# The Narzat

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# Chapter 1

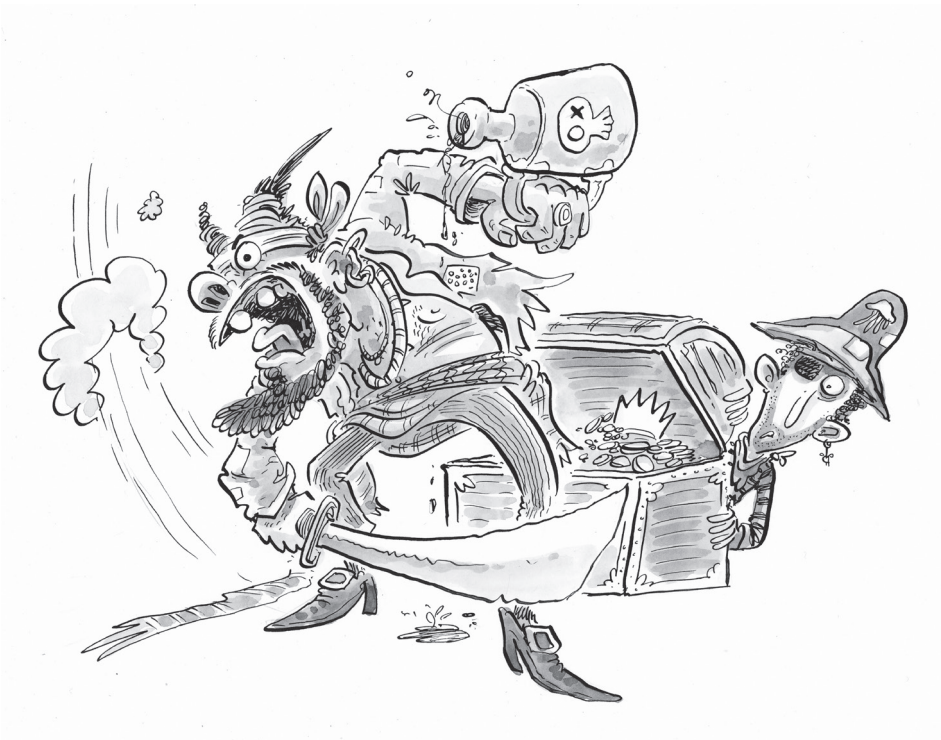
# The Jumble Jungle Wood

The Jumble Jungle Wood is **VERY** far away.

Of course, when I say *very*, I mean ridiculously, incredibly, unbelievably, mind-bogglingly far away. Imagine the longest walk you've ever been on – one where the adults looked a bit lost and started snapping at each other. One where you were worrying your feet would drop off, or that you would have to eat one of your parents in order to survive. Well, multiply that walk by the biggest number you can think of and you start to grasp how far away the Jumble Jungle Wood truly is.

To get there, you have to stumble through the coldest parts of icy wastelands, push past where the

North and South Winds meet, hot foot it across the Hooha Desert, and wade for days through the Mosquito Marshes of Swampland. You'll have to be silent when you sail across one ocean (to avoid angry pirates) and be extra loud when crossing the next (to scare off cowardly pirates). You have to take many right turns, and even more wrong turns. Sometimes you'll have to crawl, sometimes you'll have to sprint, and sometimes you'll even have to do both. If you can do all of this (and put up with a lack of food, sleep, comfort, or clean socks) you might just reach the feet of the Three-Headed Mountain. And if you



can bear to cross that, then – finally, at last! – you'll have reached the Jumble Jungle Wood.

And, oh my goodness, it is worth every step of the journey.

The Jumble Jungle Wood is a place like no other. It is filled with wildlife from your wildest dreams, and awash with creatures from beyond your imagination. From the moment the sun rises over the Three-Headed Mountain, the trees quiver with sweet snarls and howling hoots, like an orchestra of a thousand fascinated conversations. The ground is a riot of colour – from the tropical petals of the *rainbow rose* to the flashing feathers of the *coo-ee-parrot* – and a hundred scents fill the air. About eighty two of them are wonderful, ten of them are unusual and eight of them are just dreadfully smelly.

As you wander through the jungle – and I hope you do one day – the first things that will cause your jaw to drop will be the trees. Not just because they are amazing but because they are so different. *Towering toombas* loom proudly, covering the sky with a leafy green ceiling. Their bases are hugged by *cuddle-shrubs*, whilst *twirly twiglets* float on by. In some areas, *sobbing saplings* droop over flowing rivers (their blue

every other pale in comparison. It is unique in every possible way and special in all the others. It's worth travelling to the Jumble Jungle Wood just to see it. Prepare yourself to meet…

THE NARZAT!

# Chapter 2

## The Narzat

If you combined the muddiest puddle with a dustbin full of dirt, you still wouldn't have something as grimy as the Narzat. From head to toe, he is covered in muck from a hundred different adventures. Leaves litter his matted hair, and sludge oozes between his toes. In fact, both of his feet are so dirty that he has developed a protective layer of muck under his soles, which means he can traipse over any terrain with barely a wince.

If you were to stand back to back with the Narzat, you would probably be a little bit taller (or he would be a little bit shorter). Either way, you wouldn't want to stand next to him for too

long for fear that you'd get Narzat muck on your clothes.

It's hard to describe the Narzat's true shape, as bits of leaf, bush and the occasional bug have all stuck to his body making him look like a badly drawn shrub. It would be easy to mistake him for a plant if he weren't charging around all the time, wind-milling his arms and stamping his happy feet.

Besides the muck, three other things stand out about the Narzat:

1. **His grin.** He has the biggest, toothiest, yellowest smile that you have ever seen. It says hello and goodbye all at the same time, and glows with the warmth of someone who just wants to be friends.
2. **His eyes**. His eyes are of the deepest brown. This brown is unlike the muddy stains surrounding his body – it is a brown of the deepest earth, a brown that somehow manages to catch the light and twinkle. There is nothing warmer than the flash of the

Narzat's eyes paired with the shine of his smile.

3. **His 'shiny'**. It is unusual for any creature to wear jewellery, but the Narzat is not your usual creature. Around his neck is a sparkling silver chain, and from that chain hangs a sparkling silver locket. He is not sure how long he has owned the shiny – it's just always been there. The Narzat's 'shiny' is the only thing that he ever cleans.

As I hope you have gathered, the Narzat is both friendly and foul, both smiley and smelly. Many creatures in the Jumble Jungle Wood overlook his peculiar appearance and even more peculiar odour and enjoy the fun of his games and the warmth of his friendship. Indeed, even though the Narzat only talks in gravelly grunts and hoots and howls, there is some wonderful music about his laughter that brings you closer.

Sadly, the Narzat didn't always enjoy friendship in the Jumble Jungle Wood. In fact, there was a time when he had no friends, chums, pals or even mates

at all! What a sad and lonely time that was for the poor fellow. He would stumble across the forest floor, lean against the sobbing saplings, and slowly kick his way through muddy puddles. Occasionally, he tried to play games that weren't half as fun on your own, such as catch, or jungle badminton. He walked to the murkiest swamps to the feet of the Three Headed Mountain, looking for someone to talk to.

It was one special night that he sat on a particularly uncomfortable rock (the rock later turned out to be a particularly uncomfortable tortoise – you'd be uncomfortable too with a Narzat sat on you) and looked up at the stars. His brown eyes brimmed with tears and he clutched his shiny with one hand. On the pendant were etched delicate words, which glinted in the blueness of the moon. The Narzat read them slowly, mouthing the words. Soft words. Special words. I'm not sure if he knew what they meant, but he certainly knew what they felt.

The locket said:

*When the night is long and dark,*
*We fear the sun shall not rise.*



*But, oh! My love! Soon it does,*
*And what beauty fills our eyes!*

The Narzat clutched the shiny extra hard and made a special wish, for a friend. Any friend would do.

Some of you may believe in the power of wishes, and some of you may just believe in coincidences, but it may please you to know that the very next day the Narzat met not just one friend, but two friends. And they were the two very best friends that he could have ever hoped for.