

# Chapter 1

## Back to Blossom Wood



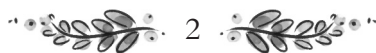
“I SO want to go to Blossom Wood again.” Eva’s green eyes sparkled as she turned to her two best friends, Alex and Katie. They were on their way home from the village shop, after collecting the weekend newspapers for their parents.

“So do I,” Alex said in her soft voice. She was the smallest and quietest of the

three friends. “But Bobby hasn’t left the feather for us. Without it, we can’t go back.”

A week earlier, Katie, Alex and Eva had had an amazing adventure when they'd found a white feather inside a hollow tree trunk in Katie's garden. To their shock, the trunk had started spinning while they were inside, and when it slowed again, their toes had tingled and their fingers had fizzed, and they'd opened their eyes to see that they'd turned into owls! Not only that, but they had been no longer in Katie's garden but high up on a tree branch in the beautiful Blossom Wood. There they'd met Bobby the badger and many other woodland creatures – and helped save the magical Moon Chestnut tree.

Katie shook her head, and her long



blonde hair swished around her shoulders. “I’ve checked the tree *every* day! Before school, *and* after! And this morning. But there’s been no sign of the feather.”

Eva stopped suddenly on the pavement. “Why don’t we try going back anyway? I really, REALLY want to be an owl again.” She looked up at the sky, raised her arms above her bobbed brown hair and imagined flying across the treetops, the wind in her feathers...

Katie spun on the spot, her hopes rising. “Do you think that would work?”

Alex grabbed the arms of her two friends. “No – we can’t! Bobby promised he would leave the feather there when he needed us. We can’t go without it.”

“I suppose you’re right,” said Katie, her blue eyes turning down. The girls began walking again.



“But we could check again now, just in case,” Eva said as they reached Katie’s ivy-covered house. She held up a newspaper. “I’ll drop this off and then let’s meet in your garden, Katie.” She ran off to her thatched cottage next door, while Alex skipped to her house – a red-brick bungalow on the other side of Katie’s.

“I’ll do the same.” Alex’s curly black hair bounced in her bun as she ran. “See you in five minutes!”

Less than two minutes later – for the girls were too excited to wait – Alex and Eva ran into Katie’s garden. They spotted Katie at the bottom, poking her head out of the hollow trunk of the fallen chestnut tree. Even from a distance they could see the giant beam on her face.

They sprinted down the garden path.

“Is it there? It is, isn’t it!” Eva cried, puffing as she slowed to a stop.

Katie grinned, brought out the large, glossy white feather from behind her back and winked. “How did you know?”



“We could see you smiling from the top of the garden!” Alex ducked her

head into the hollow trunk, feeling both excited and nervous about what adventure might be waiting for them in Blossom Wood today.

“Wait.” Eva’s smile fell from her face. “I’m meant to be going to an art exhibition with Mum this morning.”

Katie put her hands to her head. “And I’ve got a dancing exam later! Oh, it’s not fair!”

But Alex was grinning. “Don’t you remember? When we’re in Blossom Wood, no time passes back here!”

Katie did a little jump as the knot of disappointment in her stomach was replaced by a ripple of excitement. “Of course!” She ran to the end of the trunk. “Come on then – let’s go!”

The three girls dived into the large tree trunk one after the other. Just as she’d

been the first time, Eva was amazed that it seemed bigger on the inside than the outside. Even Katie, the tallest of the three friends, could sit inside easily without her blonde head touching the top.

Once they were all in the trunk, blinking their eyes to adjust to the gloom, Katie held out the feather. “Ready?” she asked her friends, feeling her legs shaking in anticipation.

“Ready!” Eva and Alex replied. They grabbed each other’s hands and closed their eyes tightly.

The spinning started right away – slowly at first, then faster and faster. They squeezed each other’s hands harder and Alex tried not to feel frightened as they spun round and round, wind rushing past her ears. She knew this would take them to Blossom Wood, after





all. It was just that she didn't like funfair rides very much, and this felt just like one!

Katie, on the other hand, couldn't help but let out a long, excited squeal. She loved the feeling of spinning about madly. "My fingers are tingling! And my toes! We must be nearly there!"

She was right: the whistling wind died down and the spinning grew slower – though the girls didn't dare look until it had stopped completely.

When it had, Eva opened one eye just a crack. "I can't believe it. We're really back," she breathed. She blinked once, twice, three times at the amazing sight in front of her. They'd arrived on a branch at the top of the Moon Chestnut tree, just as they had before, but today it looked completely different from their



the tree was healthy and buzzing with life, swarming with the happy birds, squirrels and insects who lived there.

Alex turned to Katie and gasped. In her excitement to be back, she'd almost forgotten that they were now *owls*! Katie was a beautiful snowy owl, with huge wings and glossy white feathers.

Katie hopped around on the branch. “Wow! It feels even more magical than I remember!” She spread out her wings and leapt off the branch, swooping down to the ground.

Alex looked down at her own body – she was a little owl, the smallest of the three. She shook out her brown wings and swivelled her fluffy head around.

Next to her, Eva was smiling. She was a barn owl with a white body and light-brown wings, and twice the size





The three friends landed at the base of the tree, giggling.

Then Alex bobbed her little head.

“I wonder why Bobby’s called us here. Nothing seems to be wrong!”

“You’re right,” said Eva, a smile lighting up her heart-shaped face as she took in the busy woodland. “Everyone seems to be happy!” As well as watching animals going about their daily business, she could hear a twittering tune coming from a thrush, and the songs of sparrows flying high in the sky.

“Maybe we’re here just to have fun!” Katie beamed, flapping her wings at the thought. “Ooh, let’s go to Willow Lake! I REALLY want to float around on the lily pads there...”

Alex was about to reply when she felt a tap on her shoulder. She swung round

and saw a little brown wren hopping from foot to foot. “Hello,” said Alex gently. “Is everything OK?”

The pretty bird opened her beak to speak. But, although she kept opening and closing it, nothing came out – not even a squeak!

