

Once upon a time there were twin brothers called Nicholas and Edmund who lived in a big house in the country. They grew up together and were very happy playing with toy swords, riding horses, swinging from trees and dipping for minnows in the river.

As they grew up they met other children from the local villages, including a girl called Catherine. Catherine was very beautiful, with bright eyes and a fair face and was always laughing and smiling. Both the brothers fell in love with Catherine, but she preferred Nicholas, although being a lovely girl, she was always kind and generous to his brother.

When Catherine was old enough, Nicholas asked Catherine to marry him and he was delighted when she said yes. However, before they were able to marry, a wicked, bad tyrant became ruler of a land across the sea and declared war on the country where the brothers lived. Because they were brave

and honourable men, both the brother went to war to defend the country and their friends and families.

As they marched off to war, Nicholas asked Catherine to wait for him and promised he would be home for Christmas. She said that she would.

The army campaign was very hard. Nicholas fought hard and was wounded several times. Once he was affected by a fever, from a wound that went bad and he lay, close to death, tossing and turning backwards and forwards. His doctors told him when he came round that he had called for Catherine all the time he was delirious.

Eventually the war was being won and it was apparent that the tyrant was defeated and Nicholas was well enough to leave the hospital and travel home.

After a long journey on boats and carts and eventually walking, he arrived back at his house, unable to wait to see Catherine, his fiancée again.

When he walked through the door, he had a horrible shock. There was his wife to be, in the arms of his brother, with a baby in her arms and a wedding ring on her finger. His brother had taken his chance and came home from the war early, to woo and then marry Catherine.

Catherine, seeing her true love returned from the dead, cried out and fell to the floor. Her heart was broken by the deceit of Edmund and the return of his brother had killed her. She died in Nicholas's arms.

Edmund, the deceitful coward disappeared that night and was never seen again, although his family looked high and low for him.