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EXPOSITION

Pooh and Piglet, Christopher Robin and Eeyore were last seen in the Forest – oh, can it really be eighty years ago? But dreams have a logic of their own and it is as if the eighty years have passed in a day.

Looking over my shoulder, Pooh says: "Eighty is a good number really but it could just as well be eighty weeks or days or minutes as years," and I say: "Let's call it eighty seconds, and then it'll be as though no time has passed at all."

Piglet says: "I tried to count to eighty once, but when I got to 37 the numbers started jumping out at me and turning cartwheels, especially the sixes and nines."

"They do that when you're least expecting it," says Pooh.

"But are you really going to write us new adventures?" Christopher Robin asks. "Because we rather liked the old ones."

"I didn't like the ones with the Heffalumps in," adds Piglet, shuddering.

"And can they end with a little smackerel of something?"

asks Pooh, who may have put on a few ounces in eighty years.

"He'll get it wrong," says Eeyore, "see if he doesn't. What does he know about donkeys?"

Of course Eeyore is right, because I don't know; I can only guess. But guessing can be fun too. And if occasionally I think I have guessed right I shall reward myself with a chocolate biscuit, one of those with chocolate on one side only so you don't get sticky fingers and leave marks on the paper, and if sometimes I am afraid that I have guessed wrong I shall just have to go without.

"We'll know," says Christopher Robin. "We'll help you get it right if we can." And Pooh and Piglet smile and nod their heads, but Eeyore says: "Not that you are likely to. Nobody ever does."

D.B.



