

## The Impossibly Possible Bookshop

"Come on, Sammy," shouted his Grandmama from downstairs in the kitchen. "It's time for us to go into town. I need to post a parcel and ... don't forget your umbrella!"

Ten minutes later, Sammy and his Grandmama were walking through the puddle-patched streets of the nearby town. "Wait here, I won't be a moment!" instructed his Grandmama as she darted into the post office. Sammy waited. It seemed like his Grandmama was taking an extraordinarily long time.

Out of the corner of his eye, Sammy spotted the most unusual of shops. It was a bookshop. Now you may be thinking that there isn't anything unusual about a bookshop but this bookshop was not like one he had ever seen before – it was tiny and sandwiched between a large restaurant and a shop selling shiny, new bicycles. No-one seemed to notice the bookshop. Everyone just walked past it like it was invisible.

Gripped by curiosity, Sammy began to walk towards the tiny door of the tiny bookshop. As Sammy approached the shop, he noticed small intricate lanterns hanging around the edge of the roof, puffs of peculiar smoke drifting out of the tall, thin chimney stack and thick, aggressive ivy covering the stone walls and windows.

Sammy approached the door which didn't have a knocker or a bell. Instead, it had a note which read:

With a quick glance back towards the post office, Sammy pushed the shop's door and, to his surprise, it opened slightly. With his heart pounding, he pushed the door harder. It opened more so he stooped down low and went inside.

To his amazement, the bookshop was huge inside - really huge. It was dimly lit and everything was covered in a fine film of

dust. The shop was crammed with books from floor to ceiling. Books of every colour, type and size imaginable. Books about far off lands and fantastic finds. Sammy began to explore and it wasn't long before a book, perched precariously on a high shelf, caught his eye. Taking a deep breath, Sammy climbed a nearby rickety ladder, grabbed the book and carried it to a corner of the shop where an oil lamp burned slowly. He stroked the dust off the front cover and read the gold embossed title: *Tree Goblins*.

Suddenly, a low voice emerged from the darkness, "I wouldn't open that book if I were you," it said. Sammy spun round and saw in the corner a disheveled, old man sat in a large leather-bound, red chair. His head was buried in a book and, looking up from his half-moon spectacles, he continued: "Strange things live in these 'ere books – go home and don't come back if you know what's good for you." Sammy paused for the briefest of seconds, then carefully ignoring the man, opened the book.

In the blink of an eye, Sammy found himself inside the trunk of a large tree. Colourful balloons, bunting and banners decorated the room and loud music, that made you want to dance, filled the warm air.

All around the room, small, strange-looking people, wearing brown tweed dungarees covered in toadstools, leaves and roses, danced and sang with great gusto and joy. Their large pointy ears were hidden slightly by their bushy multi-coloured hair and curly-toed velvet shoes hid their enormous, hairy feet. Around their necks each one wore a necklace covered in the most interesting of charms and trinkets.

In the middle of the room, a magnificent feast was laid out on a large woven willow table. There were pinecone truffles, sweet sap sorbets, nettle fritters and the finest pollen-puddings. In the centre was an enormous cake covered in long-grass icing

and, on the top, over a hundred candles burned brightly. It was a glorious scene and Sammy soon realised that he was in the middle of a birthday party, but not like one he had ever experienced before!

"Hello," came a small voice. Sammy looked down to see one of the strange people smiling up at him. "Hello," replied Sammy.

"My name is Treerumple and I am a tree goblin here in Moon Glen - who are you?"

"My name is Sammy and I am ... well ... a boy!"

"Will you stay for the party? It's Treegruttle's 203rd birthday!"

Sammy wasted no time in accepting the invitation and spent what seemed like hours dancing, eating and singing with the Tree Goblins.

Before long, the sun began to set and Sammy knew that he should return home. He thanked the tree goblins for the wonderful time that he had had and explained that he needed to get home to his Grandmama. As a thank you for visiting them, Treerumple handed him his necklace: "Look after this for me; never forget us!"

"Forget you? That's impossible!" replied Sammy and, with that, he opened the book once more and returned back to the shop.

The disheveled man hadn't seemed to move and as Sammy said goodbye and thankyou to him, he simply muttered: "Hmph, no one will believe your impossible story."

Outside the shop, Sammy saw his Grandmama just come out of the post office. It was like no time had passed at all. "Ahh, there you are!" she said beckoning him over for one of her special cuddles whilst putting up her umbrella.

"Grandmama?" Sammy asked.

"Yes, my dear ... ?"

"Can we come back to tomorrow?"

His Grandmama winked, looked over to the bookshop and replied: 'We'll see ... anything's possible.'