

## Fairy Tale - Green Artichokes In a Jam

Once upon a time in the kingdom of Vegetania, not so very far from here, there was a great garden. In this garden there lived many, many vegetables. On the outside edge of the garden there lived a family of artichokes. There was the father, Art Artichoke; the mother, Alice Artichoke and their son, Aaron Artichoke—but everyone called him Little Artie. In the next row lived Grandma Artichoke.

Father Artichoke was a very busy artichoke. He worked many, many hours. When he was not working he would be out in the vegetable garden helping with the many activities that went on. He also spent a lot of time helping other vegetables when they had problems he could fix. All the vegetables in the garden thought he was a wonderful vegetable. He was a very important part of the Vegetania Community Church. He was the chair artichoke of the board. Sunday school superintendent and song leader.

Mother Artichoke worked hard also. She took care of the house, when she wasn't working in the vegetable garden. She made sure that everything was ready for Little Artie. Mother Artichoke worshipped Father Artichoke. She knew and taught Little Artie to believe that Father Artichoke was the king of the garden. When Father Artichoke spoke people listened. When Mother Artichoke was not home Grandma Artichoke took care of Little Artie.

Grandma Artichoke was very special to Little Artie. He loved to be with her because she loved him just like he was. She would play artichoke games with him like Old Maid, Tidally-Winks and Checkers. Sometimes Little Artie would just sit and watch TV with her. He liked just being with her.

Little Artie loved his families little part of the vegetable garden. He was safe there. He never had to worry or fear because he knew that the others would take care of him. He didn't care that there weren't other vegetables close by that he could play with. After all he could entertain himself. And when he got bored with that Grandma Artichoke would play with him. The best thing he liked about his home was that there were never any problems there.

Everything was perfect...or so Little Artie thought.

One day a big yellow vegetable cart pulled into the row. Mother Artichoke put Little Artie on the vegetable cart and sent him off to Vegetable school. The driver of the vegetable cart said, "Well hello Little Artie, find a seat so we can go." When the vegetable cart arrived at the Vegetable school, all the vegetables piled off the cart. They went into the gymnasium. The Principal, Mr. Banana, stood up in front of all the vegetables and began to call out the names of the students according to what class they were in. First he went through the kindergartners and called each one by name, then the first graders and called each on by name, then second graders, third graders, fourth graders and when he go to the fifth graders one of the vegetables raise his hand and said, "Mr. Banana, I don't think this little artichoke is in the fifth or sixth grade." Mr. Banana said, "Oh, Little Artie what are you doing here, are you visiting with your daddy?" It took all that Little Artie could muster, but he finally said, "No sir, I'm going to school!" Mr. Banana said, "Now Little Artie, you're not ready to go to school yet. You go with Mrs. Cabbage and she will help you find your daddy." Little Artie did as Mr. Banana said and went with Mrs. Cabbage.

He did that because that's what good little artichokes do—obey their elders.

It took several hours, and Little Artie waited in the principal's office while they tracked down Father Artichoke. Little Artie felt all alone. They must not want him here at the vegetable school. He wished that Father Artichoke would hurry up and get there. He wished Mother or Grandma Artichoke would

come and rescue him from this scary place. Father Artichoke finally came to the school and talked to them. He knew Father would make things OK. Soon Mrs. Cabbage said, "Come on Little Artie we're going to take you to class." He went with Mrs. Cabbage because that's what good little artichokes do.

When they go to the classroom, Mrs. Cabbage said to the teacher, "Here is one more vegetable for you class, this is Little Artie Artichoke." Little Artie looked around the room was filled with peas, beans and corn. He didn't see any other artichokes there.

The other vegetable in the class didn't like Little Artie. They would tease him and call him names. They would hit him and not want to play with him. After all Little Artie was different. He was very shy. He didn't talk very much. And when he got scared, sometimes he cried. And when Little Artie did something stupid or dumb, the other vegetables would chant, "We do not like green Artichokes in a jam, we do not like him bad as he am." This hurt Little Artie very much. But he didn't strike back at the kids or be mean to them, because he knew it wasn't nice to be mean to other vegetables and being kind was what good little artichokes do.

The more Little Artie heard the chant, "We do not like green Artichokes in a jam, we do not like him bad as he am." The more he began to believe it. So he withdrew inside his leaves and there he hid. When he was inside his leaves, no one could hurt him. He was safe and secure. He could be anything he wanted to be. He could be a fire artichoke, a superhero an orchestra conductor, or anything else he wanted. He could go on exotic journeys and do brave and adventurous things. No one laughed at him or made fun of him. Little Artie liked this world very, very much. So he decided that whenever he had to face other vegetables or the vegetable garden he would put on a mask. He developed all different types of masks. Each time a new situation arose he created a mask. Whenever he had the mask on nothing could hurt him.

He believed that there was a farmer, who made the vegetable garden and that the farmer would take care of you because that's what good little artichokes are supposed to believe. But when the storms came, he wondered where were Daddy and Mommy Artichoke? Where was Grandma Artichoke? Where was the farmer? They must not care. If they cared they would be there.

Artie dreaded going to the vegetable school. As the years progressed the little artichoke was deluged with more and more rain from the other vegetable students and teachers that made him believe that he was totally worthless. He accepted the rain as truth, because that's what good little artichokes do.

When rainstorms would come he would quickly put on a mask. They worked for a while, but then his magical power started to fade away. Little Artie began to have doubts in his own mind. The masks could not protect him from his own attacks. When the rain would come, Little Artie re-lived it over and over again. Soon he started to believe it was true. So he started saying to himself, "I do not like green Artichokes in a jam, I do not like me bad I am." And the tape played on and on. When the storms came, the tape played and kept on playing. After a while Little Artie stopped believing that there was rain. The words that Little Artie would hear, whether they were good or bad had no meaning to him. He simply could not believe in any rain.

Finally he graduated out of the vegetable school and headed off into the big garden. But the garden is a scary place: there are weeds, insects and other things that can hurt a little artichoke. But by now Little Artie had become very good at putting on masks. He put on the Mister Friendly mask. He stopped associating with those in the vegetable garden where he grew up and took on a new set of vegetable friends and peers. He vowed that he would never be hurt again. If there were mean vegetables, he would just run away. And that he did. No matter how hard he tried, the tapes kept playing in his head, "I do not like green Artichokes in a jam, I do not like me bad I am." He finally settled in to a routine and

for a while the tape played softly. He now was wearing the in-control mask. That was until a vegetable said something about Little Artie, or another vegetable was not pleased with him. Then the tape played again and again. He believed what they said, because that's what good little artichokes do.

Little Artie decided that he had to make a change in his life. So he began to read motivational books. He learned all the phrases. He became part of programs that were designed to make you a successful vegetable. He began to do the things that up-and-coming vegetables do. But you see that wasn't really Little Artie, he had a mask on. He heard the words but they had no meaning. They were syllables. No matter how hard he tried to believe the words he read and heard, the tape continued to play, "I do not like green Artichokes in a jam, I do not like me bad I am."

A few years later the farmer came into the Artichoke row and he picked Grandma Artichoke and Father Artichoke. He took them away. Mother and Little Artie missed them very much. Now Little Artie felt even more alone. He didn't understand why the farmer would come and pick good vegetables and take them away and let the bad vegetables stay in the garden. Be he accepted the fact that they were gone and the farmer must have had a plan—because that's what good little artichokes are supposed to do.

Now that Father Artichoke was gone. Little Artie became the father artichoke. After all there was Mother and Sister Artichoke to take care of. He didn't think he could do it, but he did because that's what good little artichokes do.

Just recently Little Artie Artichoke faced a major change in his life. And what did he do? He listened to the tape. "I do not like green Artichokes in a jam, I do not like me bad I am." Do you know what became of Little Artie Artichoke..?

HE CHOKED!

And he existed ...after

– Because that's what good little artichokes do.

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## SCRAMBLED ARTICHOKE

1 Small Artichoke  
1 part Shyness  
1 part imagination

Put in a bowl and marinate with teasing. Keep the artichokes sealed tightly. Do not allow the artichoke to express itself.

On a regular basis mix in self-doubt and fear. After several years the artichoke will be thoroughly scrambled.