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opening extract from

Toby Tucker Hogging all the Pig Swill

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The Allen house, present day

Toby Tucker looked round his bedroom with complete and utter satisfaction. Not a fairy in sight!

'Looks good, doesn't it?' said his foster-father, Don.

Toby nodded happily. 'Worth waiting for!'

He'd actually had to wait ages for Don and Evie to work their way through decorating the house before they got to his room at the top. Toby's walls had originally been pink – very pink – and plastered with fairies.

Evie came in with mugs of tea and a plate of home-made plum jam tarts. They weren't as good-looking as shop ones, but they tasted a whole lot better, especially when they were still warm.

Don took the tray and kicked a chair towards Evie. 'Sit down, love,' he said.

Toby munched contentedly. He thought, for



the hundredth time, how lucky he was. Just a few months ago, he'd been living in the children's home, then the first magical thing happened when Don and Evie became his foster parents. Now he had a home, two dogs and a sort-of-family.

Evie got up. 'We'd better bring your things back in from the landing,' she said. 'You'll want your chest tonight, I expect.'

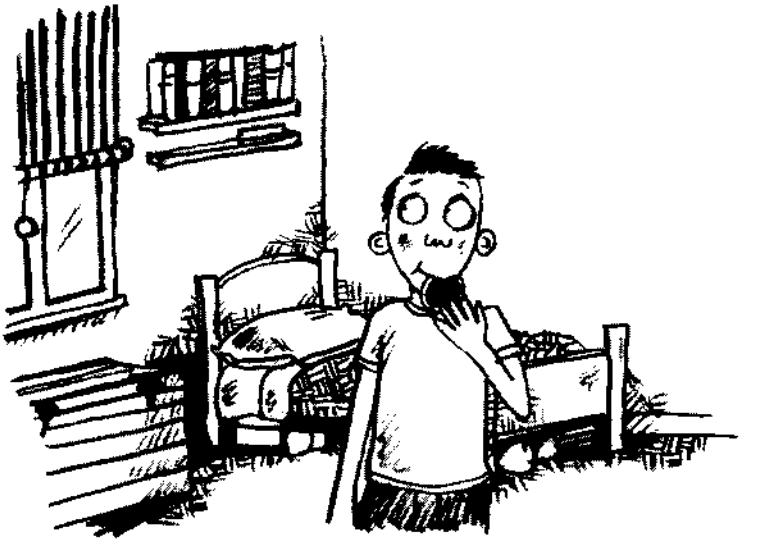
Toby nodded. The wooden chest was the second magical thing that had happened to him – but in this case it literally *was* magic.

Evie went to pull it in, but Don stopped her. 'No, you don't.' She smiled and squeezed his arm.

Once all Toby's clutter was back in, he started to straighten the room. The chest went beneath the window, the books on the shelves, junky stuff under his bed and so on. He couldn't hang his pinboard up, because the hook had gone. He stood it against the wall and examined it as he nibbled the last jam tart.

Five names. Five ancestors. Five magical lives.





'Tob-eeee!' Evie called. 'Can you come?'

'On my way!' Toby galloped downstairs and joined his foster parents at the kitchen table. 'What?'

Don and Evie glanced at each other.

'What?' Toby said again.

'The most amazing thing's happened,' said Don. 'We thought we couldn't – but it seems we can . . . Toby, Evie's going to have a baby.'

'Oh. Oh, that's great,' said Toby. 'Er, when?'

'A few months yet,' said Evie. 'Toby, we really

want you to be pleased.'

'Oh, I am,' said Toby. He looked down at the table. 'Wow.'

Don stood up. 'Come on, lad. I'll knock a hook in for your pinboard.'

Toby made for the door. 'No, it's OK. Tomorrow will do. You two, er, talk.'

He flew upstairs.



Toby had trouble sleeping that night. A baby. It would be Don and Evie's very own.

He tossed and rolled and fidgeted. Finally, he sat up and asked himself the question that had nagged him since he'd heard about the baby. 'Will they want me any more?'

By three o'clock in the morning, the question had turned into a statement. 'They won't want me any more.'

He fell into a deep sleep, and woke with a start when Evie brought him a cup of tea. She hung around, and Toby knew she was waiting for



him to speak, but he didn't know what to say. She smiled at him and left.

After breakfast, Toby raced back upstairs. 'The new baby will know exactly who he is,' he thought. 'It's even more important now that I find out who *I* am.'

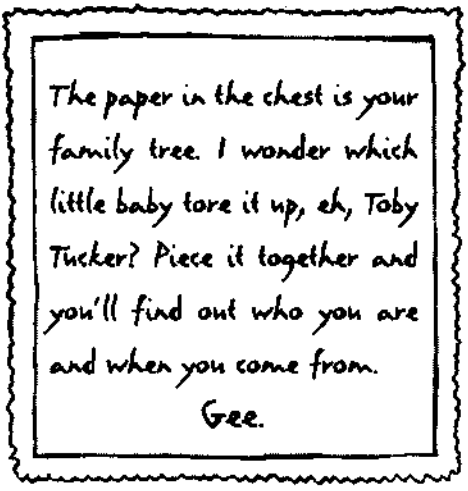
He went to his wooden chest. The children's home people had absolutely no idea who he was or where he came from. The only clue they had was Toby's chest. He opened it. It was full of scraps of torn paper. Buried beneath them was a framed photograph.

Toby took it out and examined the gentle old face. As always, he got a warm feeling as he did so.

'Who are you?' he asked the photo. 'Are you my ancestor?' He turned the photo over and read, for what seemed like the thousandth time, the pencilled note on the back.

'When you come from'. It wasn't a mistake. Gee, whoever he was, did mean 'when' you come from, not 'where'.





That was the chest's magical secret. Those names on the pinboard were the names of real people – people who'd once lived, and whose lives Toby had, sort of, shared. Each time he'd pieced one of those names together, the magic had begun.

He scooped out a heap of scraps, spread them out on the deep red carpet and picked out a couple of likely looking pieces. One had 'olas' on it. That could be Nicholas. The other had 'Pres'. That was obviously the beginning of a name.

He thought of the baby. Would he have to leave? Suddenly Toby felt a terrible urgency – a desperate need to find out who he was. Frantically, he sorted through the paper scraps.



'Orin . . . Gris . . . mel . . .'

'Looks like you could do with some help!' said a voice from the doorway.

'Jake!' said Toby.

'And me!' said Amber, as Toby's two best friends sauntered in.

'Wow!' Jake admired the room. 'Great colour – like the stripy blind.'

Amber stuck out her bottom lip. 'I liked the fairies,' she said.

The others stared. She burst out laughing and flopped on to the floor. 'Ah, your family tree! We'll help, won't we, Jake?'

That was the last thing Toby wanted, but he felt it would be mean to say so. 'OK,' he said, 'but promise me, if you find two bits that go together, you'll let me actually join them?'

They nodded.

He shrugged. 'It's sort of special for me to do it – it's my family tree.'

'I know,' said Jake. 'It's all you've got.'





Amber poked him. 'It's not, stupid. He's got all his stuff here, and he's got Don and Evie, too, and the dogs.'

Toby didn't say anything. They'd been shuffling countless bits of paper when Amber's mobile rang. 'Got to go,' she said. 'I'm getting some new shoes!' She dashed off. 'See ya!'

Jake shook his head. 'Fancy getting excited over new shoes.' He leaned over. 'What've you got? "Barrow"? Look, I've got "Fred" – they'd go together, wouldn't they?'

Toby's heart thumped. 'No,' he lied. 'The edges are different.'

Jake flung 'Fred' down and Toby swiftly slipped it into his own hand. 'Let's pack up,' he said.

'No, I'm OK for a bit longer.'

