

Fabulous Flatty and the big bully

Authors: Edith Kriel and Else Röhrs

Artwork: Jurita Burger

Theme: Victimisation and bullying

Appropriate age group: All age groups



There were many different cooking pots standing around the fireplace – big pots, small pots, pots of different shapes and sizes. Each pot had a different job. Some were used to boil water on the fire. Some were used to cook mealie meal. One was used to make meat stew. The biggest and roundest was a three-legged pot who was called Belly because he looked like a big round belly. Belly was used on special occasions to cook lots and lots of meat. The smallest pot was used to cook the vegetable relish to go with the meat. He was a flat-bottomed pot called Flatty.



Early one morning the pots were all washed and scrubbed as clean as could be. As they stood proudly in the sun to dry, they were chatting and laughing at one another's jokes. They were all happy and excited because there was going to be a big party that night and they would each have a special job.

Belly started to tease Flatty as usual. He said, "Where did you get such a funny shape? You're flatter than a pancake. You really look sick!" Flatty was a kind sweet pot who never said anything nasty to anyone. So when Belly teased him, he just looked down and wished he could be somewhere far away.

At first, the other flat-bottomed pots tried to defend Flatty. They shouted at Belly, "Flatty is fine – he is a very well-balanced pot! Just leave him alone." But they were a bit scared of Belly because he was such a big bully. They kept quiet after Belly said, "Who do you think you're talking to? Watch out or I'll stamp on you till you're even flatter than Flatty."

Belly went on teasing Flatty all day long. He said things like, "Flat flat Flatty sat on the mat on the cat on the rat – stupid flat flat Flatty." Some of the other pots who used to be Flatty's friends also began teasing him. Flatty felt very, very hurt. He kept quiet but he asked himself a lot of questions: "Why are Belly and the other pots so mean to me? Surely they can't be jealous of me? What did I ever do to hurt them? Are they scared he'll turn on them if they don't tease me? Do they think it's funny or cool to tease? It makes me feel so bad and I don't know what to do to stop them." The teasing went on and on and on. Flatty didn't want to be with the other pots at the fireplace any more. He felt awful.

In the afternoon, the cook came out and started making the fire for the party. He didn't know the pots were bullying Flatty – he thought they all lived happily together. As the cook moved Belly to the fire, Belly kicked Flatty very hard with one of his iron legs. "Ouch! That was sore", yelled Flatty, but Belly just smiled at him with a big mean smile. Flatty had a big dent in his side from the kick – it really hurt. But it hurt even more when the others giggled and said nasty things about him. The kick only hurt his outside but the cruel words cut into his heart.

There was a pile of wood near the fireplace. One big log saw what was going on. He said to Flatty: "Hello, powerful and courageous one, I'm so pleased to meet you at last!"

Flatty spun around to see who was speaking. When he saw it was Log he said, "Who are you talking to? I'm the only one here and I'm definitely not powerful or courageous!"

Log gave a deep laugh and said, "Don't you see Belly is just a big coward? It's cowardly to be cruel – it takes no courage at all. But it takes true courage to do no harm!"

Flatty looked at Log. "Um, that's awfully nice of you, Mister Log, but my side is hurting so much right now that I don't feel courageous at all."

Log said in a kind voice, "I realise you are hurting outside and inside, Flatty. That's because Belly and the other pots are trying to hurt you. It's a strange thing but most pots hurt others in

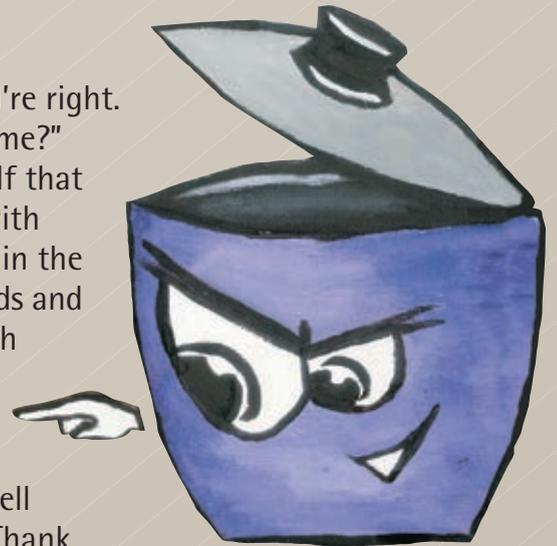


exactly the ways they are afraid of being hurt."

Flatty looked at Log again, "Um, Mister Log, maybe you're right. Please tell me what I can do to stop others from hurting me?"

Log said in a wise voice, "Flatty, keep reminding yourself that what they are saying about you is not true. Spend time with people who see your good qualities. Then look Belly right in the eye and say, 'Belly, only cowards hurt other pots with words and kicks. If you want to be brave and powerful, use your strength to do good!'"

Flatty was thinking about all this when the cook came out. Cook looked at the food that Flatty had been cooking and commented: "Little flat pot, you always do your job well and cook the food just right. I can always count on you. Thank you." Flatty smiled. He had a good feeling inside. He knew he had done well.



Possible discussion points:

What types of bullying happen in your community?

Can you think of ways to deal with bullying in your community?