



BRYONNY DOLITTLE

by Bryony De Freyne Martin

Bryony Dolittle, MD



nce upon a time, not so long ago a very special child was born in *Luton* – a town not so very far from the city of *London*. Her name was *Bryony* and she had three brothers named, *Simon*, *Jeremy* and *Gregory*. Now it passed that *Bryony* and her family moved to the seaside town of *Westward Ho!* How different from *Luton* it must have seemed, with the sea washing in beneath the bridges; the oh-so-clean air with hints of seaweed at low-tide; and the gulls bobbing on the water or wheeling in the air.

And from there, onwards to live in *East-the-Water*, not so very far from the seaside town of *Bideford* with her brother, *Gregory*.

Maybe it was the busy-ness of the gulls at *Bideford Quay* that rubbed off on *Bryony*, but truth be told, she was not one to sit idly by. Which is strange, as she soon gained the nickname of *Dolittle*, after the great animal doctor of the same name. *Bryony Dolittle*. Though for sure, it would have made more sense to those who came to know her, if she had indeed been called, *Bryony Do-A-lot!*

In many ways though, her adopted name suited her. For her great love was animals. Where *Dr. D* had *Jip the Dog* as a friend, *Bryony* has *Danny* and *Flapjack*, who lived with her father. (I would hazard a guess mind you, that she would not have gotten on with the likes of *Chee-Chee*, *Dr. Dolittle's* friendly monkey - far too noisy and boisterous for the likes of *Bryony Dolittle M.D!*) Oh, MD you ask? Well, with the good doctor, this did indeed stand for *Medical Doctor*. For the kindly *Bryony*, it stood for *Most Delightful!* For she was.

Now, back to the animals... No doubt *Bryony* would have warmed to *Gub-Gub the pig*, but possibly not so, *Polynesia Parrot* (of whom it was said, taught *Dr. Dolittle* to talk to the animals!) No. *Bryony* was not a lover of feathered friends. Especially chickens! Maybe it was their flapping, or beady eyes, or maybe even those terrifying beaks and claws, but a lover-of-chickens, *Bryony* was not.

As for horses... that was a different matter. Every Saturday, she would saddle up *Teddy* or *Molly* where they lived happily at *The Calvert Trust* on the edge of *Exmoor*, and ride

to her heart's content. On the way over in the car however, a different side to *Miss Bryony* would be seen. For another love of hers was *music*. Played very loud! Especially the likes of *Elvis* or her favourite, *Roy Orbison*.

As I say, *Do-A-Lot* was her nature. And if not riding the ponies or playing with *Danny* and *Flapjack*, she could be found perhaps swimming in the local swimming-pool, or in the park - maybe riding her bike. On a Sunday sometimes, her big brother *Simon* would have the pleasure of her company at his home in *Instow* – also by the sea. Here she could enjoy her *sandcastling* or paddling her toes in the water.

Dr. Dolittle would of course, have had his rounds to perform – visiting those animals who could not visit him for help. *Bryony MD* was no different. But her rounds were carried out in the local pet shop – visiting rabbits and guinea pigs, hamsters and gerbils. Those poor souls waiting for a loving home. (If *Bryony* had her way, I suspect they all would have gone home with her, to live among her fluffy toys and pretty things.)

Not, however the fish! Oh dear me, no. For fish, like chickens, were not to *Bryony's* liking. She liked animals she could stroke. And you and I know that you cannot stroke a fish! (Though maybe one day she will be shown how it *is* possible to hold and stroke a chicken without it flapping and squawking.)

But what about the cats and dogs, I hear you cry? For of course, *Dr. Dolittle* was famous for having the dogs, cats (and children) of the neighbourhood following him round the town of *Puddleby-On- The-Marsh*. And yes. The dogs and cats loved *Bryony* also. Especially her friend *Gaynor's* three- legged cat, *Pedro* (and of course *Danny* and *Flapjack!!*). In the street however, even dogs belonging to others would come up to her to get a friendly stroke or maybe even a cuddle (and of course, their owners would always leave with a smile on their face). The dogs were never frightened of *Bryony* and always enjoyed her company and attention. And she, theirs. For most of all, *Bryony MD* was a *kind* person. And animals can pick up on that as you know. They sense it straight away.

Of course, everyone needs a quiet time at the end of the day. And it was no different for *Miss Bryony*. After tea, she would relax up in her room. All lovely and comfy, maybe watching her favourite film, *Calamity Jane*... with a fluffy toy or two to cuddle. Well, you can't have too many cuddles, now can you?

“*She's got a bit of a way with animals, has our Bryony!*” people would say, with a smile. Most Delightful!!!