

Archie's Breakout Adventure

Chapter One: The Tunnel

It was the evening of the PINK SUPERMOON. Even though it was midnight, it seemed like daytime.



Inside their house, Ethan and Drew were fast asleep in bed, dreaming. It was the tortoises' third day visiting Netherlee during The Lockdown. They had worked out the best places to hide and were behind the garden shed, waiting for the right moment.



Archie had been digging a tunnel under the wall. He poked his head out from the entrance.

'Right then, Trixie, it's time. Let's go!'

'No, Archie, you go on alone. Find out what it's like out there then come back and tell me. At least in here we are safe from cats and hedgehogs. I hate hedgehogs. And I'm worried about this tunnel. Could a hedgehog not get in through it?'

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'OK. OK. I'll go and have a look-see. When I go, cover the entrance with that red Frisbee. Hedgehogs hate red.'

'Are you sure they hate red?'

'Aye, probably. *See ya later, Alligator!*'

'Oh Archie, would you stop saying that word! It gives me the heebie-jeebies.'

'*In a while, crocodile!*' shouted Archie, diving down the tunnel.

Using her head, Trixie nudged the Frisbee into place over the tunnel entrance and settled down to sleep on top of it.

Speaking to herself:

'Alligators and crocodiles. Horrible creatures. They eat fish and never brush their stinking, crunching teeth.'



'Thank goodness we were born in Glasgow. At least there are no alligators and crocodiles in Scotland, only horrible, nasty hedgehogs who eat worms and insects. '

'And they never brush their teeth either. REE-volting.'

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Chapter Two: In the Lane

Archie stuck his head out of the tunnel exit and peered down the lane towards the garages. He saw a pair of bright green eyes staring at him from quite far away. The eyes blinked twice and a cat leapt up onto a wall then up to the roof of the garage then turned and shouted:

'Hey you, that tortoise over there, exactly what is your name?'

At his real home with Auntie Sharon, Archie was used to dealing with other pets like cats, dogs, Guinea pigs and even the occasional snake. His favourites were tropical fish which were much better than television except when Ninja Turtles were on.

Putting on a tough, gruff voice, Archie said:

'Naw, you have tae tell me first. Whit's **your** name, Mr Catty?'

'As everyone one knows, my name is Vernon César de Madrid and I am a Spanish Tortoiseshell!'



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'Oh dearie me! Rather precious, are we? I can't abide snobs, especially when they copy my shell pattern. Right Vernon whits-yer-thingimy-bob, scat, beat it, be off with you!'

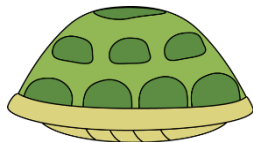
'Pray sir, on whose authority do you make your demands?'

'My own authority. Me, Prince Archie of Newton Mearns. Now you, **Vamoose!**'

The green eyes blinked twice then Vernon ran away along the garage roof and dropped out of sight.

Archie started running down the lane, sniffing, following his nose towards a most delicious smell. After about half a minute, he ran out of energy and slowed down to his normal plod. It took him nearly ten minutes to reach the gap beside Vernon's garage.

As he approached, a bright light flashed on and blinded him. He pulled his head back into his shell and then drew in his legs. Inside he was protected. Safe and sound.



The security light went out.

Then another smell reached Archie's nose.

A frightening smell. A very frightening, wormy smell.

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Chapter Three: In the Jungle

Archie remained as still as a cucumber. Listening hard, he heard a voice sing:

Hi Ho, Hi Ho, it's off for worms I go,

I sleep all day and hunt all night,

Hi Ho, Hi Ho, Hi Ho.

'Ha-Ha,' said the voice. 'Another a lovely crunchy snail. Yummy, Yummy in my Tummy. Ah-Ha-Ha Ha, not your lucky day, Mrs Slug, is it? ShlussssspT!'



After a long time, the hedgehog smell went away and the delicious smell tickled his nose. Archie pushed out his legs first, then his head. Moving slowly then quicker, he walked alongside the garage and slipped down a slope into an abandoned garden.

It had once been used to grow vegetables and flowers but now it was wild and overgrown, like a jungle. It was spring. Lots of plants were sprouting and growing. Archie lifted his nose high and sniffed: broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, lettuce and something he loved best of all, *nettles*.

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Craning his neck, Archie looked towards the source of the nettle smell. In the corner beside a pile of junk he saw a big patch of nettles. Putting his head down, he made his way through the jungle towards it.



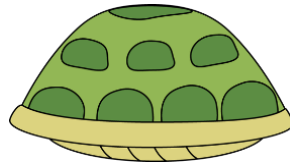
Nibbling as he walked, he was filling up with fresh, juicy food. As he ate, Archie was also filling up with energy.

Feeling stronger and stronger, he started practising Ninja kicks with his back legs and swishing his tail, using his razor-sharp tail-hook to slice through the vegetation, leaving a clear trail behind him.

Beside the nettle patch, Archie turned right around and moving backwards, he used his back legs and tail-hook to flatten the nettles before settling to nibble at the stalks, leaving the nettle tops for another day when the stinginess would be gone.

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When his tummy was so full he could not eat another mouthful, he pulled his head and legs back into his shell and drifted off into a nice dream.



A little while later Archie was wakened up by a foot kicking his shell and a smell in his nose he dreaded.

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Chapter Four: Ninja Tortoise Rules!

'Ah-Ha-Ha-Ha, Ha-Ha! I see before me an intruder', said the singing voice from earlier. 'You horrible wee horny creature! How dare you enter my realm. Don't you know this whole garden is mine. In fact, all these gardens around here are mine. Which means you are mine now, mine to eat! And I, Harry, King Hedgehog o' Netherlee, intend to eat you for my dinner. Come on, come out! Come you and fight like a man. You cannot hide in that shell of yours forever, you know.'

'Excuse me, King Harry,' said Archie, 'I can't hear you properly. You're talking to the wrong end of my body, try the other end, please.'

The hedgehog ran to the other end of Archie's shell and stuck his nose down into the small opening and snarled his challenge:

Grigalail! Grigaloo!

Come out and fight ya cowardly crew,

I'll have ye for ma pot o' stew

Yer feart tae fight wi' me!

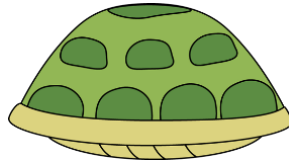
Full of Nettle Green Energy, Archie did Ninja kicks with both his back legs and, while swishing his sharp tail hook, he scraped the hedgehog on the tip of his nose.

Although Archie had given Harry's nose only a tiny scratch, the hedgehog ran away, screaming at the top of his voice:

'WATCH OUT EVERYBODY. STAY AWAY FROM THE NETTLE PATCH! THERE'S A MONSTER BACK THERE.'

Inside his shell, Archie waited until he was sure Harry was far away and never coming back.

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After a while he stuck his head out and the first thing he saw in the pile of rubbish was a toy bike with stabilisers. On the back of the toy bike was a carry box.



He had seen Ethan and Drew riding their bigger bikes in their garden and an idea came to him. Archie looked from the toy bike to the path leading back to slope up to the garage.

Speaking to himself, the little tortoise said, 'Yes, Archie, go for it!'

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Chapter Five: Triumphant Return

With the carry box filled with nettle stalks for Trixie, Archie jumped up onto the toy bike and started to pedal hard. He shot up the slope and flew out onto the lane where he landed with a loud thud and a wobble then raced back towards Ethan and Drew's garden, the one with the light blue coloured gate.

Watching from his garage roof, Vernon the Spanish Tortoiseshell cat was curious. He had never seen a tortoise riding a bicycle before so he jumped down and ran behind, making sure to keep at a safe distance. The cat had seen what happened to Harry the King of the Hedgehogs and was a bit afraid of the Ninja tortoise.

When Archie got back to the right gate, he hid his toy bike in the space behind the bins and the garden wall. Grabbing the nettle stalks together in a giant bunch in his mouth, he pushed his way back through the tunnel and banged his head on the underside of the Frisbee.



'Archie, how can I be sure it's really you?' said Trixie.

'Come on, you know my voice, don't you? Move over and let me in!'

'No, you have to give the right answer first. Are you ready?'

'OK. OK. I'm ready, go ahead.'

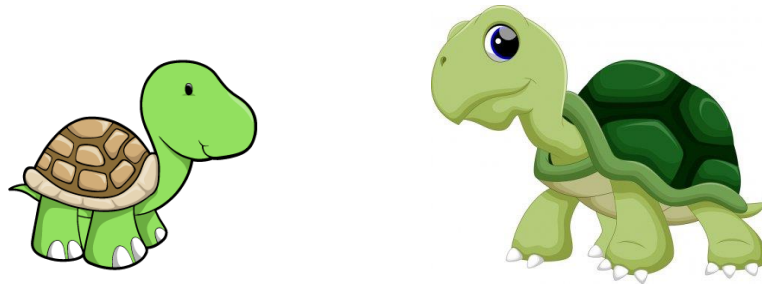
'Right Archie, what is THREE times THIRTEEN?'

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'Eh, eh, wait a minute. Eh, is it THIRTY-NINE?'

'CORRECT!' said Trixie and moved off the Frisbee.

Archie was back home safe and sound from his Breakout Adventure. Before doing anything else, he used his head to nudge the Frisbee over the hole and then to roll a stone on top of it to make it secure against any other hedgehogs.



'Trixie, do you fancy coming out through the tunnel with me tomorrow night?'

'Mmm, I'm not sure, Archie. Maybe yes, maybe no. Let's wait and see, shall we?'



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Crouched flat on the wall above them, Vernon looked down, blinked twice then dreeped back down to the lane and ran at top speed to safety, high up on his garage roof.