



*A thin freckled child with spindly legs and wispy hair*

Twin boys came next, and Mr Ruggles, who had called at the Vicarage to ask for kind assistance in clothing his sons, only *one* having been expected, spent the Sunday after their arrival in church. This was partly in order to be out of the way of the fuss at home which the twins' arrival had caused, and partly as a kind of compliment to the Vicar's wife who had been so obliging in the matter of extra baby clothes. For Mr Ruggles was not an ardent churchgoer, and it had crossed his mind on the Vicarage doorstep that his last

attendance had been at the Harvest Festival held several months previously.



*– a startling contrast to the stout Lily Rose*

Although he knelt, stood and sat down with the congregation, Mr Ruggles found it hard to keep his attention on the service, for his mind was busy with many things. At the present moment the Twins filled most of it, but one corner, his gardening corner, was very much occupied with the progress of his spring vegetables and how it was that Mr Hook at No. 2

One End Street was so much further on with his leeks and carrots. Then there was the problem of whether one or two more hens could be squeezed into the soap-box. If the family was going to increase at the present rate, thought Mr Ruggles, the more he could produce in the food line at home the better. And then, always, of course, there was the Question of the Pig. Here Jo gave himself up to a few moments' happy dreaming ... Surely, in that corner between the hen-box and the little tool-shed, there was room enough for a small sty; he could take in a bit of the flower border and Rosie could have her clothes line a few inches shorter – come to that, he might even pull down the tool-shed altogether and keep his tools in the kitchen, though no doubt Rosie would object. Anyway, with twins in the house, it was high time the Pig Question was really considered seriously. There was a fleeting vision of the Sanitary Inspector, but it was of the briefest, and as the congregation sat down for the Second Lesson, hens, vegetables and twins once more filled Mr Ruggles's mind.

'Now the names of the twelve apostles are these,' read the Vicar.

Jo pricked up his ears. Names. There was another problem. Rosie had been very quiet about the names this time. He'd said nothing himself, but he was sure she'd something up her sleeve – he believed she'd never quite forgiven him over that Carnation business and Kate. It looked as if he ought to let her have some say in the matter this time, but, really, he drew the line at fancy and flowery names for boys, and they *would* be fancy or flowery or both if Rosie had a hand in it he was sure.

‘Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother,’ read the Vicar, ‘James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew ...’

‘Seems to go in pairs like,’ said Jo to himself. It seemed encouraging. ‘Better pick two of these and get it over,’ he thought, but the Vicar was reading on, and the next thing Jo caught was about a workman being worthy of his meat and that, too, he felt, was singularly appropriate and hoped his Sunday dinner would be a good one! Then, as if an idea had suddenly struck him, he seized a prayer book from the ledge in front of him, and, after wetting his finger and rustling many pages, found the place he wanted. He pulled a stub of pencil from his pocket, held it poised over the list of the apostles, shut his eyes and brought it down ‘plop!’ James and John. Jo breathed a sigh of relief – he’d been afraid of Philip and Bartholomew – especially Bartholomew. ‘That decides it,’ he muttered, and Mrs Chips, the grocer’s wife, sitting resplendent in sapphire blue velvet in the farthest corner of the pew so that no one by any possible chance should think they were friends (so great is the gulf between grocery and scavenging), turned a stern and reproving eye on him. But Mr Ruggles was oblivious; a problem was solved, and his mind made up for him – a labour-saving device he much

appreciated. The Twins’ names were settled, and he would slip round to the vestry immediately after the service and arrange for the christening.

When he got home with the good news Rosie was annoyed. ‘Decided, have you? Well, I’ve decided too; Roland and Nigel – that’s what they’re going to be. James and John indeed!’