

Mash or Chips?

By Mac Mckechnie

In the small, unassuming town of Whitby, there lived a man named Harold Figgins. Harold was the kind of man who could walk into a room, and everyone would immediately forget he was there. He had a perfectly average job at a perfectly average company where he did perfectly average things. Harold's life was a quiet symphony of mediocrity until one fateful Thursday when a package arrived on his doorstep.

It was an unremarkable package: a brown box with no return address, sealed with so much tape that it could have survived a nuclear blast. The label simply read "To Harold Figgins."

Harold was perplexed. He hadn't ordered anything. He led a life so uneventful that even junk mail bypassed his address out of sheer boredom. And yet, here it was. A package. For him. A sense of cautious curiosity crept over him.

Harold gingerly took a pair of scissors and began the delicate operation of cutting through the thick layers of tape. After what seemed like hours of snipping, peeling, and cursing under his breath, he finally opened the box. Inside was...another box.

This second box was smaller, metallic, and sealed with a tiny padlock. There was also a note, written in an elegant, looping script:

"To Harold Figgins, the time has come. Use this wisely."

Inside was...a potato. Harold blinked. He was not particularly well-versed in the world of mysterious packages, but this didn't seem right. He picked up the potato, turning it over in his hands. It was an ordinary potato, with a slightly bumpy surface and a faint smell of dirt.

"Greetings, Harold Figgins," the potato said in a deep, gravelly voice.

"Please, don't be alarmed," the potato continued, completely ignoring the fact that potatoes aren't supposed to talk. "I am Potatimus Prime, a mystical potato from a faraway land."

Harold was certain he was either dreaming or had finally lost his mind due to a life of overwhelming boredom. "Uh...Potatimus? Is this a joke? Are you some kind of advanced toy?"

"I assure you, I am no toy," Potatimus replied, rolling slightly as if to make its point more convincing. "I have been sent here to bestow upon you the greatest gift known to mankind."

Harold's mind raced. Money? Power? A lifetime supply of potato crisps? "What...what kind of gift?" he stammered.

"The power of 'potato telekinesis'," Potatimus intoned solemnly.

Harold stared at the talking potato in disbelief. "Potato what?"

"Potato telekinesis," Potatimus repeated. "The ability to control and manipulate all forms of potatoes with your mind. It is a rare and ancient power passed down through generations."

Harold blinked several times, hoping that if he blinked enough, the absurdity of the situation would vanish. It didn't. "Why...why would anyone need that power?"

"Why wouldn't they?" Potatimus retorted. "Potatoes are the cornerstone of civilization! They are versatile, nourishing, and come in many delightful forms - mashed, baked, fried, even turned into chips!"

Harold had to admit, the potato had a point. Potatoes were indeed versatile. But still, potato telekinesis? What would he even do with that?

"How does it work?" he asked, partly out of curiosity and partly because he couldn't think of anything better to ask.

"Simple," Potatimus replied. "Just focus your mind on any potato, and it will bend to your will."

Harold decided to give it a try, because, why not? It wasn't like his day could get any weirder. He focused on Potatimus, willing it to levitate. To his astonishment, the potato rose off the floor and hovered in mid-air.

"Whoa," Harold whispered, both thrilled and terrified by this newfound power.

"See? It is a gift unlike any other," Potatimus said, still floating. "With this power, you can..."

But before Potatimus could finish, there was a loud knock at the door. Harold's heart skipped a beat. Who could it be at this hour? He wasn't expecting anyone.

"Hide me!" Potatimus hissed. "They mustn't know I'm here!"

Harold, panicking slightly, shoved Potatimus into the box and closed the lid. He raced to the door and opened it, revealing a stern-looking man in a black suit.

"Mr. Figgins?" the man asked.

"Uh, yes?" Harold replied, trying to sound casual while his heart pounded in his chest.

"I'm Agent Spud from the Bureau of Root Vegetables," the man said, flashing a badge that looked suspiciously like a potato peeler. "We have reason to believe you're harbouring a rogue potato."

"A rogue potato?" Harold repeated, trying to play dumb. "I don't know what you're talking about."

Agent Spud narrowed his eyes. "Do not lie to me, Mr. Figgins. We have been tracking Potatimus Prime for years. He's extremely dangerous."

"Dangerous? He's just a potato!" Harold protested, sweat beginning to bead on his forehead.

"We must take him into custody," Agent Spud continued. "For the safety of all mankind."

Just then, a loud thumping came from the kitchen. Agent Spud's eyes widened. "He's trying to escape! Out of my way!"

The agent moved past Harold and into the kitchen, just in time to see the box burst open. Potatimus shot out, spinning wildly like a potato tornado.

"Harold!" Potatimus yelled. "Help me!"

But before Harold could do anything, Agent Spud whipped out what looked like a tiny Taser and zapped Potatimus. The potato fell to the floor with a soft thud, lifeless once more.

"Got him," Agent Spud said, scooping the potato into a bag. "Good work, Mr. Figgins. You're a hero."

"I am?" Harold asked, still processing the fact that he had just experienced a potato chase in his own kitchen.

And with that, the agent left, leaving Harold alone in his kitchen, wondering if it had all been some bizarre dream.

Harold never spoke of the incident again. But every time he saw a potato, he couldn't help but feel a strange sense of longing for the spud that almost made his life interesting.