

# The Mysterious Key



By

Illustrated By

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# Helpful Hints for Reading at Home

The focus phonemes (units of sound) used throughout this series are in line with the order in which your child is taught at school. This offers a consistent approach to learning whether reading at home or in the classroom.

**HERE ARE SOME COMMON WORDS THAT YOUR CHILD MIGHT FIND TRICKY:**

the	to	of	and	in	is	it
was	are	you	on	at	from	with

## TOP TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD TO READ:

- Read to your child every day, even if it's just for a few minutes.
- Encourage your child to read to you.
- Praise your child for their efforts.
- Read together and discuss the meaning of the words.

the cat sat on the mat and the dog barked.

# The Mysterious Key



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# Chapter One

## Lost and Found

Cara's grandparents loved car boot sales. And they loved them even more when they could take Cara along with them. The sun shone down on the three of them as they wandered through the various stalls of bric-a-brac, looking for a bargain.

Grandma had made it some way ahead when Grandpa tapped Cara's arm and whispered in her ear.

"I want to get your grandma something as special as she is," he said. "Can you help me choose something she'd like?"

"Of course, Grandpa," Cara whispered back.

"I'll keep an eye out for something really special!"





She looked at the tables nearby. There were some scarves, but Grandma had so many already. There were some DVDs, but Grandma didn't like sitting still for too long. Cara was looking at some statues when she saw something glittering out of the corner of her eye. She turned to see a beautiful old jewellery box, partly hidden by an old aquarium.



“Grandpa, what about that jewellery box?”  
asked Cara.

“What a good find,” said Grandpa. “Grandma  
will really love that! Let’s get it for her.”

Grandpa bought the jewellery box and Cara  
put it in her backpack. Just then, Grandma



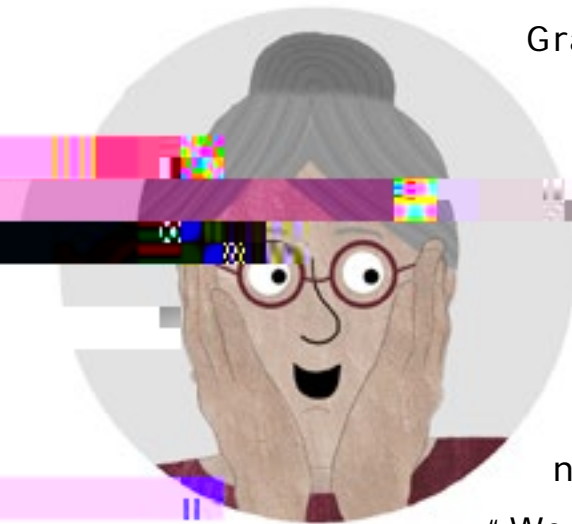


When they had finished their shopping and got home, Grandpa decided that it was time for Grandma's surprise.

"Close your eyes," he said. "Cara and I have something for you."

Grandma covered her eyes and Cara pulled the box from her bag.

"You can open your eyes now!" said Cara.



Grandma peeked out from behind her hands and a smile lit up her face.

"Wow, it's beautiful," she gasped. "But it's not my birthday yet!"

"We don't need to wait for your birthday to remind you how special you are," said Cara.

"Thank you very much," said Grandma, as she gave Cara and Grandpa a big hug. "Let's open it!"





Grandma lifted the lid while Cara and

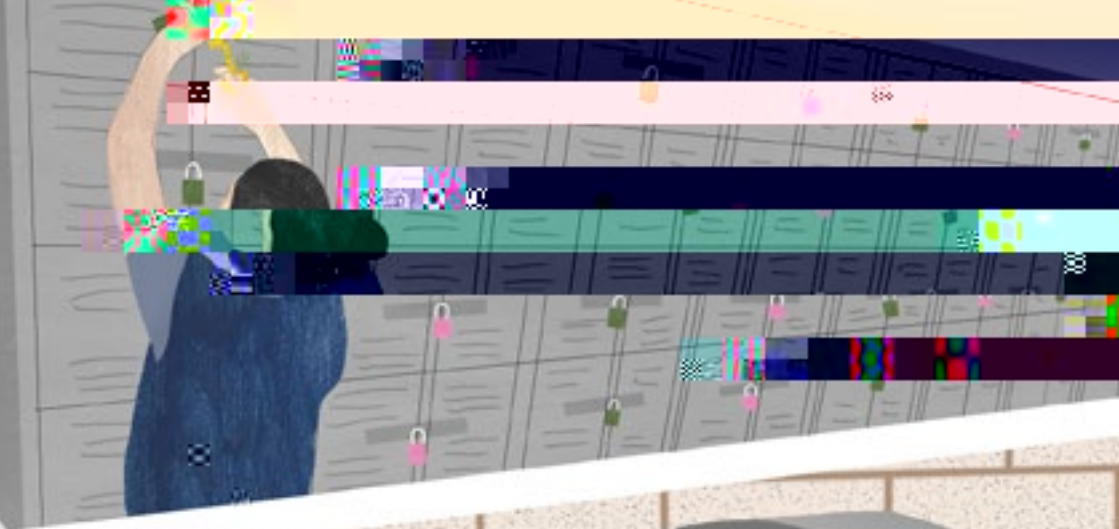
Grandma was just about to throw the key away when a little voice at the back of Cara's mind told her that this was a very important key.

"Can I please have the key, Grandma?" she asked.

"Of course you can, Cara," said Grandma. "I suppose it is a very pretty key."



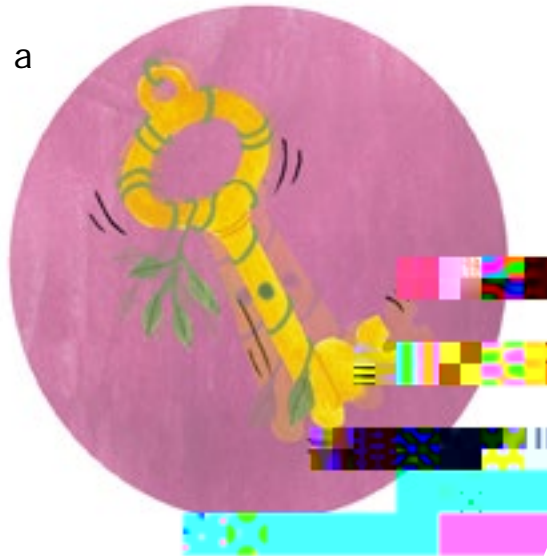




Feeling a little sad that she hadn't unlocked anything yet, Cara walked home from school in a bad mood.

She was in a hurry to get back and curl up with her grandparents and a nice book, so she decided to take a shortcut through the park. The wind swirled autumn leaves around her, and Cara started to walk faster.

But then, as Cara passed a









“ Finally!” yelled Cara. “ This has to be it! This has to be what this key opens!”

She tried the key in the door’s lock and of course, it fit like a glove. She heard the latch click open. With a creak, the door swung outwards, and Cara stepped into the darkness inside...



# Chapter Two

## Wake Up

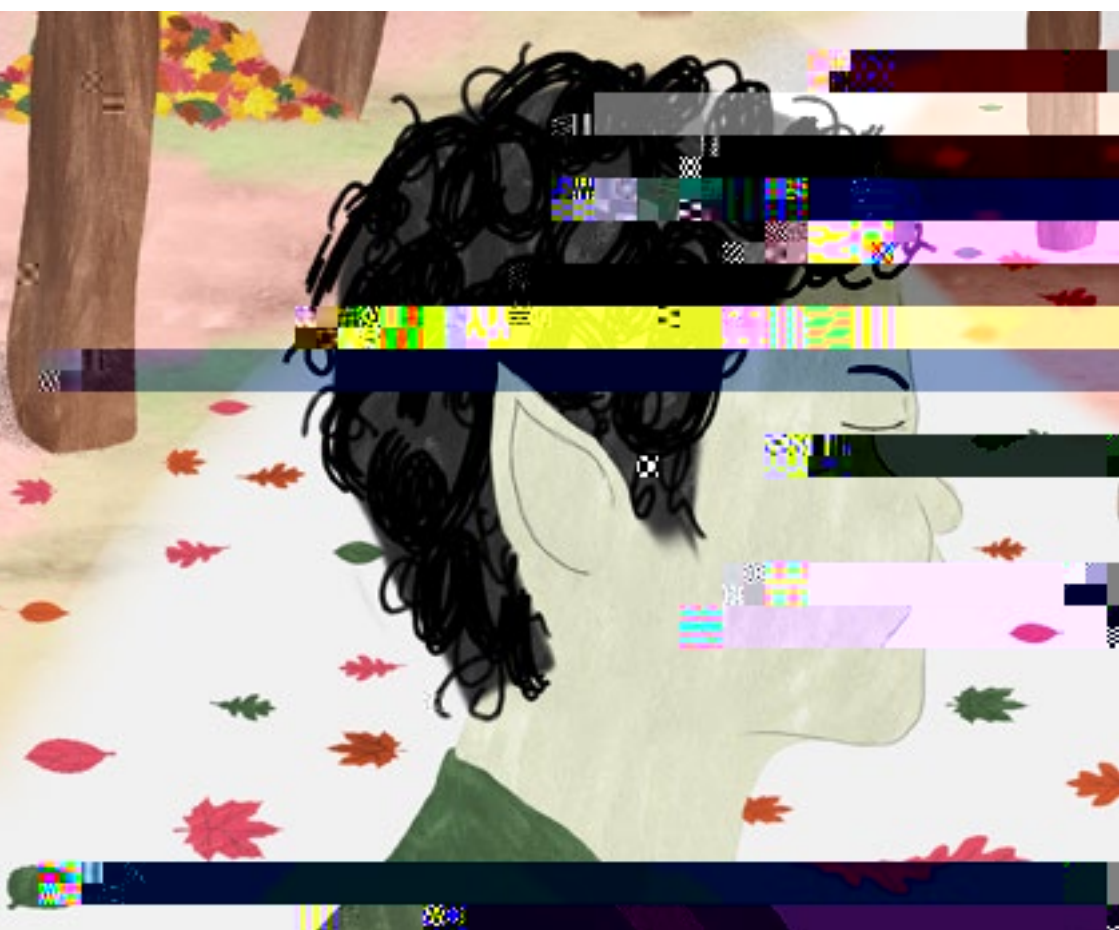
She didn't get more than a few steps in before she bumped into something. Out of the darkness opened a pair of huge, gleaming, amber eyes. They stared straight back at her, not an inch from her face. Cara screamed, and so did the person she had bumped into!

As she scrambled backwards to get out of the tree trunk, the mysterious person ran out alongside her.

She saw him clearly now. Someone who appeared to be a boy around her own age stood in front of her. But he couldn't be any ordinary boy, because out of the mop of curly hair on his head poked a pair of pointy ears!







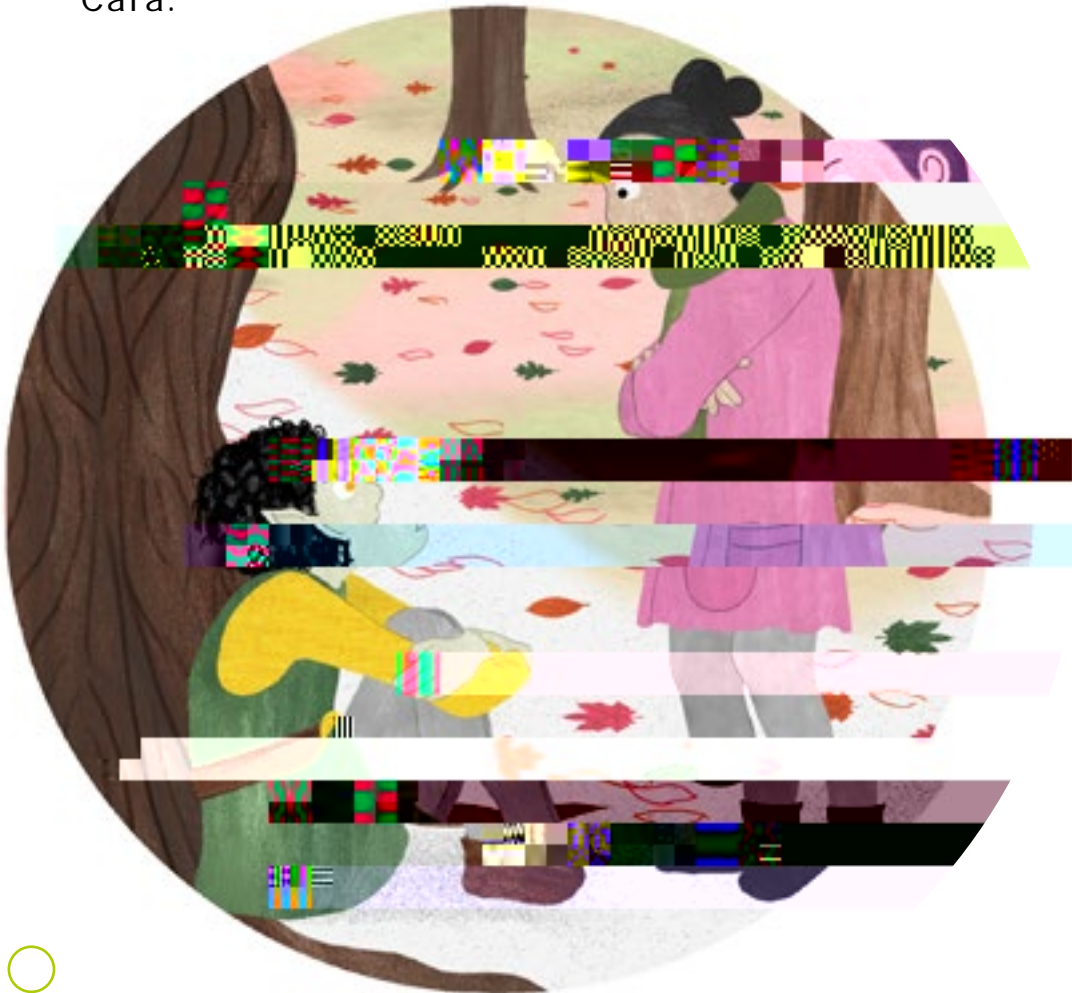
"You're a pixie?" exclaimed Cara. "That's so cool. I'm a human, if you know what that is?"  
"Of course I know about humans," he said.  
"I've just never met one before."  
"And I've never met a pixie before," said Cara. "My name's Cara, what's yours?"  
"Idris," he replied, and the name sounded like sunshine and honey in Cara's ears.



“ What were you doing standing about in the dark on your own, Idris?” asked Cara.

“ I- Well, I was playing hide and seek with my friends,” said Idris. “ But I must have fallen asleep because the next thing I remember is you.”

“ So, your friends must be nearby?” asked Cara.











"I'm not stubborn," said Cara. "I get things done."

"Alright, Cara-Who-Gets-Things-Done," said Idris. "Take me home."

"Well, we need to find something in this town that hasn't changed in a thousand years," said Cara, as she began to lead Idris out of the park. "Then you can work out where you're going, can't you?"

"That sounds like a good plan," said Idris.

"Do you know where the oldest part of town is?"

"I think so," replied Cara. "The old clock in the town centre. That's been there longer than anyone can remember."

"That will be the best place to start," said Idris. "Let's go."

The two of them marched off into the autumn afternoon.





# Chapter Three

## The Way Back

Cara and Idris had made it out of the park and were nearly at the town centre. They could see the old clock in the distance. They just needed to cross two more streets and they'd be there. As they waited for the crossing light to turn green, two kids came around the corner, sucking on lollipops.



They were the kids who had been making fun of Cara at school.

"Oh no," said Cara. "Not them."

"Do you know them?" asked Idris.

"They're just some kids from my school," she replied. "They were teasing me earlier, but it's fine. Just ignore them if they come this way."

"Teasing?" asked Idris. "What kind of teasing? Were they joking?"



“ Not really,” said Cara. “ They laughed at me, but the joke is on them. They are the ones missing out on meeting you.”

“ They laughed at you?” asked Idris. “ That’s not kind!”

Idris started to stare at the kids with clenched fists. Cara heard a crackling sound. It was coming from Idris’s hands! Little sparks of electricity danced between his fingers.





“ Let’s teach them a little lesson that kindness costs nothing,” said Idris.

He opened his hands, and the sparks shot to the ground. In front of Cara, the autumn leaves started to swirl and crunch. They zoomed towards the mean kids and started piling up around them.

“ Ahh!” yelled the kids. “ What’s happening?”





The leaves kept swirling and swirling until the  
kids were completely covered in them! "I" "I" "I"  
kites e! g Q el " ms wer I mv i

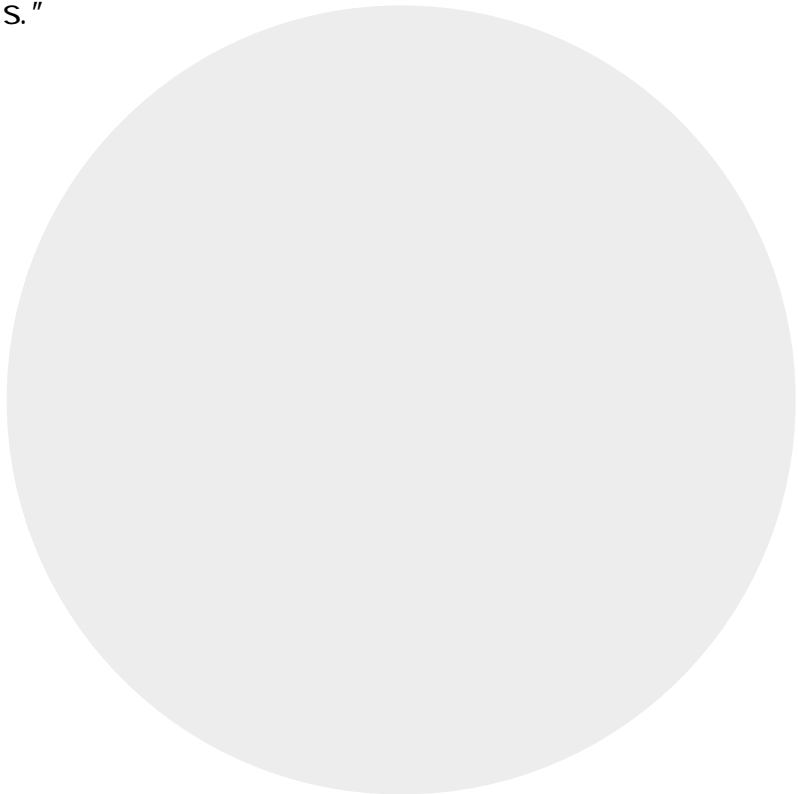
The crossing light turned green and started beeping. It was safe to cross the road. Cara grabbed Idris's hand and the two of them crossed the road, giggling.

"Idris!" said Cara. "What if someone had seen you?"

"It was the wind," said Idris. "What else could it have been?"

"Pixie magic," whispered Cara.

"Shhh," hushed Idris. "That stays between us."



They walked for some time, then turned the corner and came face to face with the clock. It towered above the two of them. The hands of the clock had stopped moving long ago, but it was still beautiful. At its base was a huge plaque.

"It says it was built in 1306," said Cara.

"We need something older than that," said Idris.

"Sorry," said Cara. "I think that's as old as it gets."

As they both stared up at the clock, trying to think of what to do next, the Sun set just a little lower in the sky. Suddenly, a ray of light hit the clock's glass face, and bounced back in a beautiful rainbow that stretched over the whole town.





Built in  
1306

1306

“Wow!” exclaimed  
Cara.

She and Idris  
couldn't see the  
end of the rainbow,  
but they knew this  
had to be a sign.

Without another word,  
the two of them began to  
follow the rainbow into the  
distance. They walked past all  
the shops, past all the houses and right to the  
edge of town.

“Where is it taking us?” thought Cara.

Cara was about to say something when it  
finally appeared. The end of the rainbow  
landed not in a pot of gold, but at the foot of  
a very old tree.

“Race you there!” shouted Idris, and he took  
off running towards the tree. Cara was not  
about to be left behind, so she ran after him.



By the time she caught up with him, Idris was halfway up the tree.

"What are you doing?" she called up to him.

"Trying to get a better view!" he replied.

"Be careful!" said Cara. "It's a long way down."

"Not for a pixie," said Idris, cheekily.

Cara thought for a minute.

"Wait, does that mean you can fly?" she asked.

Idris didn't reply.

"Idris?" called Cara. "Are you OK?"

After a moment of silence that lasted a heartbeat too long, Cara heard whooping coming from the leaves above. Idris dropped down in front of her in a flurry of leaves.

"I saw Fay Hill!" he cheered. "I know where

I am!"

"That's great news!"

exclaimed Cara.

"What's Fay Hill?"





“ It’s where we’ll find the doorway to my world,” said Idris. “ And now I know how to get there. Follow me!”

Idris took off into the woods.

“ Wait for me!” called Cara, chasing after him.

“ Sorry,” said Idris over his shoulder. “ I’m just excited because we’re so close!”

Idris slowed so that he and



They emerged from the other side of the trees into fields that spread out as far as they could see. But there was something different about these fields. The grass was a little too green. The flowers were a little too perfect. And there were no bugs in sight. They must have been getting close to something magical.





"Come on," said Idris, and he set off across the fields. Cara could see what she guessed was Fay Hill. As they reached the top of the hill, Cara saw a giant tree stump. It was wider than any tree she'd ever seen. The edges of the stump were carved with beautiful swirling patterns.

"This is the portal to the Mountain, said

"It's yours now," he said. "Look after it well. I hope it brings you lots of fun and happiness."

"Thank you," said Cara. She was sure that it would.

"Goodbye, Cara," said Idris. "Thank you for helping me find my way home."

"Goodbye, Idris," said Cara. "It was nice to meet you."

"It was nice to meet you, too," he said. "And remember, a pixie never forgets a friend."

Idris turned and stepped onto the tree stump. There was a flash of light and then he was gone...



# Epilogue

## After

By the following weekend, Cara had turned the tree into a secret den. It was cosy, and bright, with hundreds of fairy lights on the walls. Cara had pulled an armchair inside and set up a reading snug in the corner. This was



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