

Bourne
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creative writing
workshops

Words

by Penny Humphrey

“Just then, Goldilocks woke up and saw the Three Bears. She screamed, "Help!" And she jumped up and ran out of the room. Goldilocks ran down the stairs, opened the door, and ran away into the forest.”

“And then and then?” Megan cried

“And then it was the end of the story and time to turn out your light and go to sleep.”

Megan winced as her mother closed the story book squashing Goldilocks, Rumpelstiltskin, Pinocchio, Thumbelina, Snow White and the Sleeping Beauty into one big story pie, a jumble of all the words she loved.

What would Thumbelina make of Pinocchio’s long nose? would Rumpelstiltskin sleep as long as the Sleeping Beauty? And would Goldilocks bump into the Seven Dwarves as she ran through the forest alongside the Ginger bread man.

“There are bears in this forest,” she might say “Run, run as fast as you can”.

Megan’s mother kissed her goodnight and switched off the light as she closed the door. The nursery clock tick tocked loudly in the dark and became the Crocodile. Her mother’s footsteps on the stairs were the Troll trip trapping over the bridge and the apple tree branches tapping on the bedroom window were the claws of the wolf knocking on the door of the little goats’ house.

Megan pulled the blankets right up over her head and tried to sleep.

She had always wanted words, she loved them; grew up on them and painted pictures with them.

Now she looked back on her long life. There were times in her when words were dark, scary or sad but more often happy, sometimes even delirious but happy or sad there was always comfort to be found in them and now when days melted into days and nights were interminably long, she remembered her mother reading those stories.

In the day she sat by the window looking at the same view of the lawn and flowerbed, waiting and hoping for a visit and sometimes they came and stayed long enough to read to her from her favourite books. Some days, no one came and she would look outside at the green grass and think her way through the Camomile Lawn.

She knew that the curtains were gently closing on her life. She wondered how many lives had ended with words unspoken or kept locked away forever in the mind and she was glad that she had written her words down, everything she had ever wanted to say was in that book of words. They would find it soon enough and be glad.