

Once upon a time, there was a potato farmer called Ben. Ben grew the best potatoes in the Kingdom of Kelp.

The King of Kelp was happy because his people were well fed, healthy and content. Day after day the farmer dug potatoes, but after a while the farmer got tired and decided to go on holiday. The king was worried and called Ben for a chat.

'Look,' Said the king, 'If you go on holiday, we'll run out of potatoes. The people will grow hungry and discontent.'

The farmer was really tired and needed a rest, but he didn't want to let the king down. He came up with an idea.

'If you make a law to say all the people in the kingdom have to buy their potatoes from me, I will be able to afford to pay a farmhand to dig the potatoes while I'm away.' Said Ben.

The king agreed, and a new law was decreed.

For a while everyone was happy. The people had potatoes whenever they needed them. The king was happy because he had a content and healthy kingdom, which gave him free time to play golf and watch Netflix. Ben had pots and pots of gold to go on holiday whenever he liked. He also liked to play golf, and became good friends with the king. Many years passed, but one day a terrible thing happened. Ben's potato crop failed. A disease made his potatoes small and shrivelled, some were black all the way through to the middle and were inedible. No matter what Ben did, the soil was diseased and his potatoes were rotten.

The people grew hungry and discontent. The king asked Ben why he wasn't supplying potatoes. Ben was very apologetic and explained to the king that it wasn't his fault at all, but his soil was diseased and the crop kept failing. The king asked what could be done to fix the problem. The truth was Ben had no clue, but he was a shrewd businessman and spotted an opportunity.

'If you give me 5 barrels of gold coins, I'll invest in new chemicals and potato varieties and provide your subjects with all the potatoes their heart's desire.' Said Ben.

The king was no fool and thought this seemed implausible, but a new season of Game of Thrones was about to drop on Netflix, and he was keen for this whole problem to go away so he could watch Netflix and chill with the queen. He reluctantly handed over the gold coins.

The people weren't very happy about their taxes being used to pay Ben. They thought Ben already had plenty of gold, but they reasoned that at least they would have potatoes again.

Ben now had so much gold his heart wasn't really in planting potatoes anymore. If he was honest, he was sick and tired of potatoes, but he had to do something or the king would be angry. He bought chemicals to treat the blight, but his supplier let him down and the chemicals were lost. He bought some new types of potatoes, but his spade was the wrong shape to plant them. So he gave up and went on holiday.

By now, the people were thin, starving even, and terribly angry. By law, they had to continue to buy the rotten potatoes from Ben or risk being thrown in prison, or have to pay a fine of a barrel of gold, which was more than many of the people could earn in a lifetime and was a much heavier sentence than pillage, plunder or speeding on a drunken mare.

At this time a new farmer called Sam planted some potatoes. His potatoes were like magic beans! They grew ten times bigger than Ben's potatoes and were ten times more delicious. They grew so quickly and so easily that Sam would be able to sell them much cheaper than Ben could. But the law prevented people from buying them.

People were desperate. Some fled the Kingdom of Kelp entirely, while others felt they were forced to break the law and buy potatoes from Sam. People had a choice – to live in hunger, or to break the law and risk the consequences. There had to be a better way. They petitioned the king and plead with him to see reason.

The king had a big decision to make. He hadn't intended to make his people hungry or sick. But what could he do? It seemed impossible.

That night, the queen could see he was worried; he was hardly paying attention to Bridgerton at all.

'What is the matter? You look tired and sad, you haven't been yourself.' Said the queen. 'The people are hungry and discontent. Ben's crop keeps failing. I've failed them both – what can I do?' Said the king.

'It's simple. Change the law. Give people the freedom to buy potatoes from whomever they wish.' She said.

'But what about my bond with Ben? It would be ungentlemanly to let him down.' He said.

'Poppycock!' said the Queen, 'give him some carrot seeds, he can grow them instead, the people will love carrots.'

The king could see at once that the queen was right. It sometimes aggravated him to admit it, but she usually was.

The next day, the king decreed that the people of the Kingdom of Kelp would hitherto have the right to choose their own potato provider. Ben wasn't happy at first, but once

the king explained that carrots were another kind of root vegetable, and that people would go mad for them once they'd had a taste, Ben realised the potential of diversifying his business.

That night there was a grand celebration! People from across the Kingdom of Kelp came to together. There was much singing and dancing and they feasted on potatoes and mutton, with fancy new carrots.

And they all lived happily ever after.

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