

A Terrible Tomboy

The story takes place during the early 20th century. Accustomed to a daily account of the doings of both himself and his classmates, Peggy has begun to realise that all is not well with her brother, BOBBY. Instead of being full of his usual fun on the homeward journey in the pony trap, he has scarcely anything to tell her. He has been late for several days at their meeting place, and has arrived looking so flustered that, although he has laughed it off and made some excuse, she is certain that things are not as they should be. The pair have never had any secrets before. Peggy waited at first for Bobby to tell her, but the confidence was not forthcoming. In this scene, Peggy asks Bobby what is wrong. Bobby finally decides to tell her.

BOBBY: What is wrong? Not much... but... well, (*plucking at the corners of his dog-eared Latin Grammar book*) if you really want to know, it's Jones Minor. I didn't mean to breathe a word, because I hate to be a sneak but, after all, telling you isn't like telling any of the fellows, is it? I mean, you are my sister. (*Quietly*) I hate Jones Minor. He lies in wait for me every afternoon, and I have to dodge everywhere to hide and get out of his way. I came round by five back streets today, and climbed over a garden wall. He's a bigger boy than me – about thirteen I think. (*Boldly*) If he were anywhere near my own size I'd fight him back. (*Angrily*) Jones is so mean though, and cruel. He doesn't fight properly, he pulls my ears, and bumps my head against the wall. He twists my arm round, too, and hammers at it. Do you know, he says he keeps a buckle-strap in his pocket specially for me. He's just generally a beast, that's what he is.

(*Looking at his sister, sadly*) If only Archie were at home. I haven't anyone else at school to champion me. I'm sorry Peggy, I didn't mean to whine to you about it. Don't you worry. I'm growing all the time, and perhaps one day I'll be big enough to go for him. I ought

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to be able to stand up to a bit of bullying. It goes on at school to lots of boys and not just me. It's always the older boys picking on the younger, smaller ones. Do you know, they took Holmes one day, and held him upside down with his head in the lavatory basin till he nearly choked, and they tied two others up as sparring-cocks today, and made them fight all dinner-time. It's only Jones Minor who bothers me. Still, when I think about it, he isn't as bad as some of the others – so I should be grateful for that! *(Smiling)* I wish you could catch him at it though! You would probably fight him just as well as Archie could. *(Laughing)* Can't you just imagine it, Peggy! The gossip all over Warford! Jones Minor has been knocked down and thrashed by a *girl!*

by Angela Brazil, adapted by LAMDA