

The Dragon's Egg

3. "It's sheep!" I said.

"Well done!" bleated the biggest sheep. "Pass, friend, and be recognised."

And we carried on up the hill. The egg was getting warmer. The egg was getting heavier.

"Look," I said to the fox. "I really need to go home for my dinner."

I put the egg down on the ground and walked away from it down the hill. Little legs and feet popped out of the bottom of the egg, and it started to run along beside me.

"Pick it up!" barked the fox. "Pick it up! We've got to get the egg back before it hatches or we'll really be in the soup!"

"Well, I said. "I suppose that would be spinach soup, to go with your bright green eyes."

"Don't joke about it!" barked the fox. "It's really not funny!"

"I suppose it isn't," I said, though I did think it was rather funny.

"Pick it up!" barked the fox.

I bent down and picked up the egg. The legs and feet sank back inside. Then I turned round and carried on up the hill behind the fox.

We came over a ridge and found ourselves at what looked like the entrance to cave, just below the top of the hill.

"What's that doing there?" I asked. "I've never seen that before!"

But, before the fox could answer, out of the cave came the biggest rabbit I'd ever seen: much bigger than me.

"8 5 12 12 15 - 6 15 24," squealed the rabbit.

"8 5 12 12 15 - 18 1 2 2 9 20," barked the fox.

"23 8 15 - 9 19 - 20 8 5 - 8 21 13 1 14?" squealed the rabbit.

"8 5 - 9 19 - 23 9 20 8 - 13 5," barked the fox

"23 8 1 20 - 9 19 - 8 5 - 8 15 12 4 9 14 7?" squealed the rabbit.

The rabbit and the fox looked at me expectantly.

"What's it saying?" I said to the fox.

"It's a she, not an it," barked the fox. "She wants to know what you're carrying."

"Sorry!" I said. "Please tell her."

"You have to tell her," barked the fox.

"It's a dragon's egg," I said to the rabbit, holding out the egg.

"She doesn't speak human," barked the fox.

"But I don't speak rabbit!" I said.

I took out my phone and called Nancy.

"A B C," sang Nancy. "It's easy as 1 2 3." and put the phone down