

The Adventurewoods

the first stories from
The Lost Tales of Rudheath

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The Lost Tales of Rudheath**

**The stories in this book were discovered,
uncovered, investigated and invented by
the pupils, teachers and families of
Rudheath Primary School
in the summer of 2017
with the help of storyteller, artist and
amphibian Gordon MacLellan,
from Creeping Toad**

**a Do It Together activity for
Rudheath and Witton Together**



Chapter 1 ***The Adventure begins***

*Our story comes from long but not too long ago.
There were houses here in Rudheath then but not
as many as now. There were trees along the river
bank and out there and over there, down the road
and past the crossroads, the wild lands waited.*

They woke in the morning to a missing pet.
A rabbit, much loved, much cuddled, was gone.
Its hutch empty,
Its run abandoned,
No sign in the house,
No clue in the garden,
No trace in the streets.

So they gathered a rescue kit,
A bag of useful usefulnesses,
And four children set off into the morning.
Two boys and two girls,
Friends full of hope and adventure,
They had torches and towels,
A picnic, a map and a compass,
And a rope for swinging through trees.

They took lots of string for emergency things
And a bright green apple for healing.

They found sticks for campfires and shelters and
sheds,
For a boat and for fishing rods.
They found twigs for drawing maps on leaves.

But where was the rabbit?
Had it wandered?
Had it been stolen?
It must have been stolen!
There was no way that rabbit, so loved and so
loving, would leave home...

Footprints in the mud led them into the trees,
And they saw a trail catching the light,
Little glimmers in the fallen leaves,
“Clever rabbit! We’ll find her in no time!”
They followed the trail.
Of feet?
Of sweets?
Of stones?
Of bright green apples through the trees.
Hungry by now, their picnic long gone,
They ate the apples as they went along,
Not thinking of the way home and a path they might
not remember.
So, they crunched and munched and chewed their
way as the trees grew taller and the woods grew
darker.

There are mysteries here,
In these dark woods,
Stories never told,
Treasures never found,
People forever lost...

These are the woods of the Tornado Trees.
These are the woods where the Leaf Dragon lives
in the tree tops,
His scales as green and as delicate as the leaves
themselves.
Camouflaged, he hides,
Scared of the hunters who might come to kill him.

These are the woods where a miner searches for
gold
Twenty years of searching have brought no gold,
No treasure,
Just one dirty old shoe.
But in those twenty years of searching,
This miner,
He has not washed,
He has not shaved,
He has not cut or combed his hair,
His beard reaches down to his knees.
Some people don't believe he's even there,
But we know that somewhere in these deep, dark
woods,
That miner is still searching for treasure.
And no-one else will be allowed to find it first.

And through the woods and far from home there is
an old house.

Where, one clock ticks endlessly,
While two lonely butterflies flutter in the warm
summer breeze
Which sways the three apple trees from side to
side,
Four leaves carved into a totem are slowly being
overgrown by Grinch-green moss.
Five bikes stand beside that totem,
Ready for riders and adventures.

A mad old man lives there.
A mad old man with a walking stick
And a useless dog,
Friendly as anything, it doesn't growl,
It doesn't bark at danger,
It can't find a bone in its bowl,
And it can't help the old man in his quest
For a golden flower from the magic tree that grows
somewhere in these woods.

The apple trail led the children, deep into the woods
of the tornado trees, but there by a twisted, lumpy,
moss-covered stump, the trail stopped. By then the
children had eaten so many, so many very green
apples, so many apples that were not quite ripe,
that they sat down under the tree and felt rather
ill....

Add your own picture or story here

STREET STORY 1

These are short stories about the streets and gardens of Rudheath.

Tornado Trees

Most apple trees are very happy to share their apples with people. They don't mind if you are the farmer or the gardener or children who have sneaked in to run away with an apple.

In the streets of Rudheath, however, you must be careful which trees you take an apple from. If you pick an apple without asking the tree politely if you can, sometimes the tree will start to shiver and shake. If it does that you had better start running for that tree must be one of the Tornado Trees.

These trees quiver and shiver and shake until suddenly they twist themselves into dark whirling storm clouds and then they will chase you down the street. If they catch you, you will be whirled up and thrown across the town but if you manage to stop and sit the stolen apple down on the ground, the tornado will stop its spinning and settle down around its apple, sinking its roots into the ground where it has stopped.

This is why, when you walk through Rudheath, Witton and all of Northwich, you sometimes find trees in unexpected places - on a street corner, in

the middle of a garden, on a playing field. These are the Tornado Trees settled in place until someone else annoys them enough to set the wind-trees spinning.

Chapter 2 ***A house of sticks and leaves and prickles***

Full of apples and uneasiness,
The children grumbled,
The children groaned,
The children lent against the tree stump and felt
horribly ill.
They couldn't move!
They wanted to lie down.
They wanted to eat some more but were hurting too
much.
They wanted to sleep.
They just wanted everything to stop!

Their grumbles shook a nest
And above them in the old tree
A wise old owl woke up.

*"I am not an Owl Doctor,
But my brother is.
I know answers and understandings and recipes,
Only he can mix the medicine you'll need"*

She gave them a recipe,
Written carefully in mouseink on leafpaper
And sent them off to find

*a bundle of sticks
the tiniest apple from the tallest tree
a twist of bark from a pink tree
green leaves
one conker.
and...
and shell scraped from the rarest of eggs*

A trail through the trees,
Eggs were hidden under the leaves
White eggs,
Blue eggs,
Dragon eggs,
Dinosaur eggs,
But they only need one golden egg
Buried beside the blue grass
Where they had to sing the password
For the earth to release that hidden egg
*“Smelly, smelly
O, smelly eggs,
Smelly!”*

The Owl Doctor mixed the medicine for them.
It tasted of pain,
Of chocolate and swamps,
Of chewing gum and slugs.
It was horrible.

They felt much better just by looking at it!
And their rabbit was still lost!

So, onwards
Through the woods of yellow trees,
Straight trees,
Twisted trees.

Under a big tree where the leaf dragon was hiding
and watching,
The sticky remains of teabags and marshmallows
lay in the charcoal
Of an old campfire.

A party!
Footprints told a sinister story:
A party, yes
But a party for a dragon and
Teabags?
A wizard perhaps?
Would a ghost drink cups of tea?
A skeleton?
A witch?
A vampire?
A zombie?
A princess?
A dangerous boy?
Bear Grylls on his next adventure: "Picnics with a
Dragon"?
All of these?

Marshmallows, yes,
Teabags, yes.
Rabbit bones from a rabbit-burger?
No!
But there!
There! Across the fire, a path into the darker woods
A path between thorns and prickles,
Where one tuft of rabbit fur lay on the earth.

Onwards they went
And in the bushes they found a lost spaceman!
Fallen from his spaceship with nowhere to go
And no-one to know,
So he joined them on their search.

Deep in the darkest woods,
In a house of sticks and leaves and prickles
A treehouse as high as a giraffe's nose
They met a goblin and a fairy and a
Bright colourful squirrel.
Help us?
Can you help us?

Follow the path, the forest people said
There is a thief, the best of thieves,
The worst of thieves, deep in these woods.
If anyone has stolen your rabbit
That's where she'll be!

STREET STORY 2

Hidden worlds and underground wonders

There is a secret door in a tree here in Rudheath that will take you down a long set of stairs to a world of twigs and mud where the green turtles live.

If you squelch through the turtle swamp, you may find the wonderful city of the toys. There are magical houses here and spooky houses, castles, a whole city with cars and shops and people with magical things and magic in their fingertips. To find your way home again, however, you will need to find the house of the boy who lives in the woods, a house made of branches and leaves. Only he can give you the map that could bring you home. Only he can give you the key to put in the lock to open that secret door from the other side.

Many people have gone into the World of Toys and Turtles but very few have found the Boy, borrowed his key and come home

CHAPTER 3

A pink frog stole my rabbit!

Onwards!

Through the darkwoods,
Through the dangerwoods,
Into the shadows and the trailing cobwebs
Of giant spiders.

Peering ahead,
They almost miss the bottle in the mud,
But here is help,
A clue!
A message in a bottle!
Help me! Help me! Help me! Help me!
And a map
And at the end of the map,
Not a captured rabbit but
An angry dwarf
Sitting muttering in his hole under a tree.

Robbed! Robbed!
I've been robbed!
My gold is gone, my precious things.
She took them, she's taken them!
She'll have taken your rabbit, too.

So together they set out
Four children, one spaceman and a dwarf, all beard
and muttering,

And through the woods they went.
Between the tall trees,
And the unicorn bushes,
Behind the owl pole,
And under the sideways apple tree,
And beside a tall tree, the tallest tree
“We need a key”, said the dwarf, “a key to open the treasure chests of the thief. She keeps her key in an old bird’s nest on the thinnest twig at the toppest top of this tallest tree.”

“But, I can’t climb”, he said, *“My beard gets in the way”*
He looked at the spaceman.
“O, I can’t climb,” said the spaceman, *“I’m scared of heights...”*
The oldest boy said, *“I can’t climb, I might get my shoes dirty.”*
The oldest girl said, *“I can’t climb the tree, I’m still not feeling very well.”*
“I can’t climb,” said the other boy, *“I’m allergic to trees and I’ll come over all spotty and sore.”*

They all looked at the youngest and smallest child.

So she went up the tree,
Scrambling, scratching, hanging on and clinging
Squirrel swift and monkey strong,
And there she found in that old bird’s nest, a golden flower,
A heavy, round metal rose.

Is this a key?

But as she lifted it,
It slipped.
She saw it fall,
Fast as a stone,
Bouncing off branches
Down and down to splash,
Into a glittering crystal river running beside the tree.
She leaned too far
She clutched too late
And the girl followed the golden flower.

She hit the river with a tremendous splash
And sank.
Down.
Down past wriggling tadpoles
And careful fish,
Past eels and snakes and guarding crocodiles,
To land beside a beautiful pink palace built on the
bottom of the river.
She saw a glint of gold and,
Grabbing the flower out of the mud,
Found she could breathe under water.

The palace was wonderful, decorated with patterns of weeds and reeds and the wind on the water. The girl went in, passing halls and thrones. Everything was pink. The walls were pink. The floors were pink. The ceilings were pink. The chairs were pink. The tables were pink. The curtains were pink. The carpets were pink. She found a set of stairs that ran

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down, under the palace. Nothing here was pink. It was dark and gloomy and sinister in shades of grey and green. Here she found a dungeon. There was a chest right in the middle of the room.

It was locked with a round lock that the flower would fit. She realised that to open the lock she would have to let go of the key and then she would only have as long as she could hold her breath to see what was in the chest and get out before the river would claim her and she would drown.

The key device clicked in, round flower in round lock. It turned. The chest opened and the girl grabbed. A golden goblet. An elegant bottle. A tiny bell. A shining lamp. A carved mouse. A golden shoe.

And ran.

Through the palace

Don't gasp! She thought!

Don't breathe!

Just get out! Get up!

Look! Look!

The stairs, the hall, the river, the bottom of a duck!

The duck was very surprised

But the girl burst out of the water like a leaping dolphin.

Her friends cheered.

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The dwarf shouted and danced!

My goblet! My goblet!

He grabbed the golden cup and ran away.

The bell was full of mud.

They cleaned it.

The bottle was full of dust.

They shook it.

The lamp was grubby.

They polished it.

The bell rang.

And turned into a rabbit!

The dust from the bottle,

Shaped itself into another rabbit!

The lamp shone and sparkled and a rabbit-genie floated out

"It's our rabbit!" shouted the children, to the rabbit from the bell.

"It's our rabbit!"

They hugged their fluffy friend and looked at the other two.

The rabbit genie offered a wish.

She could only grant carrots.

The dust rabbit just looked lonely.

Then the crystal river shivered

The water boiled.

And out of the river came a pink crown followed by the rest of a giant pink frog

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The pink frog princess was the greatest thief in all
the land,
And she did not like being robbed.

“Run!” said the oldest boy.
They ran.

Out of the water came the Frog Princess with her
troll guards beside her.

The children ran.
The Frog Princess croaked like thunder
The trolls dribbled into their leaf beards,
Shaking the ground as they started to run.

STREET STORY 3

Unicorns

Once upon a time, in a wonderful garden, at midnight, a purple flower bloomed under the light of a full moon. Its petals shone and glittered like starlight. Midnight bumblebees would come and collect the glitter-pollen from the flower and if you could find some of that shining dust - or even eat some of the glitter honey, you could turn into a unicorn.

This magical garden was lost long ago, but even today, if you stand on the corner of Belmont Rd some nights, when the full moon shines, you can still hear the musical buzz of the Midnight Bees and you might see a dust of glitter shining on the breeze.

There are other ways of finding unicorns. Some shells, if you stroke them, will call a sea unicorn from the waves, while a certain beautiful bottle, if polished, will call an air unicorn down from the sky

CHAPTER 4

The wood wakes up

They ran.
They ran.
As fast as tigers, as leopards, as cheetahs,
They ran.
But the Frog Princess took huge leaps and soon
caught up with them.
Lamborgini fast, the friends skidded round a corner
and kept running.

Run!
Run!
Don't stop!
They encouraged each other.
The old ones helped the young ones.
The big girl carried their pet rabbit.
The dust-rabbit floated.
The spaceman threw outerspace snacks,
The Rabbit-genie threw carrots,
But the trolls caught them in mid-air and crunched
the carrots like bones.

They ran.
There was a swamp in front of them,
Stinking, green and weedy,
There was a log so they all ran straight over the
Frog-full water and onto the other side.

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The alligator woke up in surprise and snapped his jaws!

Too late for children and rabbits,
His scissor teeth sliced off two troll's toes.
But the trolls kept chasing,
And the alligator felt ill.

They ran!

There was a weird wailing warble and
Green alien hands reached down from a cloud.
Their spaceman friend was gone
Rescued by his own interstellar friends.

They ran.

One big girl,
One big boy,
One small girl,
One small boy,
One dusty rabbit,
One fluffy rabbit,
One fat Frog princess,
Two trolls,
And a genie in a lamp.

They ran.

The ground shook as the trolls got closer.
The Frog Princess gave another leap and landed
right in front of the friends
The children skidded and scrambled
Someone slid right through the Frog's legs
But her long fingers caught at the children.

With a screech,
Monkeys swung down from the trees,
Hand over hand over tail.
They could not lift the children right up into their
trees
But the monkeys swung them,
Flying,
Screaming,
To land
On the backs of Velociraptors.
The dinosaurs raced through the woods
Hunting-fast,
Dangerous-fast,
Mouths-full-of-sharp-teeth-fast.
Deadly friends.

The clouds shook
The trees trembled as the Frog roared her anger.
The trolls broke branches off the trees and threw
them at the children.

The dinosaurs ran
The children cheered!
Safe!
Safe!
No!
The trolls were there.
Right in front of them.
Huge hairy hands,
Leafy hair,

Skins as tough as treebark,
Mouths to give a toothfairy nightmares!

The velociraptors stumbled.
They snarled and snapped.
The children rolled free.
Everyone froze and the trolls smiled slow wide
smiles.

Softly,
A squeaking howl came wandering through the
trees.
The trolls stopped!
The howl came again.
The trolls were scared!
They looked round for their Frog Princess.
And as soon as they looked away
The Guinea Wolf ran out of the bushes,
The children jumped on his back.
They all jumped on his back.
Four children,
Two rabbits,
A genie in a bottle,
And two velociraptors.
The chase was on again!

The trolls chased
But it was too late for them.
The Apple Tree Man had been woken by all the
noise.
He felt branches torn,

His trees being broken,
He clicked his fingers.
With every click, one tree
And then another tree
Woke.

Tree Monsters and Woodland Warriors.
Long branches reaching out.
Twigs snagging in troll hair.
Sticks catching troll arms.
Branches like pythons, like anacondas, wrapping
The trolls into wooden cages.
The Frog Princess leapt into the air
But twig finger caught her toes
Her slippery legs
Her fat frog-tummy,
And strong branches pulled her into their wooden
prison.

The children cheered!
They thanked the Velociraptors (and offered them
some carrots)
They thanked the brave Guinea-wolf (and offered
him some carrots)
They said good-bye to their woodland friends and
set off .

But they had no idea where they were.
Or how to find their way home.

STREET STORY 4

A golden shoe

Long ago, a mouse was lost and looking for a home. This mouse was special for, if she wanted to, anything she touched with her whiskers could be turned to gold. This was good if she was being hunted and there were lots of solid gold cats in Northwich before the cats learned to stay away from her. But then people wanted to catch her so she could make gold for them and they chased her from hole to hole to nest to tree, until she had nowhere left to hide. At last she found an old shoe and crept inside. It was so horrible, no one thought of looking for her there.

She lived there happily for the rest of her life with lots of mouse-children. When she was an old mouse and about to die, she turned her wonderful shoe gold and with the last twitch of her whiskers turned herself to gold as well. The Golden Mouse Shoe was a prize possession of one of the old families of Witton until one day the golden shoe was lost in a field and has not been seen since.

CHAPTER 5

Trees as solid and as still as stone

Saved now,
Safe again,
But lost.

These woods spread wild and wide around them.

Strange creatures whisper in the shadows,
Strange calls echo from the branches of the
candyfloss trees.

The friends follow a rainbow path,
Spaghetti trees, dribbling tomato sauce from their
trunks,
Growing meatballs like apples,
Save the hungry children with a feast from their
spaghetti leaves.

Crazy confetti crabs climb,
Rattling, through the air,
After the cloud trees
Floating up to the skies.

By a mysterious sea they find the ocean trees,
Rooted only ever in salt water,
Stranding unicorns in their branches when the tide
comes in,
While sea monkeys laugh and point from the
Purple seaweed branches,
And courageous crabs lie on stones beneath the
canopy.

Rescuing unicorns with their ropes,
The children ride past,
The walking, talking firebreathing trees,
Glad that unicorn hooves are faster than
Firebreathing roots,
Or the tiny dragons that live in fire-breathing holes,
In the fire-breathing trees....

They hear water
And hope for changes.
A wonderful watery waterfall,
Where water waves over rock-solid rocks,
And a delightful, golden dolphin plays in the spray.
And red-berry bushes grow on the banks.

They follow the river,
Hoping for hope,
Hoping for home,
Or at least a signpost.
There were more animals now.
A sly snake slithered through the rocks,
A rhino was running, roaring,
Splat the Rainbow Cat was being cute,
While rainbow snakes were eating meatballs.
Perfect pandas, brave as a dinosaurs, were
playing,
A woolly wolf watched
A Flaming Fire Tree growing red rubies instead of
conkers.
A sensitive, scared squirrel slid slowly across a

trailing tree.

Riding along a shining yellow path,
They felt they were getting somewhere,
Past the creepy crocodile,
Soon they would be home!
Past the terrifying trees,
And the girl with the pop-out eyes,
They must be nearly there!
But their path shaped itself into a snake,
And its slithery tail lifted up and slid them back,
Back towards the forest,
Towards the terrifying tree,
Back the way they had come.
They slipped, they slithered, they slid!
Like mice on ice!
Like penguins on an iceberg!
Like children in mud!
Oh no! Oh no!
They threw themselves off the sneaky snake path
And landed at the foot of the Wishing Tree.

The Wishing Tree felt their hunger for home.
It heard the hope for home in their heads and
hearts.
A long branch turned,
Twisted,
Pointed.
A stream of cool, fresh water led them away
Through trees as solid and as still as stone....

STREET STORY 5

During the Adventure of the Stolen Rabbit, an old green bottle was found floating in the river. Written on a scrap of paper in that bottle was a message for the children's families...

*They are lost, your children,
Drawn into our world of woods and strange
enchantments
If you would find them again,
You must,
Go through the marshy forest,
And under the magical bridge,
Beside the enchanted river,
Between the swirling waves,
And under the bramble bush,
And across the icy blue lake,
And over a snow-topped mountain.
Past the hut where the Wild Things feast on candy
floss trees
And through the dark tunnel that the Wild Things
guard,
And there, at last,
Beside the pond, you might find the wooden letters
that spell "home".
Arrange the letters,
Spell the word again,
Sing the word to the stars and rainbows
And you might, just maybe, call your children
Home.*

CHAPTER 6

A multicoloured boat

They walked, they hurried,
They hoped for home,
Along the path the Wishing Tree had shown them.
And they walked,
And walked,
And walked,
And walked a bit more
Until they were too tired to walk any more.
No sign of Rudheath, or Witton, or Northwich.
No sign of home.

Perhaps the Tree was wrong?
They made a camp that night,
On the banks of a river.
They lit a fire,
Made a tent of giant leaves from an elephant tree.
They feasted on meatballs and candy floss.

By the morning, their camp felt like home
They even enjoyed the rain.
But homesickness crept up on them
They missed their Mums and Dads,
They missed their families,
They missed their friends.
They missed being comfy, warm and dry
They began to get hungry for proper food,
Other food,

Any food that wasn't spaghetti, meatballs and
candy floss.

But how to get home?

Maybe we could call a cab?

A 4-wheel drive, monster cab!

But we have no money.

And we have no phone.

Can we pay for a taxi in carrots?

Giant birds fly in this forest.

Maybe they would take us home for lots of worms?

They offered handfuls of squirming worms

But the birds fled!

They only ate seeds from the candy floss trees.

A lion and a wolf offered to show the children the
way home.

They looked a little

Hungry,

So the children said no.

Then

A multi-coloured man

In a multi-coloured boat,

With a multi-coloured submarine hidden inside,

Came sailing up the river.

I'm looking for a crew for a treasure hunt.

He said.

There is a pink palace, I am told,

Where a bold pirate crew

Could find some bold pirate treasure!

To go or to stay?
To look for home or sail away?
On this day, they sailed away.
Four children, three rabbits and a golden shoe

But just after they had gone,
Four witches on broombrushes,
(Smaller, you know, than broomsticks but faster)
Rustled into the camp.
Sent by the Wise Owl from the very start of the
adventure,
The witches had come to carry the children home,
But the children were gone.
There were just some multicoloured waves
On a blue-green river.

STREET STORY 6

Twig Pencils: a warning

Some shops sell pencils that look like they are made of twigs from trees. Have a look, there might be some in your classroom. You need to think carefully before using these pencils because these are Pinocchio Pencils.

When Pinocchio lies, as we all know, his nose grows. But not many people know that Pinocchio's cousins are kept on a pencil farm and there they are tricked into telling lies so that their noses grow - and then the mean pencil farmers cut those noses off with little saws, because Puppet noses give you wonderful twig pencil like the ones we see here! Each puppet grows a different colour of pencil.

What no-one is very sure is when we write with these pencils are we really writing with Pinocchio Snot?