# Squirrel and Duck

## Mission Improbable



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BLOOMSBURY
CHILDREN'S BOOKS
LONDON OXFORD NEW YORK NEW DELHI SYDNEY

BLOOMSBURY CHILDREN'S BOOKS
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3DP, UK
29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Ireland

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First published in Great Britain in 2025 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: PB: 978-1-5266-6563-8
eBook 978-1-5266-6567-6
ePDF: 978-1-5266-6566-9

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

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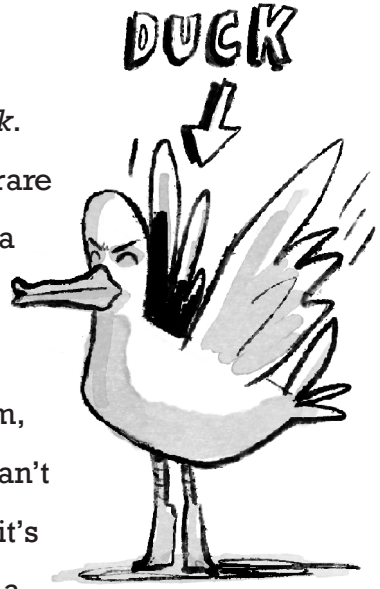



HAVE YOU EVER MET a talking duck? I'll give you a moment to think about this …

To be absolutely clear, I don't mean a duck that just makes the noise, '*quack, quack, quack*', I mean a duck that can say actual, proper words, like 'shoe laces' or 'jelly babies'.

If you answered '*yes*' then you are either lying or you have completely lost the plot. If you *have* completely lost the plot, I would suggest you put this book down IMMEDIATELY and visit **www.helpducksaretalkingtome.com**.

Of course, there is another option …




You might have met *Duck*.

You see Duck is a very rare creature, because she is a duck that can *actually* talk. Not only can Duck talk but she can sing, hum, dance *and* beatbox. She can't whistle though, because it's *impossible* to whistle with a beak. I mean, I know a few people who can't whistle, even with human lips, so give her a break, OK?

In fact, the only thing rarer than a talking duck is a talking squirrel. Which leads me on to my next question … Guess who Duck's best friend is?

I think you've guessed it!

Duck's best friend is Mr Spikes, a small, spiky, almost dried-up cactus. Mr Spikes can't whistle, or talk, or hum, or beatbox, or do *any* of those other things. This is partly because he's never tried, but *mostly* because he's a cactus – just a completely normal, everyday cactus.



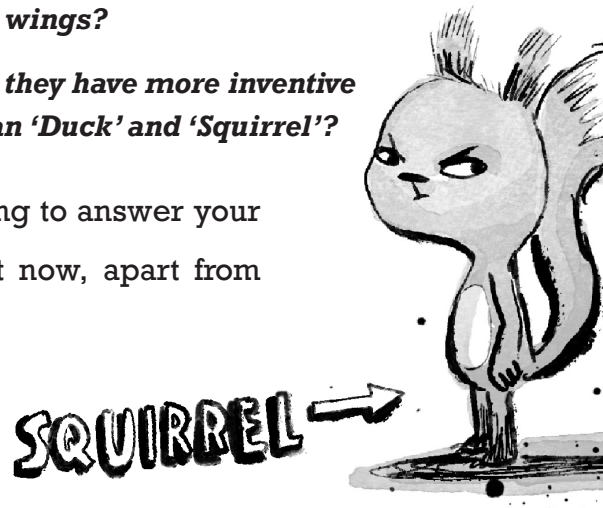


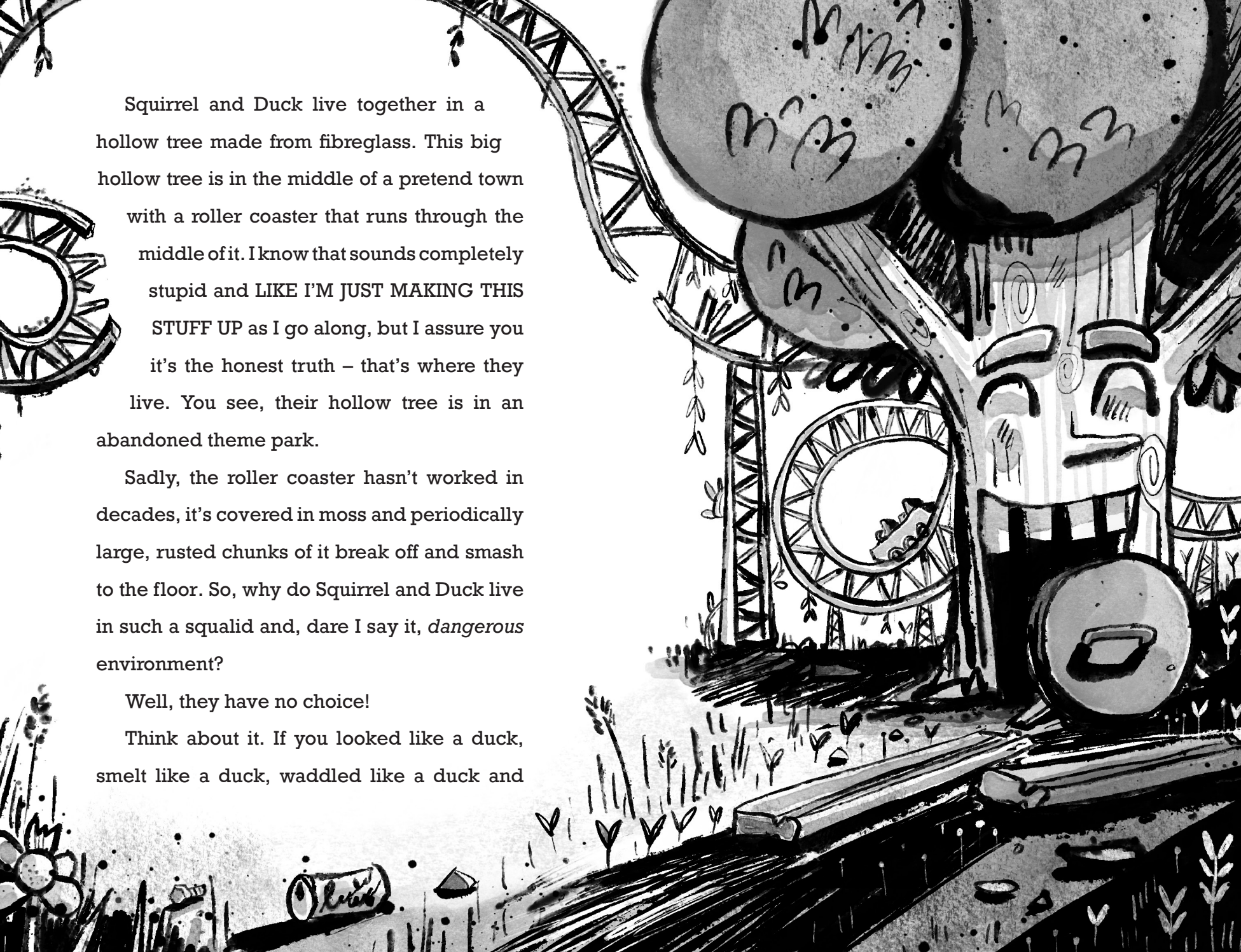
It tells you quite a lot that Duck's best friend is a small, withered cactus and *not* the talking squirrel that she shares a home with.

Now, I'm sure that you have a billion-and-one questions already, maybe a bit like this …

1. ***How come these animals can talk?***
2. ***Where do they live?***
3. ***How can a duck look after a cactus? Can she even pick up a plant pot or a watering can with her feathered, fingerless wings?***
4. ***Why don't they have more inventive names than 'Duck' and 'Squirrel'?***

But I'm not going to answer your questions right now, apart from one …





Squirrel and Duck live together in a hollow tree made from fibreglass. This big hollow tree is in the middle of a pretend town with a roller coaster that runs through the middle of it. I know that sounds completely stupid and LIKE I'M JUST MAKING THIS STUFF UP as I go along, but I assure you it's the honest truth – that's where they live. You see, their hollow tree is in an abandoned theme park.

Sadly, the roller coaster hasn't worked in decades, it's covered in moss and periodically large, rusted chunks of it break off and smash to the floor. So, why do Squirrel and Duck live in such a squalid and, dare I say it, *dangerous* environment?

Well, they have no choice!

Think about it. If you looked like a duck, smelt like a duck, waddled like a duck and

to all intents and purposes *were* a duck, and YET you thought and spoke like a human, imagine what would happen! You'd be locked up in a scientific research facility with electrodes taped all over you before you could even shriek, 'Sorry, I meant to say *Quack*'.

Over the years, Squirrel and Duck have learned that they MUST keep an incredibly low profile, to never be seen, or at the very least, to never be heard, and *that* is why they live in a dirty old fibreglass tree, in an abandoned theme park, miles away from anyone.

So, there you go … it might not be much to look at. *Yes*, it is often damp, cold and mind-numbingly boring in there – true, they don't have much room and they argue a lot (nearly all) of the time, but it's their *home* and as long as they've got their hollow, fibreglass tree trunk, everything is going to be OK.

Thank *goodness* nothing's going to come along and spoil all that.

