

SAVED BY THE BELL (Boys)

By Carole L. Cooney

In 17th century England, the bell keeper at Windsor Castle was accused of falling asleep at his post. He claimed he was wrongly accused and could prove it; he had heard the church bell chime at midnight. Townspeople supported his claim and he was not executed.

Setting: The bell tower in Windsor Castle and the lawyer's chamber

Characters:

Narrator

Bennet, the bell keeper

Samuel, the castle guard

Sir Cooper, the Lawyer

Sarah and Anthony, townspeople

Narrator: It was a stormy night over England. High in Windsor Castle tower, Bennet the bell keeper, slept. Suddenly there was a flash of lightning and loud bangs of thunder.

Bennet: (loud scream) What was that?
(He jumped up from his cot and looked out the tower window.)
No one's about on a stormy night like this. And that's a good thing, too.

Narrator: There's a knock on the door. Bennet runs to open it. He is faced with Samuel, the tower guard.

Samuel: What's going on in here?

Bennet: What do you mean, sir?

Samuel: Have you been so busy sleeping that you've forgotten to ring the tower bell?

Bennet: No, sir. I rang the bell, sir.

Samuel: My ears didn't hear it! Come with me. You know what this means!

Bennet: But sir, I even heard the church bells ring out at midnight.

Samuel: Silence! Enough of your nonsense! Follow me.

Narrator: Samuel marches Bennet down the narrow tower steps into the lawyer's chamber. Sitting behind a huge desk is Sir Cooper reading over some documents.

Sir Cooper: What is it? I haven't time for this now.

Samuel: But sir...the bells have not rung tonight!

Sir Cooper: WHAT! Is this true, Bennet?

Bennet: No, sir. I mean to say, I DID ring the bells this evening. Perhaps the storm's thunder drowned them out.

Samuel: (laughing) A likely story. I don't suppose the townspeople heard them ringing.

Sir Cooper: Ahh, that's a good idea, Samuel. Take Bennet to a prison cell. Then bring two townspeople to me and make it quick!

Narrator: Samuel locks Bennet in a prison cell. He then goes outside the Castle and brings two of the townspeople into the Castle and marches them up to the Lawyer's chamber.

Sir Cooper: What are your names?

Sarah: My name is Sarah, sir.

Sir Cooper: And yours?

Anthony: Anthony, sir.

Sir Cooper: I have *one* question to ask you and it is an important one. A man's life depends on your answer. Do you understand?

Sarah and Anthony: (eagerly) Yes, sir.

Sir Cooper: Did you hear the tower bells strike at midnight?

Sarah and Anthony: (nodding their heads) Oh, yes sir! And we even heard the church bells.

Sir Cooper: I see. Samuel, bring in the prisoner.

Narrator: Samuel opens the chamber door. Bennet enters with his head down. He stands before Sir Cooper.

Sir Cooper: Lift up your head and put a smile on your face, Bennet. Sarah and Anthony heard the tower bells this evening. They even heard church bells. Bennet, you are free to go back to your job in the tower. You have been "saved by the bell." By the way, Samuel, where were YOU this evening that you didn't hear the bells?

Samuel: (embarrassed) Sir, I... I...

Sir Cooper: Oh, be off with you. Get back to your post. Don't you see I have work to do!