

Ben Weston

Tommy the Talking Lunch Box

Every day Tommy and Sammy went to school together. They were best friends who spent hours each day talking to each other. They never were without one another. Tommy was a lunch box, and Sammy was salami. Sammy was packed for lunch and placed inside Tommy where he would be safe until lunch. Then Sammy would get eaten. But every day a new slice of Sammy would be in Gerald's lunch so Tommy and Sammy would never be apart for long.

Sammy wasn't the only thing in Tommy. Along with salami, every day Bert, the bread was packed for lunch, Stacy, the strawberry, was packed for lunch, and Jerry, the juice was packed. They all got along with each other inside Tommy the lunch box.

But Tommy was no ordinary lunch box. He could talk to humans. Of course, Tommy was a little bit shy around them, so he really only talked to one human, Gerald, the little boy who ate lunch from Tommy.

Tommy was a great friend to everybody he knew. When ever somebody felt sad, he would cheer them up by telling them a joke or by telling them how they were special.

One day he saw Stacy all alone after lunch. Stacy was alone and crying. Tommy asked Stacy "What's wrong?"

"All of the other fruits get eaten at lunch, except for me."

"That's alright, I bet that Gerald just forgot to eat you today, tomorrow will be



different."

That night Tommy talked to Gerald. He told him that he should eat all of his food in his lunch so that no food feels left out. The next day, instead of eating Sammy first, Gerald went right for Stacy, and ate her up in one bite.

"Thanks Tommy," Stacy said, "that made me feel a lot better."

In the morning before school, Gerald always watched his parents make his lunch, so that they didn't forget anything. He didn't want any fruit to feel left out. On this particular day, Gerald noticed what his parents were putting in their lunches.

"Mom, Dad, what are you putting in your lunch?"

"Oh nothing, just grown up food."

"Please tell me, I'm curious."

"Well, in my lunch I have brussel sprouts, spinach salad, and tomato juice," his father said.

"Ewww, that sounds gross. I think I like salami sandwiches better." But Gerald was still curious. He had never tried spinach salad or tomato juice before.

The next day, Gerald asked his parents if he could have the same lunch as them. His parents seemed confused but they packed tomato juice and brussel sprouts like Gerald asked.

Tommy didn't know what was going on. He asked Gerald "Where's Sammy, you always have a salami sandwich for lunch."

"I'm having what Mom and Dad eat for lunch today."

"Why?"

"Because if my parents like it, then I will too."

At lunch, Gerald opened up Tommy. A foul smell escaped from inside the lunch box, "that smells gross, what is that?" said Gerald "That's the smell of brussel sprouts and spinach salad." Tommy explained.

"That smells nasty." But Gerald tried to eat his lunch anyways. Hr didn't like the taste of brussel sprouts, or the texture of spinach salad. He wanted to wash out his mouth with some tomato juice, but it tasted weird too. Gerald didn't even finish his lunch, and was hungry for the rest of the day.

When he came home from school, his parents asked him how he liked his lunch.

"It was good."

"Really, oh that's great sweetie. It's a lot healthier than your regular lunch."

Tommy didn't like hearing that. He knew that Sammy, Stacy, and Jerry were just as healthy as brussel sprouts. But he was afraid to speak out. He had never talked to Gerald's parents before.

"Would you like it if we packed you the same lunch tomorrow?" Gerald's parents asked.

Gerald wanted to look grown-up, and he wanted to be like his parents, so he agreed.

The next day, the same thing happened. Gerald couldn't finish his lunch, and

was hungry the whole day. Tommy didn't understand. Why would Gerald say something that wasn't true?

For the next week, Gerald ate brussel sprouts and spinach salad for lunch, until one day he felt sick. He stayed home from school. He knew why he felt bad. It was because he was eating the same lunch as his parents. But he didn't want to tell his parents to pack him his regular lunch, he wanted to eat the same lunch as an adult.

Sammy and all of his food friends had a talk with Tommy.

"Tommy, why aren't we being eaten? Does Gerald not like the way we taste?"

"No, he loves the way you taste. He wants to be a grown up, so his parents are packing him a grown-up lunch."

"Does he like the way his new lunches taste?"

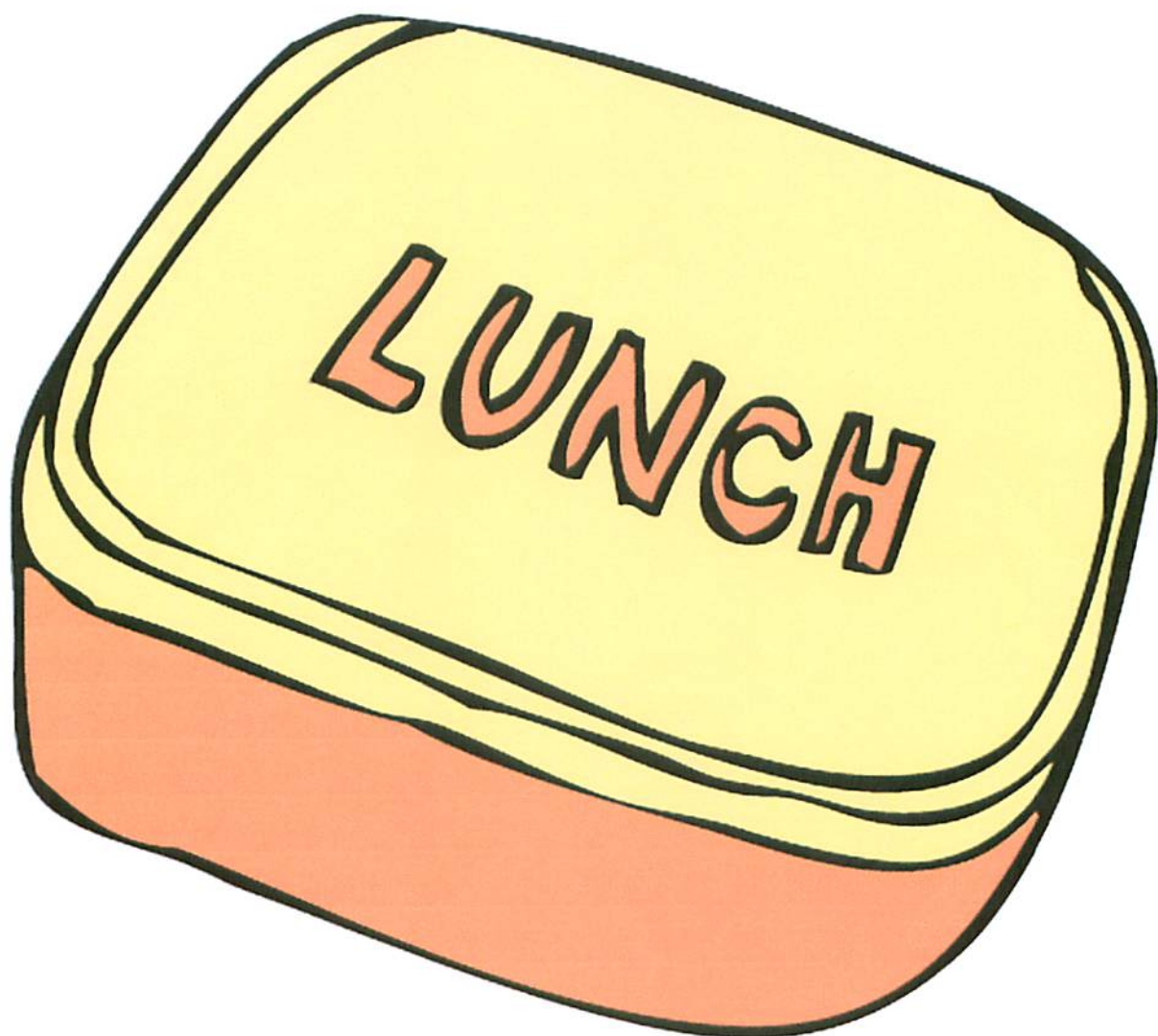
"No, he thinks they are gross."

"So then why does he eat them?"

"I don't know."

"Tommy, I think you should talk to Gerald. Explain to him that grown ups and kids are different."

So Tommy talked to Gerald. He explained to him that grown ups like grown up food. And that kids like kid food. But Gerald didn't want to admit that he didn't like the grown up food. He still thought that to be a grown-up, you had to talk like one, and act like one, and eat like one.



That night Gerald couldn't sleep. He tried to count sheep, and asked his parents to read him a bed time story, but nothing worked. He layed awake in his bed for hours. In the middle of the night, Gerald heard a sound coming from his kitchen. He decided to sneak around and see what the noise was.

So he got on his tippy toes and walked really softly down the stairs, through the living room, into the kitchen. He hid behind the counter, and looked over. Somebody had opened the fridge and had taken out the bread and salami. He peered over the counter top and saw his dad. He was eating a sandwich.

"Hey dad, what are you doing?" Gerald confronted his father.

"I'm eating a salami sandwich."

"But your a grown up, you can't eat that, it's not grown up food."

"Who says? If I'm a grown up, and I like eating salami sandwiches, why can't I eat a salami sandwich?"

"But I thought you like tomato juice and Spinach salad?"

"I do, but I also love salami. I have since I was a little boy."

"Dad, could you pack a salami sandwich in my lunch tomorrow?"

"Sure."

"And could you put in strawberries, and apple juice too?"

"Sure."

Tommy was on the kitchen counter the entire time, quiet as a mouse, listening to Gerald's conversation. He was so happy to hear the news that he and Sammy would be reunited the next day for lunch. And all three of them went to bed, looking forward to tomorrow.