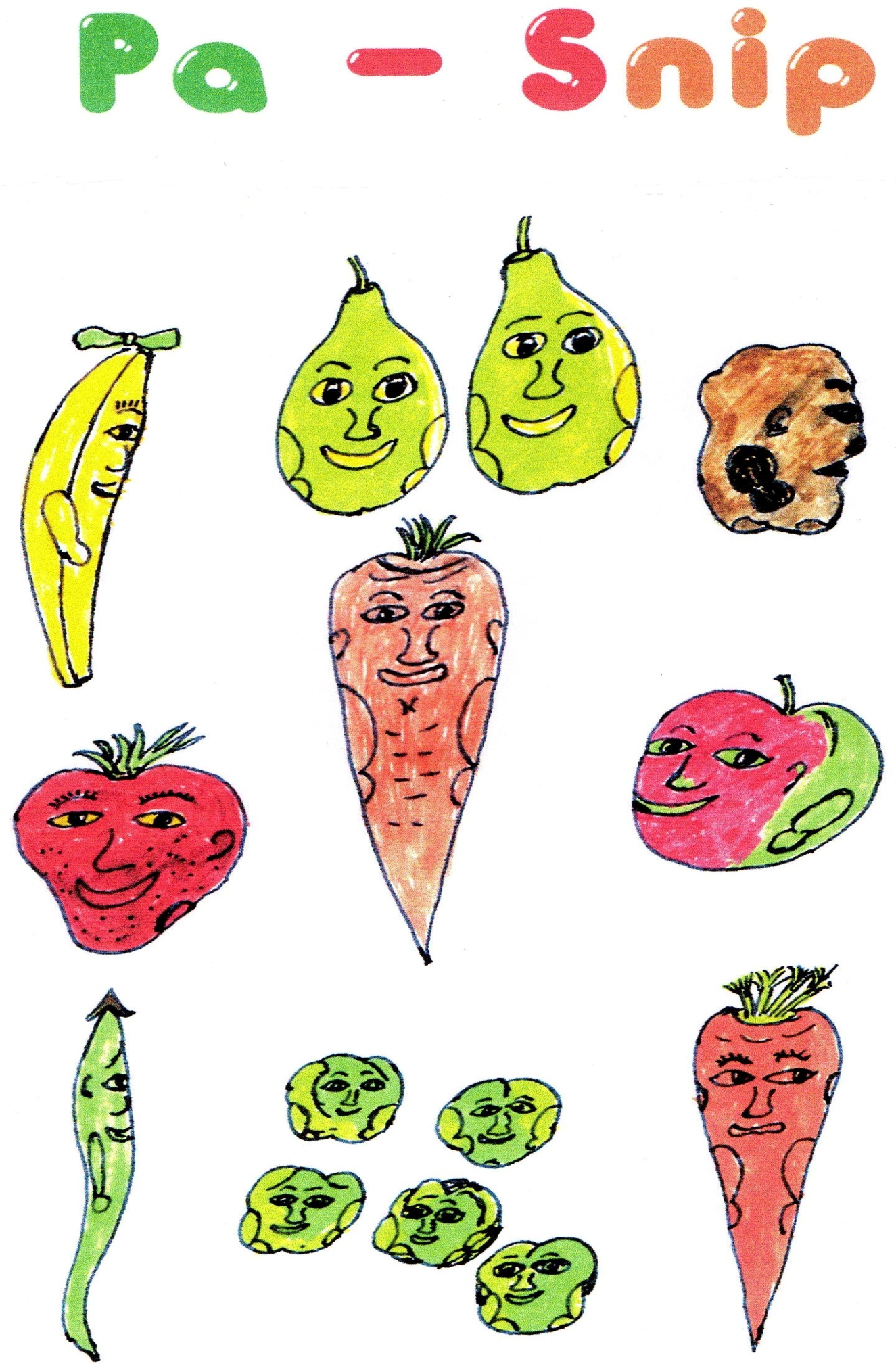
yellow door. As soon as he was awake he started to moan again. He seemed

so grumpy.

“I wish the lights were brighter in her,” he moaned. “It’s so dark in here. Its like

it used to be when I was under the ground in Scotland. I want everyone to see

my brown skin, but they can’t when the lights are out.”



“I don’t want bright lights,” Lady Anna, the banana spoke up in a squeaky

voice. “They are too warm. They will make my lovely yellow skin turn brown

like yours, Tatti.”

“It’s all right for you,” moaned Tatti. “Everybody likes you, but no-body cares

about me. I’ve had to spend all my life in the dark underneath the ground.

When I did come out I only saw the blue sky for a few moments before they put

me in the dark again … in a huge paper bag.”

“Now, Tati,” said Pa Snip. “You know you don’t really like the light. It hurts your

eyes.”

“I don’t care,” said Tatti. “I want people to notice me. Everybody thinks of us

potatoes as dirty and spotty. We are NOT!” He said ‘not’ in a very cross way,

and then added. “Even in the ground the worms and beetles are all against us.”

Tatti looked so cross that Pa Snip said, “We all care about you Tatti. Let me tell

you a story about one of your family. I’ll call him Tatti too.”

Everywhere was quiet for a long time. All you could hear was the hum of the

shop refrigerators. Everybody was just thinking everybody else had gone to

sleep when Pa Snip began …..

Down under the rich red soil of the ground a potato called Edward, who was just

like Tatti, was growing secretly, together with other potatoes. All those other

potatoes in his row thought he was the biggest of them all. They called him

King Edward. Edward felt like a king. He was so big. He felt so important. He

was sure he was king of potatoes.

One day, as the sun’s warm glow crept deep down into the ground, Edward and

the other potatoes felt the earth trembling all around them. Everywhere,

potatoes, weeds, grubs and worms began to shiver and shake together as a

great machine came digging them out of the ground. Soon people were

throwing them up into a trailer behind and enormous tractor. The potatoes

bounced against each other. The little ones thought it was great fun. The big

ones tried to stay still as they screwed up their eyes because of the bright light

of the sun.

The tractor and trailer bumped them across the field and tipped them into a pile

inside a long farm shed. Next they heard many voices. People came from

everywhere. Hands of all shapes and sizes began to sort the big potatoes from

the little ones and put them in paper sacks. Edward was not frightened. He was

a king and kings are never scared.

He waited his turn to be picked up. “They are sure to have a special bag for

potatoes as big and important as me,” he said out loud. All the potatoes around

him said, “Yes!” But they wondered why Edward had not been taken first.

The pile of potatoes grew smaller and smaller. Edward waited and waited. None of those hands picked him up. At last Edward was the only potato left when the people’s voices faded away and the farmer came into the shed. The farmer himself picked up Edward from where he sat all alone. “I don’t know what we’ll do with this man,” he said, and put Edward on a shelf under the window.

“Man!” Edward exploded. “Man! I’m no ordinary man. I’m a king potato! I’m King Edward!”

It was not long before the farmer’s wife came into the shed. She saw Edward on

the shelf under the window. “That’s just what I want,” she said. “The children

are coming to tea.” Edward felt proud again as the farmer’s wife carried him to

the house and laid him on the kitchen table. “I have been kept till last and

chosen out of all the others,” he thought. They know I’m the king potato.” But

he did not feel that way for long. The farmer’s wife picked him up again and

took him to the sink where she ran cold water over him. Then she scrubbed him

all over with a hard brush. At first it tickled, but then began to feel sore.

“Stop! Stop”, he cried out. “My skin’s peeling off!” But the scrubbing went on

till all the soil was washed out of his wrinkles.

I’m a king I’m a king, he shouted, you can’t treat me like this ! But the

farmer’s wife did not notice. Now, she picked up a sharp knife and putting

Edward on to a wooden board, cut the ends off him.

Tatti groaned. Everyone in the pink paper-lined box had been quiet until now

but Tatti was imagining it was him on the table in the place of Edward.

“I thought you were going to tell a good story about me.” There were tears in

all his eyes.

“Wait,” said Pa Snip. “It’s not so bad. I’m coming to the best part of the story

now.” He went on. The farmer’s wife cut Edward up into the thinnest pieces of

potato. She took those Edward slices and dropped them into a pan of boiling

oil. Soon she scopped them out again. They had turned into the most beautiful

golden crisps. “Dinner’s ready!” she called to the children.

“That’s another good story” said Mr. H. Appy. “Edward may not have been very

beautiful but he did become lovely crisps. He made the children happy.”

Tatti looked sad. “I thought you said it was good at the end,” he said to Pa

Snip.

“It was,” replied Pa Snip. “I haven’t finished yet.” He went on with his story.

Do you remember how the farmer’s wife cut the two ends off Edward? Well,

she kept those pieces in a dark box all through the winter. When it was Spring

and all the world came back to life again, she took the two ends of Edward into

the garden and showed the children how to plant them in the ground.

In a few weeks those pieces of Edward grew little sprouts of white roots like

arms and legs and hands and feet. Some of them grew up through the soil and

turned into green leaves with white flowers and the others turned into little

potatoes. They grew bigger and bigger until there were many many more

Edwards, just like Tatti.

Tatti rolled over happily now to look at his reflection in the shiny top of a tin of

beans and said, “I suppose I am dull and brown now, but perhaps I’ll be golden

crisps too and make lots more potatoes just as wonderful as me.”