



THE LOST LEGEND

A STORY STARTED BY
SHANE HEGARTY

WITH CHAPTERS
CONTRIBUTED BY YOUNG
AUTHORS ACROSS ENGLAND

FOREWORD

The Lost Legend is the outcome of a project launched by BT and Barclays, as part of their *Wi-Fi in our community* programme.

The BT and Barclays Wi-Fi in our community programme was launched in March 2015 to provide free BT Wi-Fi and hands-on digital support in 100 libraries and other community sites in deprived areas across the UK. Today the programme is creating more opportunities for people in the UK to mix and meet and build a stronger sense of community spirit as well as helping those who can benefit most from being able to go online.

This project aimed to help young people make the most of their creativity by encouraging them to contribute to this brand new book.

Best-selling children's author Shane Hegarty wrote the first gripping chapter of the story, which sees our heroes, Emily and Damian, set-off on a whirlwind adventure across England in pursuit of a mythical monster. Young people at selected community sites across the country were then challenged to write another chapter for the book, based on their local area, using the free internet available at their local library or community centre, to inspire their ideas.

A winner was chosen from each area and each chapter that follows has been written by a young person whose contribution was chosen to appear in the final story.

CHAPTER ONE

By Shane Hegarty

Monsters are not meant to exist. Nor are they supposed to invade our world. But they do, and for generations, families across the world have protected us from these mythical creatures, known to this secret community as Legends.

Emily and her twin Damien were from one of those families, fifteen-year-olds from a long line of Legend Hunters going back generations, living in a monster-plagued town called Deepblade. And half an hour ago, an alarm had gone off in her house, warning that something had broken through.

She and her brother had thrown on their armour and grabbed their trusty Desiccators, stubby rifles that spat out blue shrinking liquid capable of reducing anything – a monster, a bus, monsters on a bus – to a mashed up ball no bigger than a cabbage. Then they'd split up in search for the invader.

But things were not going well.

They were not going well at all.

And the main way that they were not going well was that the Legend had disappeared from Emily's scanner, and she couldn't find her brother either.

Eventually, hearing a shout, Emily rushed round a corner. But instead of encountering a hungry monster looking to nibble on a human she found only Damien, half-collapsed by a phone box on a side street, red dripping from his sleek armour.

Oh no, she thought.

"We've got a problem," he gasped as his knees buckled.

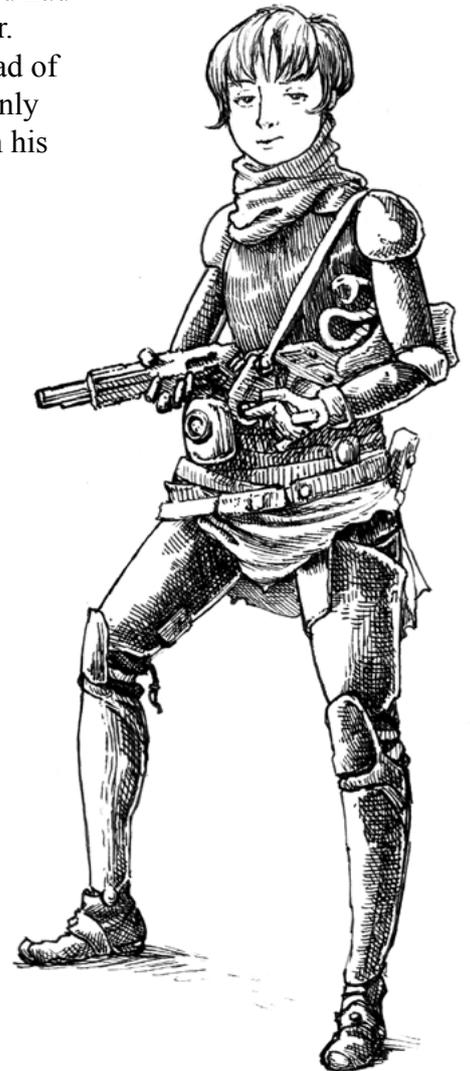
Heart racing, Emily grabbed him under his armpits before he slumped completely, and helped him to the ground.

She stood over him, taller of the two despite being twins, her armour dark and glinting, a single etching of a silver snake twisting from hip to shoulder. She ran one hand through dark hair she kept short to prevent it getting in her eyes when she was meant to be seeking out creatures.

Damien's hair covered his ears, stuck up at a variety of silly angles, and was now matted in the red fluid which dripped from his metal shoulder pads, covering the image on his armour of a fang-rimmed mouth.

He had clearly found only trouble. The strange thing was, the trouble smelled surprisingly savoury.

"You're covered in tomato sauce," she said, licking a thumb. She examined him, her heart rate slowing and her irritation growing as she gradually realised she couldn't see any wounds.



Her brother nodded, his energy returning. “It was a Legend that came through the gateway. A snarling little green brute. About the height of my belly, skin like a burnt welly, fangs longer than his fingers, face like a squashed frog. I found it at the edge of the market and chased it through the stalls.”

Emily licked another finger and winced at the different taste.

“That’s Granny Marge’s Fiery Pepper Sauce,” Damien informed her. “I’m afraid Granny Marge’s market stall is going to need some repair work.”

Emily wiped her hands on her own armour. “Legends are dangerous little things,” she said. “So, where did you put it after you caught it?”

Damien didn’t answer.

“You caught the Legend, right?” she said, glowering over him. “Tell me you shrunk him with your Desiccator so he can be popped into a jar and we can go home.” This was what they did with Legends: shrank them with a Desiccator, then kept them on a shelf in their house, where they couldn’t harm anyone.

Damien still didn’t answer, just picked at his armour as if it had a loose thread.

Emily circled the phone box, chewing slowly on the inside of her cheek in an attempt to calm down before she came around to him again.

She failed.





“You lost a child-nibbling, fang-toothed Legend!” she shouted at him.

“I was right on its trail,” said Damien, standing up gingerly. “I tracked it all the way through the market, down along the river quay, right to the river itself. Then it just sort of disappeared.”

“Disappeared?”

“Sort of,” confirmed Damien.

Emily stared at him. “Tell me, was there by any chance a splash just before it disappeared?”

Her brother considered this. “Now you mention it—“

Emily gasped with exasperation. “You let a Legend escape into a river? A river, furthermore, that leads to tributaries and lakes and seas linking the whole United Kingdom?”

“It wasn’t like I gave it directions and a rubber ring,” protested Damien.

“You’d better hope it can’t swim. Or sail a boat. Or waterski. Or even float,” said Emily, almost nose to nose with her brother. “That Legend could turn up anywhere.” She paused to think. “Right, you grab your Desiccator, we’ll try and intercept it before it gets too far.”

Damien screwed up his face in a manner that filled Emily with immediate dread.

“What is it now?” she asked.

“I might have slipped in the market,” Damien admitted. “And the Legend might have taken the Desiccator from me.”

The sigh from Emily stretched on for a few seconds. “So, let’s recap. You’ve lost a child-nibbling, fang-toothed Legend that’s stolen a device capable of shrinking an elephant into something the size of a baby walnut. And now we have absolutely no idea where it is.”

The public phone rang.

They looked at each other, a little surprised by this intrusion. Damien reached in and cautiously brought the receiver to his ear.

“Hello,” he said. “No. Yeah. Maybe.”

Emily stared at him, raising her eyebrows impatiently. Damien held up a hand to tell her to wait.

“Of course,” he continued to say to the mysterious caller. “Sure. Oh, no, never. Nuh-huh. Yuh-huh. OK.”

He put the phone down.

“So?” Emily demanded.

“The Legend’s been spotted,” Damien said. “But you’re not going to like where.”

CHAPTER TWO

By Nathaniel Pye, age 12, submitted through Crosby Library

“Southport...” Emily hummed, “but whereabouts?”

“Why don’t we use the scanner?” suggested Damien.

“Well... it didn’t work before but I’ll give it a go.” replied Emily. And with that Emily switched the machine on... nothing. But suddenly the machine sprang into action in an array of beeps and strobe lights. Then, a continuous tone showed that the Legend was near.

“See if you can find its direction.” instructed Damien. Emily moved the machine up, down, left and right to find the strongest signal.

“It’s over there!” she shouted, gesturing towards the bank of the Marine lake.

“Surely not? That’s the middle of the lake!” he exclaimed.

“Well... that really doesn’t help the situation,” stated Emily. “What do we do now?” Suddenly they spotted the pedal boats, looked at each other and grinned.

Peddling across the lake they saw another boat aside the central island.

“He must be in that,” said Emily

“Well, we’ll sneak around the island and ambush him on the other side,” whispered Damien. They peddled as fast as they could around the island, water droplets glistening on their armour, but as they neared the target they were dismayed to find him peddling towards the pier. They had no choice but to follow, however by that time they had been noticed and the chase was on. They rushed ashore.

“Look he’s on the carousel.” shouted Emily.

“Take the shot then!” demanded Damian, wishing he still had his own Desiccator. There was a loud pop as the blue liquid was catapulted through the air. But at that moment the Legend leapt out of the carousel and ran. The twins could do nothing but watch in awe as the liquid splattered onto the horses and the shrinking process began. It vibrated then violently shook and bit by bit shrank into a very realistic toy carousel.

Despite their astonishment there was no time to waste; they pursued the Legend towards the pier and although it had short legs, this one was a fast runner. He twisted and turned in and out of view, towards the entrance of the pier but hesitated as he knew he would be cornered

“Quick, take another shot whilst he has stopped!” shouted Damian. Emily took aim and pulled the trigger. “POP!” the earth shuddered and the Legend laughed.

“Missed again, hehehe!” and with that he darted into the arcade. Meanwhile the pier was collapsing. The first part of the pier was pulling away from the beach, leaving it unstable. It landed with a loud crash on the beach.

“Oh my word!” exclaimed Emily. “We’re destroying Southport!”

“And that is not the worst of it! Look at the scanner,” stated Damian “Just look at the scanner!” Emily sighed “he’s gone.”

“Well, that didn’t go according to plan,” said Damien, rubbing his forehead in frustration.

“Unless letting that Legend escape was the plan,” agreed Emily. “Where to now?”

The jingling of a phone box across the street caught their attention. “Looks like we’re about to find out.”

CHAPTER THREE

By Harry Day, age 11, submitted through Bootle Library

Ready and determined, Emily and Damian stood in the middle of Albert Dock on Liverpool's waterfront, where there had been sightings of something small, green and alarmingly bitey roaming the misty colonnades surrounding the murky dock.

There were screams and people fleeing from Liverpool World Museum. Emily and Damian rushed over to explore what the commotion was all about.

"Well that makes sense," Damian quivered. "That phone call was from the LHHQ (Legend Hunters Head Quarters) reporting a mysterious sighting in the museum."

"Then don't hang around, get a move on!" Emily shouted over her shoulder as she darted towards the museum.

Damian, eager to follow but still sticky from the ketchup and pepper sauce, tripped over into a heap on the cobbled path. When Emily, about to enter the museum, heard the thud of Damian's fall, she spun back round to see what the problem was. She impatiently returned to offer aid to her clumsy, annoying brother. And POW! Instantly the vast and gleaming museum shrank down to the size of a shoe box.

"NOOOOOO!" Emily shrieked.

"Good job I fell over or you would have been desiccated too with the museum."

"Don't get me started." Emily muttered through gritted teeth knowing that she owed him her life despite him losing both the Legend and the Desiccator all in one day.

As Damian scrambled back to his feet he caught a glimpse of the Legend who had been hiding behind the museum, but his hiding place was now revealed as it shrank.

"There he is! GET HIM...!"

Damian grabbed Emily by the hand and ran after it, trying to avoid stepping on all the ant-like desiccated people escaping the shrunken museum. The Legend turned and headed towards Pier Head, cackling as he carelessly deployed the Desiccator in every direction, reducing much of Liverpool's historic waterfront buildings to nothing more than ornaments. Everything that stood in his path was obliterated: John Lewis, Monsoon (Emily was devastated), Topshop, Liverpool Cathedral and even Goodison Park!

Arriving at the edge of the River Mersey and unsure how to make his escape, he glimpsed two desiccated cruise liners down by his scaly feet. Without hesitating, he jumped aboard, one foot on each shouting, "Full speed ahead!" The cruise liners, acting like self-powered water skies, carried the Legend out towards the Irish Sea, and into the sunset. As Damian and Emily reached the water's edge, all they could do was watch and listen to the ships' desiccated fog horns squeaking as if high on helium. A familiar jingling sounded from the phone box on the jetty. The twins exchanged a resigned look.



CHAPTER FOUR

By James Norman, age 13, submitted through Workington Library

Some hours later, Emily and Damien now stood in the middle of Workington where, according to the LHHQ, there had been sightings of something small, green and alarmingly bitey roaming.

“Woah, this new gear is mint!” Damien said to Emily, admiring the back-up Desiccator that had been sent through to him from Deepblade.

“Yeah, but Damien, use proper English, you fool!” she replied.

They stood looking around in awe at the beauty of such a place called Workington, only to realise it was an image of Madrid they were staring at in the window of Thomas Cooks.

“Oh, not how I imagined it?” Emily said.

“Same here, at least there’s some cool shops I suppose?” Damien replied.

Then, they saw it. The green Legend they were looking at stood there frozen, the black gloop as thick as gutter mud was slowly oozing out of the body and then crashing to the floor making a splash. Damien and Emily knew that no-one could ever be aware of the Legend and it was almost morning...they didn’t have long.

DING, DONG

The clock struck six. Soon the busy workmen and women of the town would be rushing to their jobs, so slowly Damien and Emily snuck up to the creature. Getting closer and closer making sure they didn’t put a step wrong. They were about to cage it...“OWWWW!!!” Damien screamed. The Legend screeched in their faces and ran off, the gloop trailing behind it.



“DAMIEN! What happened there? We’ve lost it!” Emily raised her voice.

“I stepped on a pin. Okay? What did you want me do? Sing a little lullaby??” he answered, sarcastically.

“Let’s not argue. We have something more important to do. The Legend is not in our hands and it’s 6:15am! Come on, follow the trail,” Emily said.

They followed the trail of slime. Out of breath, Damien realised where he was.

“Curwen Castle…” he said.

“What?” Emily questioned him.

“Look where we are, Curwen Castle. Haven’t you heard the history?” he answered. “Years ago Mary Queen of Scots hid here but eventually was found. It’s the best spot for Legends to stay, he’s led us here.” he continued.

“THERE!” Emily shouted as she spotted the Legend on top of the castle ruins. They ran towards the castle with their weapons in hand ready to attack it; they both shoot with the Desiccators. Damien and Emily were at different angles, so when the Desiccator’s beams shot they bounced back off each other. Heading for each other, quickly they ducked. However, the beam bounced from house to house, shop to shop down the long street blasting them into tiny pieces of dust. They looked behind them but ignored the devastation, they were right behind it, they had a cage ready to trap it, but then it turned around and spat slime right in their faces and they were both trapped.

All they could do was watch the Legend run away and disappear into the surrounding forest, the sound of sirens ringing in the background. The slime slowly melted off and they were free to go. They scarpered down an alleyway and collapsed against a phone box. Emily had the receiver clasped in her sweaty hand, almost before it started ringing.

“Next sighting?” Damien asked, still panting.

Emily nodded silently and replaced the phone. “Bolton”

CHAPTER FIVE

By Usayd Bariwala, age 12, submitted through High Street Library, Bolton

The twins wasted no time, hotfooting it down to Bolton with their Desiccators as soon as they had heard the latest reports. And here they were now, an unholy shiver running down their spines, hearts pumping, standing on a vast barren field, with the disfigured freak of a monster snarling in front of them. They ran towards the Legend, sprinting so fast that they didn't see the trap that the sly creature had laid! Tripping at full speed over the knotted long grass, the Desiccators flew out of Emily and Damien's hands. The Legend's reactions were much faster than the twins. He snatched the Desiccators out of the air and an evil smile spread across his face as he aimed them at the twins with his gnarly claw like hands.

"Run!" screamed Emily. "Dame, do you see that forest there? Head there and take cover". The Legend, sensing Damien to be the weaker of the two, fixed its eyes on him and with a shrill scream, took after him.

"Find cover" instructed Emily. "Anything to stop that freak show catching us."

With adrenaline pumping through them, they sprinted towards the cover they hoped the trees would give them. Hearts pumping, chests heaving, they ran like they'd never run before. As they crouched behind rocks, Emily signalled to her twin. She wanted Damien to act as a decoy so she could creep behind the Legend and knock the Desiccators out of its hands. As she fumbled on the ground for a broken branch she could use as a weapon, eyes firmly fixed on the Legend, she motioned to Damien to stand up and draw the Legend's attention to him, whilst she hoped to clobber it with all her might.

Uneasily, Damien stood, white in fear, and mouth dry as a desert. He shuffled in the opposite direction to his sister with the gaze of the Legend following him. With a sneer, it raised two Desiccator-toting arms. One chance is all Emily had to get it right and disarm it, and save her brother from being zapped into a lego-sized figurine. A thwack sounded as the branch came down on the Legend's wrists. Not hard enough though, as the Legend shrieked more in anger than pain, and twisted its body into an attack stance with Desiccators still gripped firmly. Emily raised the branch again and this time lowered it with all her force on to its arms, letting out a scream of hope and fear. The Legend roared in pain as he dropped the Desiccators with a crunch on the leaves. Emily and Damien grabbed the Desiccators and without a second thought aimed them at it, charging them ready to fire. Quickly sensing that it wasn't going to end well for him, and outnumbered by the siblings, the Legend leapt up onto Damien and used him to gain a leg up into the trees. And, as quickly as it had appeared, it disappeared into the thick growth of the forest.

CHAPTER SIX

By Simra Mahmood, age 13, submitted through Bromham Library

Progress had been slow since the twins lost track of the pesky Legend in Bolton. Following vague readings on the scanner, they had gradually made their way south before intelligence sent through HQ had brought them to a small town in Bedfordshire. They trundled through a narrow alleyway, determination slowly slipping from their faces like the green slime of the Legends. They had been walking around the whole of Bromham all day getting statements, but hadn't got very far. Damien slipped and fell straight on his face. "Ow" he said.

"That was clever, wasn't it?" Emily replied. She looked around to see why he fell, which wasn't a surprise as Damien was so clumsy. Noticing a type of wet goo on the floor, Emily asked Damien for the torch in his backpack, as it was a little dark in the alleyway. Shining it on the floor she saw a trail of green slime leading out of the narrow passageway. Proving her suspicions true, the back of a Legend appeared. "Come on," she whispered while pulling him up. The nasty animal had the Desiccator clutched closely in his claws. He pointed it at a bin and shrunk to the size of an apple and gobbled it down faster than both of them could sprint.

"OH MY GOD!" Damien shrieked.

The Legend turned to face them both, pointing the Desiccator at Emily and Damien at the same time.

"Run!" screamed Emily, and they ran as fast as their legs could go. Having put some distance between themselves and the Legend, Emily knew it was time to fight back. With a swift move of her hand, she pointed her Desiccator at the horrible creature. It froze. Damien jumped cowardly behind Emily and clung tightly to her. She aimed and fired as quickly as the Legend had blinked. Shrinking to the size of a cabbage. Emily and Damien cracked up laughing. He unzipped Emily's backpack, pulled out a jar, and shoved the Legend in. They walked back down the alley together arms linked, massive smiles plastered across their faces.

They headed out of town and pitched their tent in a nearby field, intending to rest before they returned to Deepblade with the captured Legend.

"Well at least we've sorted that out" said Emily breathing a sigh of relief.

"Yeah" Damien agreed

They both went to bed exhausted by the challenging day they just had. Suddenly they were awakened by a smash. Damien checked his watch; it was two in the morning. Emily leapt out of her sleeping bag and flicked on her torch. They saw the Legend wriggling through the entrance to the tent, escaping with the Desiccator.

"We forgot to take the Desiccator from the Legend before we put it in the jar," cried Emily.

"We were so close!" cried Damien, rubbing his forehead in frustration.

"Get some more sleep" said Emily, trying not to sound defeated. "We need all the energy we can get to hunt that thing down tomorrow."

"And do it properly this time" Damien agreed.

CHAPTER SEVEN

By Olivia Kirby, age 10, submitted through West Swindon Library

“What was the name of that park again?” asked Emily, stepping out of the way and trying to avoid colliding with a busy looking office worker and his very hot looking cup of coffee.

“Lydiard Park” Damien answered, heading towards the line of buses parked outside the train station. After waiting a short while and putting up with a few strange looks they boarded a local bus and started travelling west through the streets of Swindon.

“Anyone would have thought these people have never seen anyone wearing a suit of armour before,” Damien muttered to Emily.

“Sssshhhhh! Look over there!” Emily snapped back. She had just caught sight of a flash of green, dashing out of a group of trees.

The bus was just approaching another one of Swindon’s roundabouts and had just passed a wide, futuristic glass building, which had a bright yellow web of metal running around it. From one of the doors groups of smiling children and their families were heading in and out. Panic filled Emily’s heart and without hesitation she let out a cry –“STOP the bus!” The driver was reluctant to stop so close to a roundabout but after a second look at his two frantic, oddly-dressed passengers, he decided it may be best to let them off. They ran across to the trees where they’d seen the green figure.

“Where is it? Have we lost it?” shouted Damien as he dashed along the line of trees, peering into the shadows. But Emily didn’t answer, she was studying the ground beneath her feet. All of a sudden she was off striding along the grass verge. Confused but intrigued, Damien rushed to the spot where Emily had been standing and even he recognised the Legend’s tracks when he saw them. Soon, they were standing outside a metal door on the far side of the building they had passed. There was a trail of small muddy foot prints leading right up to it. Damien and Emily both looked at each other and silently opened the door further, stepping into the darkness. As their eyes adjusted to the gloom of the room they could see boxes piled on one another. Cautiously, they crept forward, looking for clues to where the Legend might be hiding. Emily was the first to spot the hideous creature, crouched in the shadow with his long claw-like fingers still wrapped around Damien’s old Desiccator.

“I am going to need to climb higher to get a clear shot. When I give the signal you distract it. ” She slung her own trusty Desiccator over her shoulder and started to climb.

Damien waited for Emily to take up position. She gave him the nod. He leapt out to surprise the little beast. But that’s when it happened. If only he hadn’t tripped. If only he hadn’t collided with the tower of boxes. If only Emily hadn’t been standing on that particular tower of boxes. With the boxes laying in a messy heap, Emily was lucky to land at the top of the pile with only her pride hurt.

CHAPTER EIGHT

By Ethan Starling, age 8, submitted through Whitley Library

More determined than ever, Emily and Damien tracked the Legend away from Swindon and across the North Wessex Downs to Reading. Meanwhile, the creature in question was making its way down Basingstoke Road. Soon, it had found itself at the entrance of the community garden by Whitley Park School. He looked round at all the rows of perfect potatoes, luscious leeks and brilliant beans. “What a lovely place... for wrecking!” it said menacingly. Then, without warning, the nasty Legend started trampling all the vegetables and charging all over the beds. “This is fun!” he shouted loudly. Suddenly, he stopped. Someone was coming! Quickly, he ran over to the fence, jumped over and held its breath. When the coast was clear, the small monster breathed out heavily, and crept off to make more chaos.

A few minutes later, out of breath, the two adolescents reached what was left of the garden. Mouths open wide, they stared at the remains of the vegetables, devastated that all the gardeners’ hard work had gone to waste. “We were too late. The Legend got here before us,” whispered Emily, shaking her head in disbelief. “We’ve got to find him before he causes any more destruction,” retorted Damien, trying to sound brave although not feeling it.

By that time, the Legend had made his way along Northumberland Avenue and had found himself at the local swimming pool. He ducked below the barriers and went into the changing rooms. Then he walked through and looked at the pool. “Ooh, that looks good for a swim,” he murmured. So, he took off all his clothes, ran back, charged and leapt into the warm, shimmering water. SPLASH!!! Immediately, there came a terrible racket from all the people in the pool. The ladies started screaming and because of the noise and the commotion, the babies wailed and wailed! The life guard was dumbfounded to see the wrinkly, green monster splashing about in the water. He grabbed a woggle from beside the pool and ran closer to it. Before he knew what was happening, the life guard had whacked him hard on the head! “Ouch!!!” the Legend screeched and leapt out of the pool. He rushed down the corridor and out onto the street.

As the Legend hastily turned the corner, he suddenly bumped into two running figures. It was Damien and Emily! Quick as a flash, Emily took out her Desiccator and aimed it at him. POOOWWW!! Damien reached down to pick up the shrunken monster.

“Let go of me!” it squealed, squirming to get away.

“You’re coming with us!” Damien told him firmly, and he shoved the Legend into Emily’s coat pocket. Then, without hesitation, the two victorious teens began walking towards the bus stop.

Later on, when Emily reached into her pocket to take out the mini monster, she realised something. Something terrible! “Oh no,” she cried, “it’s gone!”

CHAPTER NINE

By Sophie Bruce, age 16, submitted through Pinhoe Library

That same day saw Emily and Damien standing in the middle of Pinhoe. This tricky little Legend was much harder to find than they thought. Pinhoe didn't seem that big so where could it be hiding? They suddenly spotted a row of shops that seemed to have been broken into.

"What happened?" Emily said to the rather irritated shop keeper.

"This little green thing came in here stealing stuff!" All over the floor were wrappers from chocolate bars and shelves that had collapsed. "So I got my broom—"The shopkeeper continued, "and I chased him out."

Damien sighed. "We've been searching for days." His posture slumped, he was fed up, and this should not be taking so long. Before Damien started sulking, Emily took control.

"Any ideas where he could have gone?"

"Well, he could have scurried off up there."

As they looked up at the hill they saw the sun setting from a bright blue to a faded orange mist. Hints of pink dotted around in the sky like a painting in a gallery. Not even two minutes into their trip up the hill, they heard a rustling from a nearby shrub. "Could it be?" The twins looked at each other with eager eyes and smirked. A squirrel popped out making them both jump back. It looked at them for a second before running off into the distance.

The area may not be that big, but the Legend was small, making any small moving creature a suspect. They observed from the hill the town below. The shops, the dog walkers, the people jogging. It was all so normal, not a place for a little Legend to be lurking at all.

Making their way back down the hill Damien and Emily got caught up in a crowd of Christmas shoppers. Spun this way and that, they stumbled to an open space and found themselves in a car park. At last, there he was. In front of them the Legend stood tall and proud kicking bins over and people's cars. Not very inconspicuous at all...Damien went to lunge at him, however Emily pulled him back hesitant it would be startled and run off again.

"Emily what are you doing, it's right there!" Damien whispered.

"He's smaller and somehow faster than us. Go slow and we will catch him."

Damien nodded. Both of them ever so gently made their way over towards him. All you could hear was the whistling of the wind and then a small snap! They stopped moving, Damien's leg mid-air. Emily had stepped on a small twig. The Legend turned and fled, flinging itself through a nearby door into, of all places, a toy shop.

CHAPTER TEN

By Shane Hegarty

Damien and Emily stood in a toy store. It was a massive place on the edge of town filled with noisy gadgets, excited people and now, one grumpy Legend, recently arrived from another world.

“If you were on the run in a toy shop,” Emily asked Damien as they examined the long, high and colourful aisles, “where would you hide?”

“I’d go straight to the virtual reality headsets,” answered Damien. It took Emily a moment to realise he was only saying this because he wanted to play with those gadgets.

“No,” she said, annoyed, “if you were a Legend where would you hide?”

There was a scream from two aisles away.

“The action figures,” they both said at the same time.

Damien and Emily ran towards the scream, meeting scared shoppers fleeing in the other direction. They turned the corner into the action figures aisle to find the Legend, waving a Desiccator at a very confused and sullen six-year-old boy whose father was shouting at him to get away from the creature.

“But I picked up the big doll because I want it!” wailed the boy, stamping his foot. “It looks so real.”

The Legend aimed the Desiccator at the boy, squeezed the trigger. Just before firing, the creature was knocked over by Damien riding a speeding skateboard. Sparkling blue fire shot upwards from the dropped Desiccator and hit a giant cuddly alien on the shelf, shrinking it to a small, soft ball that dropped on Damien’s head. Grabbed by his father, the little boy was carried away still protesting, “I want that toy!”

Panicking shoppers blocked Emily’s way as she tried to shoot, and when she finally got a look at the now defenceless Legend it was running away down the aisle. She couldn’t dare risk firing among all these people. She needed an alternative. A box of boomerangs sat on a shelf next to her. She picked one, flung it. It arced beautifully through the air, over Damien’s head, over the fleeing customers, towards the Legend.

And missed.

But the boomerang knocked some toy robots into action. They walked into remote control cars. The cars shot off into a row of wooden dolls houses. The heavy houses fell over and dragged the shelf with them, crashing on to the Legend.

Dazed, the creature tried to wriggle free. Damien fired at it. Pop. Pop. Pop.

Small foam arrows bounced off the monster. Damien had grabbed a Super Blaster toy by mistake.

“Catch!” shouted Emily and tossed her Desiccator to him. He caught it mid-air and in a swift, skilful movement turned, fired and shrank the Legend just as it burst free.

A small green ball of desiccated Legend dropped to the floor and bounced forward – once, twice and plop, landed in a toddler ball pool.

The shop was empty of shoppers now, their screaming replaced by the noise of chirping, singing, revving toys falling from shelves behind them. Emily picked up the shrunken ball that only moments before had been a Legend.

“I’m so glad that’s over,” she said. “Now let’s get going. It’s a long bus ride home from Exeter. Give me the ticket.”

Damien patted his pockets. His legs. His chest. Checked behind his ear. Then he remembered.

“The Goblin ate it,” he admitted.

“Ate it?”

“When I ran into it on the skateboard. At least it didn’t eat me.”

“Yes. A great pity,” said Emily, not meaning that at all.

She sighed, grabbed a book from the nearest shelf, sat on the floor, opened it.

“What are you doing?” asked Damien.

“Waiting here. You can take that skateboard and go find us a ride home.” She licked her finger, turned to the first page. “I’ll be right here when you get back, enjoying someone else’s adventures for a change.”

END

