**Journey to Druid’s Bottom**

“Rise and shine now children. Rise and shine. Quick, smart!” Mr Evans’ voice bellowed up the stairs awakening the sleeping children with a start. As the blackout curtains were still covering the windows, the two youngsters could barely see as they scrambled around in the dark for matches to light the candle. Carrie, the eldest of the two, hurriedly pulled down the blinds and opened the navy-blue curtains, adorned with tiny purple flowers, which were shut tight across the steamed-up window.

“Wow! Nick, quick. Look at this!” squealed Carrie in delight.

Nick, her younger brother, yawned, jumped out of his rickety bed and plodded across to the window where Carrie was busily wiping away a circular patch of condensation. “It’s snow, Carrie. It’s real snow! And it’s everywhere!” he declared in amazement as a smile slowly formed on his rosy-red face. “Quick, let’s get dressed and build a snowman! Oh Carrie, I’ve always wanted to build a proper snowman. Can we? Can we please?”

Dressing quickly, the children argued playfully about who would build the best snowman. Running down the stairs, they could smell delicious porridge and honey. Happily, they burst into the kitchen only to find poor Aunty Lou red-faced with streaming eyes. A cold! A nasty, horrible cold! “Sit at the table. Quickly now children. Eat up. You must eat up. You’ve along day ahead of you. I want you to fetch the Christmas goose from my sister’s house down at Druid’s Bottom!”

“But Aunty Lou, you said…” Carrie nudged her little brother sharply.

“We’d be more than happy to, Mr Evans. I’d love to go for a walk in the snow!”

Excitedly, the two siblings ate the warm creamy porridge that Aunty Lou had made while Mr Evans fetched a huge cloth bag from the larder. Handing it to the children, he reminded them to be home before dark. Thrilled to be going outside, the youngsters hurriedly put on their bobble-hats, duffle-coats and woolly gloves. Shouting goodbye, they stepped outside into the thick blanket of snow which lay glistening on the ground.

Whipping their faces, the bitter wind turned their pale cheeks rosy red as the daring duo trudged through the snowy village. Sparkling tinsel and glittering fairy lights were peppered across shop windows, beckoning customers to enter. Cinnamon, toffee and the smell of other various spices scented the chilly air. It was, after all, the eve of Christmas Eve!

After building the biggest snowman Nick had ever seen, the children scurried to the old wooden style which lead to the path through the thicket. Elated, the daring duo climbed hastily over it entering woodland of frosted trees. Contentedly, Nick and Carrie danced in the glistening snow as snowflakes melted on their rosy red cheeks. It was pure magic! Further down the path, which had begun to narrow a little, the wind began to howl and bit at the children’s fingertips. Suddenly, the path came to a halt. A dark tunnel of looming yew trees, covered in frosted amber leaves, lay ahead.