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THE DAY THE FRENCH FRIES FOUGHT BACK!



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A gamebook by the students of
Mme François' Grade 3/4 ELA class.

IT

is a warm, sunny spring day at École Varennes. The birds are singing, the bees are buzzing, and through the open window you can hear the happy sounds of neighbourhood children playing.

You would love to go and play too, but instead you are stuck in class listening to your teacher's latest grammar lesson. "I would like to tackle punctuation marks again," says Mme François over the groans of the other students, "Monsieur Sherwin agrees that we need to work on this. Let's go over the rules one more time..."

Your teacher's voice trails off as you stare out the window again. You see a woodpecker chipping away at a nearby tree trunk. A red squirrel is grooming its tail as it rests on a nearby branch. Across the back lane, a dog chases a ball around the neighbour's yard.

"Wait a second," you think to yourself, "That is one weird ball." The ball really is strange. In fact, it looks like the dog and the ball are taking turns chasing each other!

"Hey!" shouts Mme François in your direction. Surprised, you snap your head around to stare at her. "Did you hear anything I just said?" she asks. "Uhhh..." you stammer as your classmates smirk and giggle. You try to explain yourself as you point out the window, "I was looking outside at the weird ball that dog is chasing."

All at once, the entire class rushes to the window to see the ball for themselves. "Class! Class! This is ridiculous! Back to your tables please!" yells Mme François over the hubbub as she goes to shut the window.

Instead of shutting the window, your teacher and all of your classmates are staring at the dog, which is now hiding in a corner of the yard. It is surrounded by several 'balls' that are slowly advancing on the frightened animal. The dog breaks free and jumps over the fence. The balls roll into the back lane after the dog. "Um... I think I'm going to shut the windows now," mutters Mme François. She quickly closes the panes and lowers the blinds.

Suddenly, there is a sound over the class intercom. "Attention staff and students," says the voice of the school secretary. "This is a lockdown alert," continues the secretary, "Please proceed to the nearest classroom and – ARGH! Hey! What are these things? Potatoes? You've got to be kidding me! Get off! GET OFF! Someone call the..." The intercom goes dead.

"What? Potatoes? That's the craziest thing I've ever heard!" sputters Mme François. Just then, there is a knock on the door. Mme François gestures for silence as she heads toward the door. SMASH! The door is pushed in and potatoes start streaming in through the opening. Your teacher tries to close the door but she is soon covered in spuds and knocked unconscious.

For a full minute, the potatoes continue to stream into the classroom. There is soon a pile that reaches right up to window! You can see Mme François' shoes sticking out from the bottom of the pile. You hear music playing out in the hallway. The music gets closer and closer until it stops right outside the classroom door. A tiny voice announces, "Victory for King Beppo the Ugly!"

You and your classmates look at each other in puzzlement. Is King Beppo coming into your classroom? As if to answer that question, a giant potato appears at the window and gracefully rolls its way down the ramp. This potato is huge!

The potato is covered in 'eyes' and roots that it uses like arms and legs. There is a large gash across one side of its body. When the potato starts speaking, you realise that this gash is its mouth.

"Pitiful humans!" booms the potato to the class. "How easily you are conquered! I am Biffy, and I represent Beppo the Ugly, king of all tubers! I am here to negotiate the terms of your surrender. Where is your leader?" demands the spud, surveying the room.

"Uh, I think she's in that pile underneath you," you tell Biffy.

"Does that mean **YOU** are now the leader of the humans?" asks Biffy.

You instantly regret having spoken up. What if the potatoes want to take you with them? You are about to tell Biffy that you can't be the leader when you notice another student crying. Many of your classmates look terrified. What if you say 'no' and Biffy picks one of the smaller, younger students? All of your classmates have turned toward you, eagerly awaiting your answer.

IF YOU TELL BIFFY THAT YOU ARE, INDEED, THE HUMANS' LEADER, turn to page 3.

IF YOU TELL BIFFY THAT YOU ARE DEFINITELY NOT THE LEADER OF THE HUMANS, turn to page 4.

YOU TELL BIFFY THAT YOU ARE THE STUDENTS' LEADER...

You stand up tall and clear your throat. "I'm in charge now!" you say.

"You are a brave human," says Biffy. "As ambassador of the humans, you will negotiate with King Beppo on behalf of your species. You have my word that you will be treated as an honoured guest," proclaims Biffy.

Biffy makes some strange clicking sounds and the pile of potatoes comes to life. Mme François groans, still unconscious, as the potatoes roll off of her and toward you, lifting you off the ground.

The potatoes carry you out of the classroom, past the office (where tubers are pouring out of Mme DeCruyenaere's door) and outside onto Varennes Avenue. It is strangely quiet outside. You are soon heading North on St. Anne's Road and into a fast food restaurant.

Everywhere in the restaurant, potatoes are singing, dancing and partying but they stop the moment they see you. "Is this the ambassador?" asks one potato. "Will the war soon be over?" asks another.

"As you can see, human," remarks Biffy, "our people are eager to reach an agreement." The potatoes bow before you and Biffy. Soon, you are heading down a hatch in the floor of the restaurant and into a large tunnel. After several minutes, the tunnel opens into a huge cavern. You are shocked to see skyscrapers, streetlights and even tiny potato cars! Everywhere, potatoes are going about their daily lives. You are soon at the door of an incredible castle that appears to be made entirely of crystals.

"King Beppo is holding a feast in your honour. We would like to serve your favourite food at the feast. What would you most like to eat?" asks Biffy. "Do not lie to me, as we potatoes have a gift for detecting lies. Liars are harshly punished down here."

You are very hungry. Seeing all these potatoes has made you crave your favourite food – French fries! French fries with ketchup would be sooo good right now! There's no way you can ask Biffy to serve you potatoes, though. Do you lie to Biffy, hoping the spud doesn't notice? Or do you tell the truth and hope that Biffy isn't offended?

IF YOU LIE TO BIFFY, turn to page 6.

IF YOU TELL BIFFY THE TRUTH, turn to PAGE 8.

YOU TELL BIFFY THAT YOU ARE NOT THE LEADER OF THE HUMANS...

There's no way you are taking on this responsibility! There has to be an adult somewhere in the school. "Isn't there a teacher or another grown-up you could talk to?" you tell Biffy.

"Foolish human!" spits Biffy. "We have neutralized all of the so-called adults within several kilometres of here! It would seem that you are now in charge, whether you like it or not," smiles Biffy, "You are coming with me!"

Biffy makes some strange clicking sounds and the pile of potatoes comes to life. Mme François groans, still unconscious, as the potatoes roll off of her and toward you, lifting you off the ground.

"What? Wait! No! I don't want to go!" you protest.

"It is too late to argue, silly human. You will negotiate with King Beppo on behalf of your species. If you refuse, you will stay as our hostage!" laughs Biffy.

The potatoes carry you out of the classroom, past the office (where tubers are pouring out of Mme DeCruyenaere's door) and outside onto Varennes Avenue. It is strangely quiet outside. You are soon heading North on St. Anne's Road and into a fast food restaurant.

Everywhere in the restaurant, potatoes are singing, dancing and partying but they stop the moment they see you. "Evil human!" yells one potato. "Dip the human in boiling oil!" screams another.

"Silence!" bellows Biffy, "The human is here to bring peace between our species!" The potatoes stop yelling and bow before Biffy. Soon, you are heading down a hatch in the floor of the restaurant and into a large tunnel. After several minutes, the tunnel opens into a huge cavern. You are shocked to see skyscrapers, streetlights and even tiny potato cars! Everywhere, potatoes are going about their daily lives.

There are tunnels just like the one you came through leading off in every direction. Is this your chance to escape? You are so big that you could easily smash through every obstacle in your path. On the other hand, the potatoes easily overcame Mme François and every other adult they encountered.

IF YOU TRY TO ESCAPE, turn to page 10.

IF YOU STAY WITH BIFFY AND MEET BEPPO THE UGLY, turn to PAGE 12.