

The Present



I held out my shaking hands, hardly daring to breathe.

'Hold them flat and still, you don't want to drop him,' said my dad.

Him? Oh my goodness, they had...

I held my hands out as flat and as still as I possibly could. I could almost feel my new puppy's warm and furry bottom in my hands.

Something was very gently placed in my upturned palms.

Hmm. This is strange.

I could feel a cool, smooth, hard, flat object. It weighed about the same as my school lunch box (before I'd eaten the contents). For a terrible moment, I thought it was my lunch box, or a new one at any rate.

Then I slowly opened one eye. I didn't really know what I was seeing so I opened both eyes. I looked down upon something resembling a soldier's helmet. It was greeny-brown with rather pretty circular patterns on it. Right at that moment, a head, followed by a tail and four scaly legs with sharp claws at the ends, shot out from beneath the helmet. I was so shocked I screamed and almost dropped it. The head, four legs and tail flew back in - and then it dawned on me.

My parents had got me a tortoise!