

The Blackberry Picking Machine by Olivia Baker

“Do you think we will be successful this year?” I questioned dad excitedly, as we hurriedly made our way along the brown cobbly path to the best blackberry bush (which sat on the heath near our house), “I think so” replied dad equally excited. “Unlike last year’s awful pick, with your amazing, blackberry picking machine we will get the best ones!”

Every year I longed to reach the lovely ones at the top and centre of the bush; they always looked so fruitful, round, plump and juicy. This year was even more exciting as the weather was ideal for growing and I do have the freedom to go to the blackberry bushes. I am determined to get the best ones; they are mini water balloons filled with fine taste, always out of reach. They call to me; tempt me like a child in a sweet shop, twist my face into a kind of tormented grin.

Proudly carrying my homemade marvellous machine, the steel frame caught a sunbeam from the afternoon sun.

“It can tackle the problem head-on with its extendable arm, where the berries are out of reach” I informed dad. (I was certain that the scissors I had stuck to the end of a pole would sort out the blackberry removal and a tub slotted underneath to catch them was simply genius). I could taste victory.

We reached the blackberry bush. There they were. Lush. Spying the first candidate, I felt confident and nervous in equal measure as I cautiously extended the arm on my crazy contraption. Hooking it under the first berry and pushing up on the pole, I carefully snipped it off and satisfyingly watched it tumble into the pot. Yes! Got it.

“Sweet, succulent success!” I congratulated myself. Like a lighthouse, my eyes darted around for dad. Noting him picking some from another bush, I sneakily slipped the just-picked berry into my mouth. An abundance of bold blackberry filled my mouth like a burst dam. Bliss.

Another sunbeam revealed the best yet; low and central. Machine fully extended; could I get it? If I hadn’t made my machine super long, I wouldn’t have had a chance at all. Dodging brambles, my heart started to skip and dance with excitement. Mesmerised by the blackberry I concentrated hard. Precariously leaning forward, I tipped in the machine...

“Owwwchhh!”

Crashing into the spikey bush, stinging my legs on the surrounding nettles and flattening the innocent bush en-route to the ground, I was completely coated with blackberry juice! Thankfully, the only real damage was scratches on my legs; my machine was still in one piece.

Dad appeared and slowly peered into the bush with a wry grin, seeing me sat in a sulky heap. “Anyone for blackberry crumble?”