

The Dandelion Princess and The Toad Boys

The Delirium Threemen
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Roy would be somewhere between 10-11 years old in this story.

The Dandelion Princess And The Toad Boys

The two girls ran and played around in the grassy, empty lot as if it were their own private meadow. The younger girl suddenly stopped and excitedly pointed to the ground, "Jo-Jo look, a puff-ball."

"Let's see how many blows it takes you to remove all the seeds. If it takes more than three puffs your mother wants you home," the older girl teased.

The younger girl grabbed the stem of the white fluffy ball and pulled it from the ground. She inhaled deeply, her mouth formed into an 'O' as she blew on the white ball at the end of the stem. "Ffffffffff...,one, Ffffffffff..., two, Ffffffffff..., three," she laughed as she held the now naked stem of the dandelion. "Good thing I blew them all away because Mom's not home," she smiled up at the older girl.

The older girl picked a puff-ball and blew on it, "One o'clock", on the second blow, "Two o'clock" clearing all the seeds from the stem of the plant. "According to the dandelion it's two o'clock," she informed the younger girl.

"Dandelions can tell time? Who told you that, Jo-Jo?" the younger girl asked.

"I learned that from a poem my older sister taught me. Hey Brenda, would you like me to teach it to you?" Jo-Jo asked.

Brenda enthusiastically nodded her head up and down. "Okay, now listen carefully and I'll recite the whole thing and then I'll have you repeat it with me," Jo-Jo said before reciting the poem.

I picked a dandelion clock

And I held it near my nose

I blew the pretty fluff away

And counted up my blows

"It's one o'clock, it's two o'clock

I gave a great big puff –

"It's three, it's four o'clock"

Away went all the fluff

My dandelion clock was right

For mother called to me

Come in and wash your grubby hands

It's nearly time for tea"

After Jo-Jo finished the poem, she then had Brenda repeat each line after she said it. The girls began picking yellow dandelions as they practiced learning the poem together. Once each girl had collected a handful of dandelions they headed back across the street towards Brenda's house. They spotted Brenda's neighbor Mr. Findley tinkering with his car.

"Hi Mr. Findley. Roy and Cuddy still not back yet?" Jo-Jo asked.

Jim looked up from under the hood of his Woody wagon. "Not yet, they should be back anytime now," he answered before slamming the lid shut on the car. "So what are you two lovely ladies up to," he said as he tipped an imaginary hat in their direction.

Brenda jumped up and down excitedly, "Jo-Jo is gonna teach me how to string dandelions together."

Jo-Jo smiled shyly as Jim responded, "Well then, I'll leave you two to your work. Meanwhile, I'm gonna go inside and clean up."

The girls sat down on the grass near the edge of the walkway as they watched Jim Findley enter his house. Each girl set down the bundle of dandelions they had picked. Jo-Jo used her thumbnail to make a vertical slit in one of the stems about an inch away from the head of the yellow flower. She repeated this action to a second flower. Brenda looked on as Jo-Jo inserted the stem of the second flower into the slit she made into the first flower. After stringing a couple of dozen or so flowers together Jo-Jo inserted the stem of the last flower in the chain into the slit of the first flower to form a circle. She slipped the circlet of flowers around her neck.

"Jo, can you make me a necklace too?" Brenda asked.

Jo-Jo smiled down at the younger girl, "If you want to have good luck you need to make your own chain to wear. If I make it, you won't have any luck." Jo-Jo noticed the disappointed frown appear on Brenda's face. "How about I show you how to make one? It's really not that hard."

Brenda's face lit up at that suggestion. Jo-Jo guided Brenda as she assisted the girl in forming her own chain of dandelions. Once the chain was long enough Jo-Jo instructed her on how to put the stem of the last flower into the slit of the first flower. Brenda smiled triumphantly as she placed the necklace of dandelions she had just made around her neck.

"Now don't go putting your fingers in your mouth," Jo-Jo cautioned the younger girl when she noticed Brenda had a hand near her mouth.

"Dandelions aren't poison, are they?" she inquired.

Jo-Jo giggled, "No, but they'll make your hands taste terrible. Best to wash your hands really good before you go back inside for supper."

"Can you make a crown? That way you can be a Dandelion Princess," Brenda asked.

Jo-Jo smiled at Brenda as she proceeded to start another chain of dandelions while they waited for Roy and Brenda's older brother Cuddy to return.

"Campbell soup, Campbell soup, down your belly and in your boot," the two boys chanted several times as they walked down the street.

Roy pulled the push mower while Cuddy walked beside him as they walked up the street. They had finished mowing Mrs. Porter's lawn. As they made their way home they broke into their usual antics of making funny noises before finally they began singing and doing their own actions to accompany the song.

"I am a little horned toad, Hopping down the road," they sang as they both began to hop.

"Just listen to my song," their hands went behind their ears.

"I sleep all winter long", they did some fake snorting-snores and greatly exaggerated yawns.

Roy and Cuddy could see the two girls sitting on the front lawn as they neared Roy's house. They began to sing louder.

"When spring comes I peep out," they started 'peeping' at each other from behind the hands they held in front of their faces.

"And then I jump about, And now I catch a fly," 'glub-glup' they were now jumping and sticking their tongues out at imaginary flies and eating them.

"And now I wink my eye," then they winked repeatedly at each other.

Jo-Jo had just finished making a circlet of dandelions as the two boys finished their song.

"And now and then I hop, And now and then I stop!" hopping several times before coming to an abrupt stop in front of the girls. They continued to catch imaginary flies with their tongues as they continued their imitation of toads.

Jo-Jo rolled her eyes, "I see the two Toad Boys have returned."

"Hey, its the Ditch-Weed Girls," Cuddy said to Roy. Roy laughed as he pushed the mower towards the garage to put it away.

Brenda scowled at her older brother, "These aren't weeds, they're flowers."

"Ummm, nope, they're weeds," Cuddy answered back.

"They're pretty, so that makes them flowers," Brenda retorted back.

"They're pesky weeds" Cuddy countered as Roy came back from putting the mower away.

Jo-Jo interrupted the argument between brother and younger sister, "That's enough, Cuddy. They're nice-looking enough to be considered flowers."

"So what ya arguing about?" Roy asked as he returned from the garage.

Cuddy threw a thumb in the direction of the girls, "They think dandelions are flowers instead of weeds."

"Geesh, no wonder I have to help you two in science. Flowers are planted or they grow in groups of their own. Weeds grow randomly anywhere and everywhere," Roy added with a roll of his eyes towards Jo-Jo and Cuddy.

"They're *FLOWERS*," Brenda blurted out, "And once Jo-Jo puts on the crown she's making she'll be The Dandelion Princess."

"More like the *QUEEN* of the *BONE EATING SNOT FLOWERS*," Roy whispered to Cuddy as they broke down into giggles.

"You're making that up. There are no such flowers like that!" Brenda challenged him.

Roy threw her an all-knowing look. "Wanna bet? They eat the brains of dead whales at the bottom of the ocean floor."

"You're so DIS-GUST-ING," Jo-Jo retorted back.

"Yes, and you just *LOVE* it when I'm disgusting," Roy teased back as he nudged against her.

Jo-Jo gave him a dirty look. Sometimes she didn't know what to make of him. One minute he would be nice to her and the next he'd start teasing her. She did note that he NEVER teased her at school; in fact, both Cuddy and Roy treated her rather nicely at school. They were her biggest defenders against anyone who tried to hassle her.

"Come on Jo-Jo, we'll go do our own ceremony to crown you princess," Brenda pleaded with the older girl as she looked scornfully at the two boys.

Cuddy's face suddenly lit up, "Awww come on, Brenda. Roy and I would love to help you crown Jo-Jo."

Roy gave his head an affirmative shake before he leaned over and whispered into Cuddy's ear. The two girls looked on as the two boys buzzed back and forth to each other occasionally giving a sly glance or mischievous smile their way. Jo-Jo narrowed her eyes at them suspiciously.

"What are you two toads up to," Jo-Jo finally asked, convinced that they were planning something.

"We're not just any toads. We're *HORNY TOADS*," Cuddy added smugly.

Both boys turned their heads towards her and tilted them as she said in unison doing a barely passable imitation of Yosemite Sam, "***Great horny-toadies, what are you doing upside-downy?***"

"That's exactly what you two are, a couple of ugly little horny-toadies," Jo-Jo retorted.

"Don't go getting us horny toads mad because we'll squirt blood out of our eyes at you," Roy threatened.

Cuddy piped up, "Okay, okay, let's get down to the business of crowning the Dandelion Princess. A ceremony is definitely in order"

Brenda jumped up and down excitedly, "Yes, let's have a crowning ceremony."

"I'm not so sure we should trust you two toads," Jo-Jo said skeptically.

"We promise we'll behave...mostly. Cross our hearts," Cuddy said as both he and Roy drew X's over their hearts with their finger.

"Hmmmph, I heard that line from the two of you goons before," Jo-Jo said testily.

"Okay is everyone ready for the ceremony. Grand Toadster Roy will be officiating," Cuddy announced.

"Let's see, since we don't have a bouquet of *BONE EATING SNOT FLOWERS* we'll have to use the rest of the remaining dandelions," Roy said looking directly at Jo-Jo.

"Brenda, gather the remaining flowers for the bouquet and hand them off to Roy," Cuddy instructed.

Roy pulled out a long-stemmed dandelion from the bunch that Brenda had handed him. "That one should make a good scepter," he whispered to Brenda as he handed the single stem for her to hang on to.

"Okay, are we ready to begin," Roy asked the other three.

They all indicated they were ready to start the crowning ceremony. Roy cleared his throat. "Dearly beloved we are gathered here today..."

Before he could finish the sentence Cuddy interrupted him, "*Heavens to Murgatroyd* Roy! It sounds like the beginning of a wedding service."

Roy gave him an irritated look, "Those are also the same words that begin a funeral service. Now, that's enough comments from the peanut gallery." Roy quickly threw everyone a silencing look before beginning again.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to celebrate the coronation of the Dandelion Princess. I present to you JoANNE Johnson, Princess of the Dandelions, your undoubted ruler. JoANNE you are present this day to pay homage and service to the Dandelion Kingdom. We, your loyal subjects, are here and willing to do the same?"

Roy whispered loudly to Cuddy, "Trumpets, please."

Cuddy cupped his hands over his mouth, "Ta-ta-da-dut-dut-daaa."

"You're Majesty, are you willing to take *the* oath," Roy continued on with the ceremony.

Jo-Jo narrowed her eyes. "Yes, I am, your toadness."

Roy handed Jo-Jo the bouquet of dandelions. "Brenda, the crown for her Highness, please."

Roy continued after Brenda handed him the circle of dandelions. "I have for you a golden floral ring. A ring with no beginning and no ending which symbolizes your devotion to the Dandelion Kingdom. JoANNE if you would kneel before us, so I may place this ring on your head as a visible sign of the vows which will proclaim you as Dandelion Princess."

Once Jo-Jo knelt before him, Roy used a single Dandelion as a 'sword' and continued, "Earth-to-earth, flower-to-flower, weed-to-weed I commit you throughout eternity to serve as Dandelion Princess. If any person can see just cause as to why JoANNE cannot serve as ruler of the Dandelion Kingdom then speak now or forever hold your peace."

Roy then placed the circle on her head and then held out a single dandelion by its stem. "Receive the Royal Scepter, the symbol of majestic power and justice." Turning towards Cuddy and Brenda, "I now give you the Dandelion Princess."

"You may lick the flies off the princess," Cuddy chortled.

Before Jo-Jo could get up off her knees, Roy grabbed her by her shoulders and held her down. He let out a couple of '*glub-glubs*' before he ran his tongue up the side of her face. She managed to push him away from her. "Why you horrid little...little...toad," she cried out in a red-faced rage.

Roy and Cuddy ran around to the other side of the wagon parked in the driveway to provide a protective barrier between them and the enraged, newly crowned princess.

"I'm sending you two the doctor's bill for the warts he's gonna have to remove," Jo-Jo simmered as she raised her fist towards the two boys.

"Actually you don't have to worry about getting warts. Dandelions cure warts," Cuddy said.

"Yeah," Roy joined in "Just use the dandelion milk from the cut end. That'll do the trick."

Roy and Cuddy dashed off up the block. "I'll be sending you MY bill instead," Roy shouted back to Jo-Jo.

Both boys laughed as they ran up the street to put as much distance from them and the wrath of the Dandelion Princess. "*Great horny toads, is she ever mad at us,*" they both said breathlessly before breaking down into fits of giggles.

"I wonder what she'll do to get back at us? Do you think she's making more chains of dandelions to tie us up with?" Roy laughed as him and Cuddy as they continued walking up the street.

Cuddy turned to Roy, "You *KNOW* it would be funny as all heck if you ended up having to spend the rest of your life chained to her."

"Only in my nightmares," Roy retorted back. He knew Jo-Jo could dish it out as good as she got it.

"I wonder sometimes if you're not sweet on her, Roy-bo. You *DID* pick her over me to be your partner in science class."

Roy squirmed a bit. "Only because she got to me first...*HOW* could I say no?"

"Uh-huh...I also noticed how you're always giving her one of your cookies at lunch. How you always pay her way when we go to the movies. Need I continue to prove my case?"

"That's what you're supposed to do with girls," Roy let out an inflated sigh, "Besides my parents raised me to be a *GENTLE-man*."

Cuddy raised one of his eyebrows skeptically, "You? A gentlemen? I guess that extends to sharing the same straw when you let her drink your soda."

"So I let her have a sip here and there. I don't hear you complaining when I pass the soda over to you. *ALL* three of us are using the same straw."

Cuddy couldn't argue with that. He thought a moment before issuing his next comment. "Just remember, if you ever do end up marrying her, you'll not only be stuck with her but her mother as well."

Roy *KNEW* Mrs. Johnson didn't like him. She always gave him a loathing glare accompanied by a disapproving snort whenever he walked Jo-Jo home. He suddenly felt a chill run down his spine at the thought of Mrs. Johnson being a permanent part of his life – now that was even more hideous than Bone Eating Snot Flowers gorging themselves on whale brains.

Dandelion Facts and Myths:

If you can blow away all the seeds in three tries or less then your mother doesn't want you home, but if it takes more than three puffs then you best be getting home.

You supposedly can tell time by counting the number of blows it takes to removing the seeds from the dandelion. Each blow is equal to one hour. The white head is sometimes referred to as the Dandelion Clock.

If you make a dandelion chain and wear it around your neck it is supposed to bring you good luck. If you wear a dandelion chain someone else has made from you then you will get no luck from it.

The milk from a dandelion can be used to treat warts and should be applied two or three times daily. This gentle remedy can be used to treat warts on the face. You also don't get warts from frogs or toads.

Author's Note:

***The Dandelion Clock* was the poem used in this story and it was written by Ivy Russell. The date of the poem was written is undetermined. I did find the poem on a website in the UK featuring children's songs and poems.**

"I am a Little Horned Toad" has no author credited to it and has been around for many years.

The use of a quote from Yosemite Sam is the property of Looney Tunes, of course.

Bert Lahr (The Cowardly Lion) was the first to utter the phrase 'Heaven's to Murgatroyd' in the film "Meet the People" (1944). The phrase was regularly used by Snagglepuss (The Yogi Bear Show) whose voice was patterned on Lahr's Cowardly Lion.

Horny Toads (they really are lizards) will shoot blood out of their eyes when they feel threatened. They will aim for a predator's eyes or mouth with great accuracy. They can also inflate their bodies and look like spiny balloons.

Bone Eating Snot Flower, however they not really a flowers. They are zombie worms. Quoted from the Ever So Strange Animal Almanac:

"The Bone Eating Snot Flower reproduces constantly, the female keeping a harem of males inside her tubes so that her eggs can be constantly fertilized. The eggs are cast into the oceanic currents, hopefully to find another whale carcass that has been stripped down, rather like a wormy dandelion clock. A terrifyingly ghoully snotty zombie bone-eating dandelion clock."