

## 6 Familiar settings

# The Ice-Pit



## Chapter One

Teddy was the bravest kid I ever met. He wasn't frightened of anything – not even of Haggerty Park. So why did we go there with him on that hot, summer afternoon? “We must be mad!” exclaimed Pete, my twin brother.

“Why do you say that?” Teddy asked.

“Can't you see? It's so overgrown and wild. Besides, people say there are booby traps hidden in the grass. You'll be cut in half if you step on one!”

“There's a wolf here, too,” I added, nervously.

“Stories,” Teddy scoffed. “Just stories.”

“What about the keeper, then? He guards the place, doesn't he? Is he just a story?”

“It's Wednesday, Kit. This is his afternoon off.”

“How do you know?”

“Because I've been here hundreds of times,”

Teddy said. “We're not going to step on a trap in broad daylight, are we? And I bet the wolf is just the keeper's Alsatian. He'll be off-duty as well. So there's nothing to be scared of, right?”



Right...

Pete and I were still worried, though. The gloom under the trees didn't look like broad daylight to us. And that rustling over in the bushes could easily have been a wolf. Anyway, where was Teddy taking us? The house itself was just a boarded-up wreck. Even the kids who told stories about Haggerty Park admitted that.

"Hey, Teddy," said Pete. "We should be at the swimming pool on a day like this."

"Good idea," I said, quickly. "Let's go back and pick up our swimming things."

"Swimming?" said Teddy.

He made it sound like doing sums. He glared at us as if he were a pirate chief facing down a mutiny.

"You really want to go swimming?" he sniffed. "When you could be having a proper adventure?"

"A proper adventure?" I gasped.

"That's right, twins!"

Teddy was beaming from ear to ear now. This made Pete and me really scared. When Teddy had that sort of look on his face, there was sure to be trouble on the way.



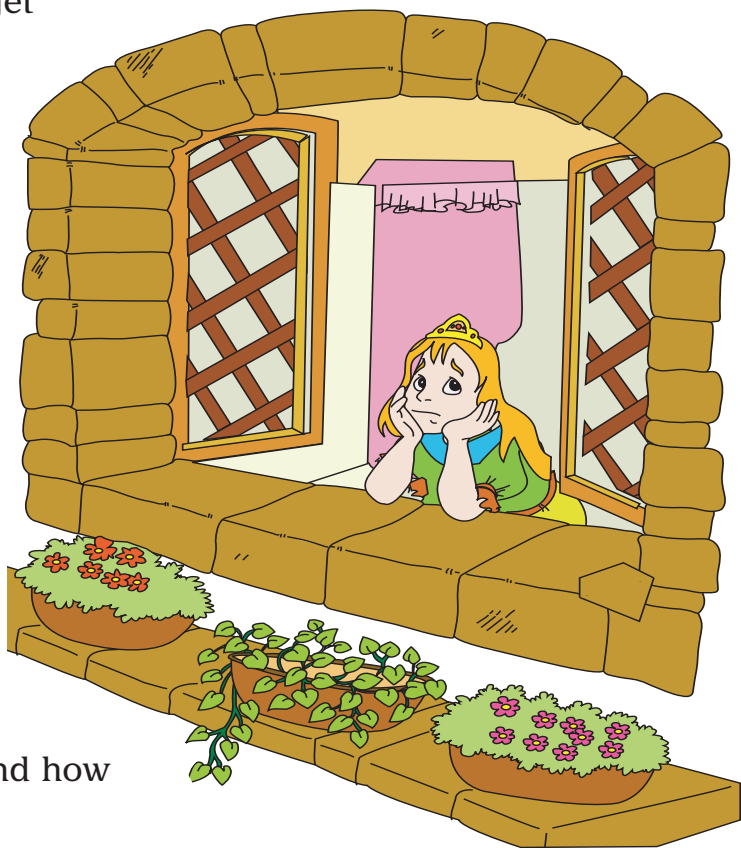
# The Golden Goose

## Chapter One



There was once a princess who lived as if she were under a spell. Perhaps she was, for all she would ever do was sit by the window of her tower, gazing out. Now and again she would sigh. But that was all. She would just sit there with never a smile on her face, nor a word from her lips. And no one, not even the King, her father, could get anything out of her.

The King tried everything he could think of. At first he just talked to her kindly, saying she'd be much happier if she joined in with life at court. But she hardly even looked at him. Then he told her how it was her job, as Princess, to be seen out and about more, and how



he needed her help with royal duties. Still she just sat there, like someone in a dream. For all the notice she took of him, he might as well have been talking to the air.

Eventually he lost his temper. He stamped about her room in a fury, ranting and raving, saying she was a lazy, selfish, ungrateful girl who never gave a thought to anyone else. She took everything that was given to her but gave nothing in return. Still the dreamy girl just sat there, with hardly a blink. Her father could have been a fly, for all the attention she paid him.

And then the poor man broke down and cried. He knelt down by her stool and sobbed, and begged her to forgive him for getting so angry. “Will you not give me a nod or a smile, or just a glance, my daughter?”

Did she do any such thing? No. At first the King simply gave up and sat miserably on his throne. Then he began to think. Perhaps someone, somewhere, would be able to bring the Princess out of her strange mood. So he ordered a proclamation to be made. It said that if anyone could bring the Princess out of her trance, that person could marry her and rule over half the kingdom. Well, the Princess herself was very beautiful and the kingdom was large and prosperous. If that didn’t encourage people, nothing would.

# Adventure in the Spooky School



## Chapter One

“Home at last!” sighed Jake. He pulled off his soggy coat and rubbed the rain off his glasses. It had been a long day. It had been a very, very l - o - n - g day.

Everything had gone wrong. First, he’d been told off by his teacher (for playing with the class mouse when he should have been doing his maths). Then he’d been told off by Mr Mack, the caretaker (for playing with the mouse and getting straw on the floor), and then he’d been told off AGAIN by Mr Mack (for getting straw on the floor again). “That Mr Mack really hates me,” Jake muttered to himself.

Things couldn’t get any worse.

Then Jake’s mum came in. “You did



remember to bring your spellings home, didn't you?" she asked.

"It's the test tomorrow."

Jake rummaged around in his bag. He found: half an apple, an old tissue, his felt-tip pen, a football sock ... but no spelling book.

Wait a minute! What was that? There, snuggled up asleep in Jake's football sock, was ... Click, the class mouse.

"Oh no!" Jake thought. "I must have put my spelling book in the cage – and the mouse in my bag! In the morning they'll find Click is missing and they'll know I was playing with him again. Can you imagine what they'll say? What can I do?" he wondered.

Then he had an idea. "I've forgotten my spellings, Mum!" he shouted. "But I can run back and get them."

"Be quick," his mum shouted. "It gets dark quickly at this time of year. Be back here in ten minutes."

Jake grabbed his coat and ran for the door. Now he had a choice. Should he go the sensible (but long) way? Or should he go the quick way – over the back of his garden and through the hedge into the playground?

**CHOICE 1** The street way (Go to page 36.)

**CHOICE 2** The quick way through the hedge (Go to page 38.)

## CHOICE 1

### The street way

“Better go the street way,” thought Jake, and he pulled his coat on and set off. The rain was falling even more heavily now. It stung Jake’s eyes. Cars swooshed past, spraying him with waves of muddy water. Rain clouds had darkened the sky until it was the strange blue-grey of a bruise.

Jake scuttled on and soon he was at his school crossing. It was then that he realised he had another problem. Normally, Jake crossed this road easily because Mr Peters, the lollipop man, popped out and held his stick firmly in the face of oncoming traffic. But there was no sign of Mr Peters – and the



traffic was heavy. Swoosh, swoosh went the cars, speeding past him with their headlights glaring.

Jake stood by the road and, as he waited, he thought of all the warnings and stories he'd heard about the dangers of this road. He shivered. It seemed hopeless – he could end up standing here all night. The school lights on the other side of the road seemed to wink and mock him. Click wriggled in his bag as if to say, “Well, are you ever going to get me back?”

Then a squeal of brakes – someone had stopped for him! Headlights blinked to tell him to cross. Jake took a deep breath and ran.