

## The legend of how the Earth became peaceful – A Korean folktale



Welcome to our Korean garden. Gardens have been popular in Korea for over 2000 years and are designed to be a place of reflection and peace. I'm now going to tell you a story of how the ancient Earth became peaceful...

The King of the Heavens and Earth had two sons; Great Star and Small Star. Great Star was wise and thoughtful, whereas Small Star was a bit of a trickster. When they had both grown into young men, the king decided that the time had come to separate the Sky, the Earth, and the Netherworld. He would rule the skies and heavens, one of his sons would rule the Earth, and the other the Netherworld, however they both wanted to rule the Earth. The king decided to challenge them to a riddle contest and the winner would become the ruler of Earth. Great Star having great wisdom won the contest, but his brother was not ready to lose the Earth, so he begged the king for another chance. The king gave them another challenge, they were tasked to grow a flower garden. They had 100 days and whoever had the best floral display would win the contest and rule over the precious Earth. Great Star grew a beautiful Korean garden full of wild flowers, whereas his brother's plants all withered. On the night before the 100th day, Small Star being the trickster, sneaked into his brother's garden and swapped the displays around. The king awoke on the 100th day and seeing that Small Star's garden was far lovelier than Great Star's, made him the ruler of Earth.

Small Star however, soon realised that the Earth was out of order; there were two suns – so everything got singed, and there were two moons which caused great waves and floods. Every living creature could speak, the plants and animals all spoke, so it was very noisy. Plus, the Gwisin ghosts tormented all life, which resulted in chaos and misery.

Small Star pleaded with his brother to help and as Great Star was a kind being, he helped his brother. He took two iron arrows and shot one into the second sun, and one into the second moon – they both exploded and turned into all the stars of the sky. He then took pine dust and scattered it over the plants and the animals and they became silent. Lastly, he allowed the Gwisin into the Netherworld.

The Earth became peaceful and ordered, and Small Star became a wise ruler.

Today we must continue to work together to make Earth a peaceful, place for all the life that lives here.

Have you seen our owl? That's the 1st one of 8 well done! Now pause the story and press play when you reach myth and folklore.

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## The Lost Child

You are now in Myth and Folklore. There are many weird and wonderful folktales and legends in Cornwall, as it is steeped in history and magic. I would like to tell you an eerie tale of a lost child.

In a village in Cornwall, a little girl was gathering cowslips in the fields near an ancient woodland. The child was suddenly charmed by hearing beautiful music playing from within the wood, it was so mesmerising she wandered closer. When she reached the edge of the wood the music grew clear and sharp, exquisite to her ear. She had heard the tales of wolves, bears and mythical creatures of the woods, but she was not afraid, for she was now under a magical spell. She followed the music into the depths of the wood, past the silver birches, hazels, and rowans and into the groves of oak and beech trees. When the understory of tangled brambles and thicket became too hard to overcome, an invisible being appeared and crushed down the unruly plants and a pathway formed for the little girl to follow.

As the darkness set in the girl found herself on the edge of a small lake, the stillness reflected the hundreds of shining stars that shone in the sky, the music faded and peace set in. The little girl, weary from her wanderings, settled down on a bed of moss and chamomile and fell asleep.

The child was spirited away across the lake by a lady of the woods and the faeries. She was taken to a palace of jewels and crystals which far exceeded what she had seen in any Cornish mine.

The girl, when found by the village folk asleep on her bed of moss and chamomile, said she had stayed at the palace for a long time, months perhaps years, however, only a night had passed.

The villagers did not dispel her story, they knew that even when things seem unlikely and hard to explain it does not necessarily mean they are false, and that the world within an enchanted wood is not understood by all humans.

As we learn more and more about woodlands, trees and the life within them, we realise these ecosystems are indeed magical, helping to keep our planet healthy – we must look after them as they look after us.

Have a look around for the 2<sup>nd</sup> owl and pause the story, press play when you have reached Southeast Asia in the Rainforest Biome.

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### The Ghost of Tani

Welcome to the Rainforest Biome, you are now in our Southeast Asia garden, and I would like to tell you about the ghost of Tani.

Look around – can you see the wonderful fruit trees, the star fruit and papaya, and you can't mistake the big leafed banana trees. Here in the understories of the forests, wild banana trees grow, they are not actually trees, but herbaceous plants, or herbs. Banana plants grow in clumps and it is thought in Southeast Asian culture that some clumps have a guardian watching over them, caring for the plant. They call this guardian the Nang Tani. They mark these clumps with a fabric tie.

Nang Tani – 'the banana tree fairy' is a beautiful young girl, with long black hair. She hides during the day and at night on a full moon she comes out and hovers over the clumps. She is known to have a warm and good heart, although there is a dark side to her, and if anyone is seen to be destructive over nature or each other, she will hurt and haunt the guilty.

One night a long time ago in a small village in Thailand, a young girls cry could be heard on the warm fragrant wind. The villagers collected their children together and found them all to be safe. They slept together under the moon lit sky in a long hut on stilts, for the cry was haunting and everyone felt uneasy. At first light they saw a man from another village staggering towards them, he had been taken by the Nani, his speech did not make any sense, he just pointed to a clump of banana plants. He stayed to recover but soon left the village never to be seen again. A while later, the villagers heard tale of the man, who had fallen in love with two women and broken both their hearts. The female villagers decided to honour Nang Tani and marked the trunks of the banana plant with coloured cloth and gave offerings of incense and flowers to thank her. The tradition is still practiced today, but only around banana plants that are thought to have the ghost of Nang Tani within them. If these plants are cut down, it is said to bring bad luck onto the village, so be careful as you pass the banana plants in the Biome today.

Did you find the Owl? Now it's time to pause the story and press play when you reach the corner in West Africa, where the path splits towards South America and The Canopy Walkway.



### The Spirit of the Curupira

You are now entering the Amazon Rainforest area of the Biome. The Amazon is the world's largest rainforest. It's home to millions of species of plants and animals and stores a vast amount of carbon.

As you walk along, can you feel the eyes of Curupira following you?

Legends have it that the Curupira is an odd sort of a chap, very small, with bright orange hair all over his body. He's cunning and a bit mischievous. His feet are turned back to fool his hunters into following his footsteps from whence he came. He is thought to be the guardian of all things fauna and flora in the Brazilian Amazon, and will harm you if take more than what you need from the forest. If you take animals that are still caring for their young, he will know, if you leave litter or trample down new life, he will see... here is his story.

In a time when the forest was silent of man's destructive ways, a tribe of hunters were stalking through the forest. The elders were showing the young men how to track and learn from the trees and plants. One young man would not listen, he knew it all, he made fun of the old ways, and laughed at the elder's beliefs. When night arrived, they made camp trying not to disturb the plants around. They bent over young trees and tied them together, so they would still grow after they left, they took fallen wood for fire and they ate tubers and fruit. The young man however, wanted meat, so he went into the forest to find prey, the elders shook their head for they knew what was out there. The young man cut down the undergrowth as he went, he shot his arrow into many but only picked one, and he cut a shelter and made fire by chopping down trees. The Curupira watched and waited. When the young man was asleep, the Curupira cast a spell and turn the youth into a peccary pig. When the young man, now pig, woke he did not realise the change and went back to his tribe. The tribe awoke with hungry stomachs and a young man saw a peccary pig walking towards him, he took his arrow and shot. Luckily for the pig the arrow only hit his leg, it screamed a human scream, and the tribe gathered around him and saw it was no longer a pig but the young uncaring man, who now had an arrow through his leg. He recovered from his injury but from that day onwards he always cared for nature around him and always watched out for the Curupira.

The moral of the story? When we don't look after nature, we are shooting ourselves in the leg!

Remember look out for your 4th Owl? Can you see it? It's time to pause the story and press play when you reached the Bamboo House further around the Biome.

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### The Bamboo Cutter and the Moon Child

You are now entering the herbs and spices area. To your right is the Bamboo Hut, bamboo is an incredible plant, it grows very fast and is very strong and durable. It can be grown sustainably and you can find many things now made from bamboo, even toothbrushes!

Bamboo grows across tropical and subtropical regions, including Japan, which is where our next story comes from.

A long time ago, a bamboo cutter was cutting bamboo. It was late afternoon and the moon had begun to shine; the cutter was just about to pack up for the day when he saw a shining stalk of bamboo. He carefully sliced it open and inside was a tiny girl, an infant the size of his thumb, and beside her was a nugget of gold. As he and his wife did not have children he decided to take her and the gold home.

Within a few months the girl had grown into a beautiful young woman and the bamboo cutter used the gold to buy fine clothes and food for her. Tales of her beauty reached to all corners of the land and five young noblemen decided to visit and try to win her hand. However, she did not want to marry any of them as she knew that she did not belong to this world, but to the Moon. She knew these noblemen to be deceitful tricksters, so she devised a contest to uncover their evil ways. She asked each of them to bring back an impossible artefact – a coloured jewel from the neck of a dragon, the stone begging bowl from Buddha, a jewelled branch from a camphor tree, a feather from the Phoenix. They were all too lazy to go on these journeys, so they lied and faked the artefacts, and the girl exposed them. They rode away in shame and changed their ways forever.

She was celebrated and received letters from the Emperor of Japan, thanking her. The girl began to shine like the moon, and the people called her the moon princess as she was wise and caring. But she knew the moon was calling her back. When the large and bright mid-autumn moon appeared in the sky, she knew it was time to leave.

She never forgot her earth parents and always watched over them. When times grew hard, she would send a nugget or two of gold for the bamboo cutter to find in the shining bamboo.

The 5<sup>th</sup> Owl is close by, see if you can see it? It's time to pause the story and press play when you reach the cypress tree in the Mediterranean Biome – it is by the beach on the higher path.



## The Mourning Tree

Cypress trees stand straight and tall on the horizon of the Tuscany lavender and vineyard hills of Italy, but why is it known as the Mourning Tree? Well here is its sad and mournful story.

In the ancient world of Greece – a hero named Cyprisus was beloved by all, including the great god Apollo; the god of sun, music and poetry, for he was a beautiful, charming and gracious youth. Cyprisus's favourite companion was a tamed stag, and under the landscape of olive groves and enchanted woods the stag would allow Cyprisus to ride him. The youthful lad would take the animal to browse new pastures and drink from clear refreshing springs. They rode through sun drenched grass and cooled down under the shade of the popular, weeping willows and maple trees.

The stag was so revered it was allowed into people's homes, where it would be stroked and adored. It was given many gifts; jewels around its antlers, a silver amulet on its forehead, and a collar studded with precious stones. It was sacred to the nymphs, and loved by all.

One day the stag slept under a rowan tree beside a cool stream, resting its limbs and enjoying the peace of the day, when a sharp spear pierced him, blindingly thrown by Cyprisus. He had not seen the stag asleep on the ground. The devastated youth curled up beside the dying stag, wanting nothing but his own death to arrive. Apollo tried to comfort the youth, but Cyprisus only wished to be allowed to mourn forever. Apollo gave him his wish and he turned him into a tall and slender tree, an evergreen with deep roots that touched the underworld linking the dead with the living. The tree became known as the cypress tree and is sacred to Hades the god of the underworld. Within the Mourning Tree Cyprisus lives on forever.

You are nearly at the end of the trail, find the 6<sup>th</sup> Owl, and when you reach the Australia area press play once more.



### How the River Red Gum came to be

Welcome to our Australia area, have you noticed the Rainbow Serpent painted on a box to your left? Well he is in your next story, known as a Dreamtime story which is an Aboriginal creation story. The river red gum is a species of eucalyptus tree which is the most common type of tree in Australia. This story is how they came to be.

In Dreamtime – a time of creation, the Rainbow Serpent had created the landscape and people of all sizes, the Bool were great giants and shared the land with the humans.

The Bool, who stood tall over all others became arrogant and occupied the good fertile and hunting lands besides the rivers. The humans and animals asked if they could share the land, but the Bool would not allow it. The Rainbow Serpent grew cross and told the Bool they had to share, but they had become so arrogant they didn't listen. Finally, the Rainbow Serpent sent storms, rain and thunder to beat down upon all life to teach the Bool a lesson. But they still would not listen, it rained and rained, and the rivers flooded but the Bool stood firm. The humans were starting to become afraid, as the flood water was getting higher and higher. The Bool, not wanting anyone else to suffer their defiance let the humans climb upon them. More and more humans climbed upon the giants, animals climbed on too. The Bool then reached out their arms and stretched out their fingers, so the birds and bats could take a perch. The giants became very unsteady, so to hold themselves upright they buried their feet down into the soil so they would not fall over.

The Rainbow Serpent could not help but be impressed by the kindness of the Bool and at last the storms stopped. As the rivers receded the humans and animals climbed down from the great bools, who had been standing in the same spot for a very long time. Their muscles had become solid and their black hair had changed to green leaves, their arms and fingers were now branches, and their legs great trunks, they had turned into mighty trees; the River Red Gum trees. The people looked up at the sky and a rainbow of all colours had appeared, the serpent spanned the sky now in honour and respect of the Bool.

Have a look for the 7<sup>th</sup> Owl, it's around the Australian story circle. Press pause and make your way to meet the real owls, they are waiting for you on the bluff, behind the Core building on the way to the exit. Press play once you are there to hear the last story.



## How the Owl became wise

Welcome to the eighth and final stop on the Odyssey of Weird Little Stories. I have one more story to tell and that is about the Owl, and how they became so wise. This is an old Native American woodland myth.

The Creator who creates by thinking what will be, started thinking of animals, first he would think of outlines and then fill in with detail. Today it was the woodland creatures turn and they were all lined up waiting to be filled in.

The rabbits were next and then the owls, they had been waiting a long time and therefore had a long time to think what they would like to look like. The outlines had included a voice and eyes, and ears so the creatures could see and hear and chat whilst waiting.

As the Creator was discussing the detail with the rabbit, the owl kept interrupting "I say Creator I want a long neck like swans, and red feathers like the cardinals and a beak like the hawks."

"Yes, yes, but wait your turn, now stop watching me, you know it is forbidden," snapped the Creator.

The Creator turned back to the rabbit who was a little nervous, "now what do you want?"

"Long legs and ears, ummmm and fangs, and claws"

"I would like claws too" shouted the owl.

"I am warning you owl, turn around and be quiet"

but the owl would not stop, he demanded this and demanded that, and kept watching the Creator. Finally, when he was only halfway through the rabbit, the Creator grabbed hold of the owl. He pushed the owl's head down into his body, so he had no neck, pulled his ears out horizontally, until he screeched, and shook him until his eyes widened with fright.

The Creator who creates by thinking what will be, stood back pleased with himself. The owl now had big ears to hear, big eyes to see, a short neck to spin around, and a little wisdom to use to fly away before the Creator could do anything worse.

Owl was no longer a fool. He flew quickly away, screeching and hooting.

The Creator turned to finish the rabbit but the rabbit was so scared he too had left, half finished – no claws or fangs and only long hind legs – which he was very glad for, as they were very good for hopping away.

Luckily the owls flew back and have landed here today to share their wisdom with you, we hope you enjoyed listening to the stories along the trail.

Don't forget to spot the final owl before you leave. Have a safe Journey home and see you soon.