

The Magic Faraway Tree

Enid Blyton

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Extract

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Enid BlytonTM

THE
MAGIC
FARAWAY
TREE



Illustrated by Jan McCafferty

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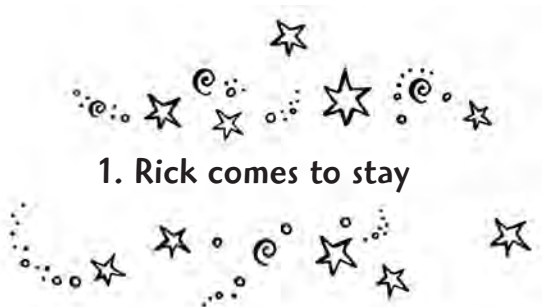


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1. Rick comes to stay

Once upon a time there were three children, Joe, Beth and Frannie. They lived with their mother and father in a little cottage deep in the country. They had to help their parents both in the house and in the garden, as there was lots to do.

Now, one day their mother had a letter. She didn't very often have letters, so the children wondered what it was about.

'Listen!' she said. 'This is something quite exciting for you. Your cousin Rick is coming to stay with us!'

'Ooh!' said all the children, pleased. Rick was about the same age as Joe. He was a happy boy, rather naughty, and it would be such fun to have him.

'He can sleep with me in my little bedroom!' said Joe. 'Oh, Mother, what fun! When is he coming?'

'Tomorrow,' said Mother. 'You can put up a little bed for him, and you must make room for Rick's things in your cupboard. He is going to stay quite a long time, because his mother is ill and can't look after him.'

The three children flew upstairs to get Joe's room ready for Rick as well.

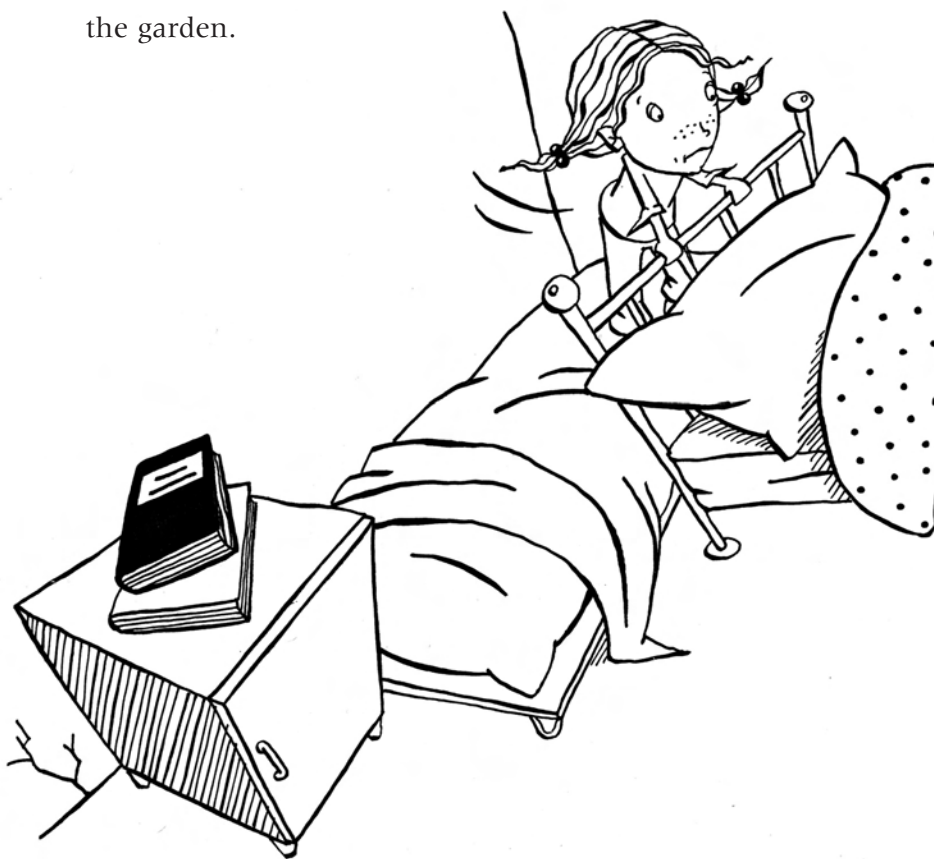
'Hey! What will Rick say when we tell him about the

Enchanted Wood and the Faraway Tree?’ cried Joe.

‘And what will he say when we show him our friends there – Silky, and old Moon-Face, and the dear old deaf Saucepan Man, and everyone!’ said Beth.

‘He *will* get a surprise!’ said Frannie.

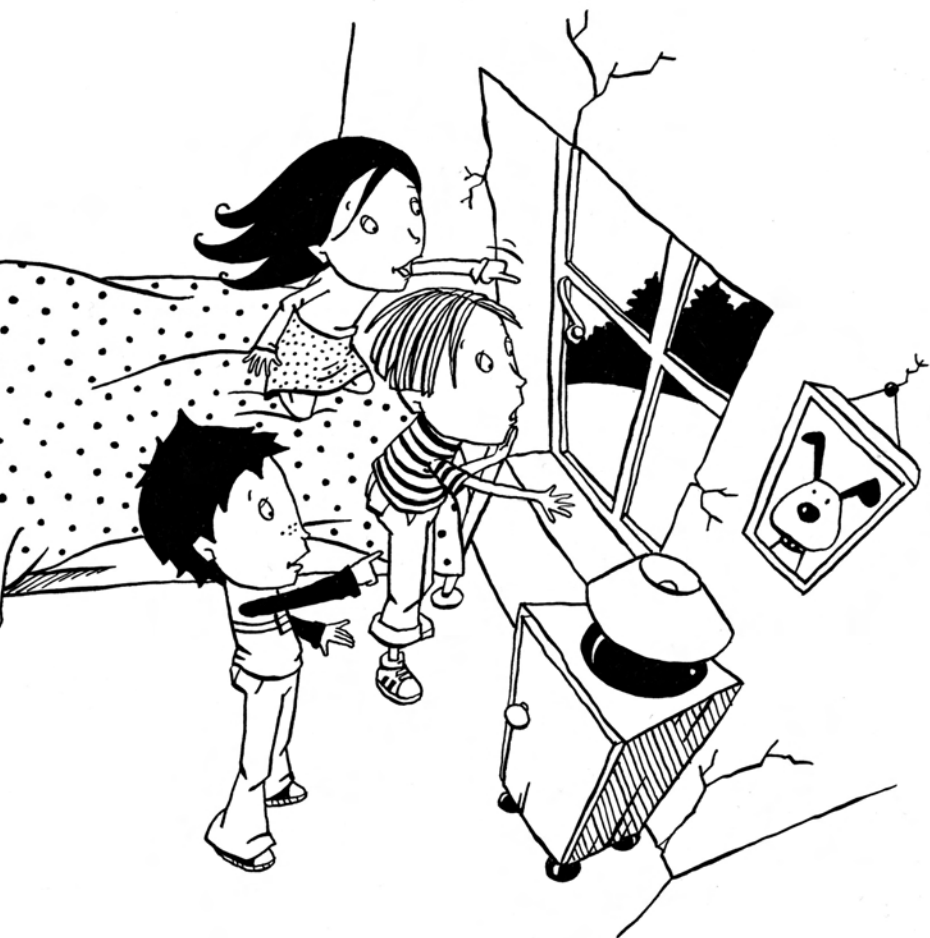
They got everything ready for their cousin. They put up a little camp-bed for him, and found some blankets. They made room in Joe’s cupboard and bedside cabinet for Rick’s clothes. Then they looked out of the window. It looked on to a dark, thick wood, whose trees waved in the wind, not far from the bottom of the garden.



‘The Enchanted Wood!’ said Beth softly. ‘What marvellous adventures we have had there. Maybe Rick will have some, too.’

Rick arrived the next day. He had travelled in the delivery van from the village shop, with a small bag of clothes. He jumped down and hugged the children’s mother.

‘Hello, Aunt Polly!’ he said. ‘It’s good of you to have me.



Hello, Joe! I say, aren't Beth and Frannie big now? It's lovely to be with you all again.'

The children took him up to his room. They helped him to unpack his bag and put his things neatly away in the cupboard and the bedside cabinet. They showed him the bed he was to sleep on.

'I expect I shall find it rather dull here after living in the city,' said Rick, putting his washing things on top of the bedside cabinet. 'It seems so quiet. I shall miss the noise of buses and cars.'

'You won't find it dull!' said Joe. 'My word, Rick, we've had more adventures since we've been here than we ever had when we lived in town.'

'What sort of adventures?' asked Rick in surprise. 'It seems such a quiet place that I shouldn't have thought there was even a small adventure to be found!'

The children took Rick to the window. 'Look, Rick,' said Joe. 'Do you see that thick, dark wood over there, backing on to the lane at the bottom of our garden?'

'Yes,' said Rick. 'It seems quite ordinary to me, except that the leaves of the trees seem a darker green than usual.'

'Well, listen, Rick – that's the *Enchanted Wood*!' said Beth.

Rick's eyes opened wide. He stared at the wood. 'You're making fun of me!' he said at last.

'No, we're not,' said Frannie. 'We mean what we say. Its name is the Enchanted Wood – and it *is* enchanted.'

And oh, Rick, in the middle of it is the most wonderful tree in the world!’

‘What sort of tree?’ asked Rick, feeling quite excited.

‘It’s a really enormous tree,’ said Joe. ‘Its top goes right up to the clouds – and oh, Rick, at the top of it is always some strange land. You can go there by climbing up the top branch of the Faraway Tree, going up a little ladder through a hole in the big cloud that always lies on the top of the tree – and there you are in some strange land!’

‘I don’t think I believe you,’ said Rick. ‘You’re making it all up.’

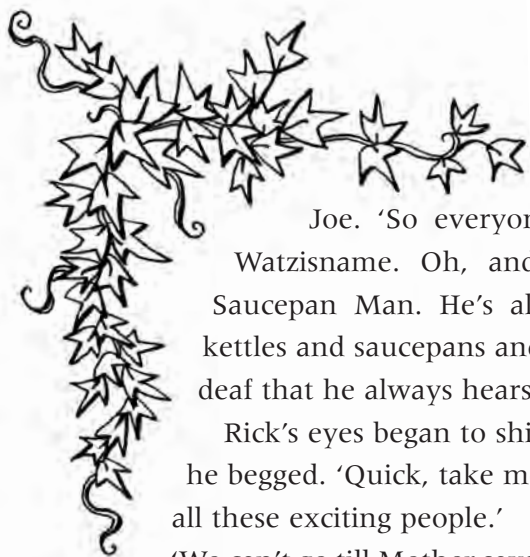
‘Rick! We’ll take you there and show you what we mean,’ said Beth. ‘It’s all quite true. We’ve had such exciting adventures at the top of the Faraway Tree. We’ve been to the Rocking Land, and the Birthday Land.’

‘And the Land of Take-What-You-Want and the Land of the Snowman,’ said Frannie. ‘You just can’t imagine how exciting it all is.’

‘And, Rick, all kinds of odd folk live in the trunk of the Faraway Tree,’ said Joe. ‘We’ve lots of good friends there. We’ll take you to them one day. There’s a dear little fairy called Silky, because she has such a mop of silky golden hair.’

‘And there’s funny old Mister Watzisname,’ said Frannie.

‘What’s his real name?’ asked Rick in surprise.



‘Nobody knows, not even himself,’ said Joe. ‘So everyone calls him Mister Watzisname. Oh, and there is the Old Saucepan Man. He’s always covered with kettles and saucepans and things, and he’s so deaf that he always hears everything wrong.’

Rick’s eyes began to shine. ‘Take me there,’ he begged. ‘Quick, take me! I can’t wait to see all these exciting people.’

‘We can’t go till Mother says she doesn’t need us in the house,’ said Beth. ‘But we *will* take you – of course we will.’

‘And, Rick, there’s a slippery-slip, a slide that goes right down the inside of the tree from the top to the bottom,’ said Frannie. ‘It belongs to Moon-Face. He lends people cushions to slide down on.’

‘I do want to go down that slide,’ said Rick, getting terribly impatient. ‘Why do you tell me all these things if you can’t take me to see them now? I’ll never be able to sleep tonight! Goodness! My head feels in a whirl already to think of the Faraway Tree and Moon-Face and Silky and the slippery-slip.’

‘Rick, we’ll take you as soon as we can,’ promised Joe. ‘There’s no hurry. The Faraway Tree is always there. We never, never know what land is going to be at the top. We have to be very careful sometimes

because there might be a dangerous land – one that we couldn't get away from!'

A voice came from downstairs. 'Children! Are you going to stay up there all day? I suppose you don't want anything to eat? What a pity – because I have made some new bread and put out some honey!'

Four children raced down the stairs. New bread and honey! Goodness, they weren't going to miss those. Good old Mother – she was always thinking of some nice little treat for them.

'Joe, Father wants you to dig up some potatoes for him later,' said Mother. 'Rick can help you. And, Beth and Frannie, I need your help, because I have to take some mended clothes to Mrs Harris, and she lives such a long way away.'

The children had been hoping to take Rick to the Enchanted Wood. They looked disappointed. But they said nothing, because they knew that in a family everyone had to help when they could.

Mother saw their disappointed faces and smiled. 'I suppose you want to take Rick to see those peculiar friends of yours,' she said. 'Well now, listen – if you are good children today, and do the jobs you have to do, I'll give you a whole day off tomorrow! Then you may take your lunch and dinner and go to visit any friends you like. How would you like that?'

'Oh, Mother, thank you!' cried the children in delight.

‘A whole day!’ said Beth. ‘Why, Rick, we can show you everything!’

‘And maybe let you peep into whatever land is at the top of the Faraway Tree,’ whispered Frannie. ‘Oh, what fun!’

So they did their work well that afternoon and looked forward to the next day. Rick dug hard, and Joe was pleased with him. It was going to be fun to have a cousin with them, able to work and play and enjoy everything, too!

When they went to bed that night they left the doors of their rooms open so that they might call to one another.

‘Sleep well, Rick!’ called Beth. ‘I hope it’s fine tomorrow! What fun we’ll have!’

‘Goodnight, Beth!’ called back Rick. ‘I can’t tell you how I’m longing for tomorrow. I know I shan’t be able to sleep tonight!’

But he did – and so did all the others. When Mother came up at ten o’clock she peeped in at the children, and not one was awake.

Joe woke first next day. He sat up and looked out of the window. The sun streamed in, warm and bright. Joe’s heart jumped for joy. He leaned over to Rick’s bed and shook him.

‘Wake up!’ he said. ‘It’s tomorrow now – and we’re going to the Enchanted Wood!’



2. Off to the Enchanted Wood

The children ate their breakfast quickly. Mother told them to make sandwiches for themselves and to take a small chocolate cake from the cupboard.

‘You can take some doughnuts too,’ she said, ‘and there are apples in that dish over there. When you come home, I’ll bake some potatoes in the oven, and you can eat them with butter and cheese.’

‘Oooh, Mother – we *will* be hungry!’ said Joe at once. ‘Let’s hurry up with the sandwiches. We want to start off as soon as possible.’

‘Now be home by six o’clock, or I shall worry,’ said Mother. ‘Look after your cousin, Joe.’

‘Yes, I will,’ promised Joe.

At last everything was ready. Joe packed the food into a leather bag and slung it over his shoulder. Then the four of them set off to the Enchanted Wood.

It didn’t take them long to get there. A narrow ditch was between the lane and the wood.

‘You’ve got to jump over the ditch, Rick,’ said Joe. They all jumped over. Rick stood still when he was in the wood.

‘What a strange noise the leaves of the trees make,’

he said. 'It's as if they were talking to one another – telling secrets.'

'Wisha-wisha-wisha-wisha,' whispered the trees.

'They *are* telling secrets,' said Beth. 'And do you know, Rick – if the trees have any message for us, we can hear it by pressing our left ears to the trunks of the trees! Then we *really* hear what they say.'

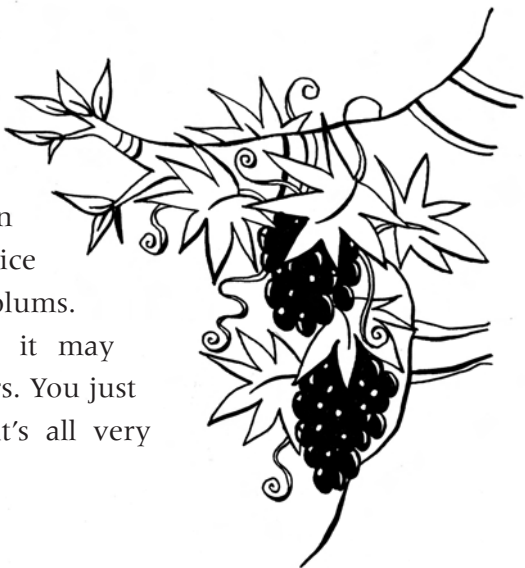
'Wisha-wisha-wisha-wisha,' said the trees.

'Come on,' said Joe impatiently. 'Let's go to the Faraway Tree.'

They all went on – and soon came to the mysterious magic tree. Rick stared at it in great astonishment.

'Wow, it's simply ENORMOUS!' he said. 'I've never seen such a big tree in my life. And you can't possibly see the top. Goodness me! What kind of tree is it? It's got oak leaves, and yet it doesn't really seem like an oak.'

'It's a funny tree,' said Beth. 'It may grow acorns and oak leaves for a little way – and then suddenly you notice that it's growing plums. Then another day it may grow apples or pears. You just never know. But it's all very exciting.'



‘How do you climb it?’ asked Rick. ‘In the ordinary way?’

‘Well, we will today,’ said Joe, ‘because we want to show you our friends who live inside the tree. But sometimes there’s a rope that is let down the tree, and we can go up easily with the help of that. Or sometimes Moon-Face lets down a cushion on the end of the rope and then pulls us up one by one.’

He swung himself up into the tree, and the others followed. After a bit Rick gave a shout. ‘Wow! It’s extraordinary! This tree is growing nuts now! Look!’

Sure enough it was. Rick picked some and cracked them. They were hazel nuts, ripe and sweet. Everyone had some and enjoyed them.

Now when they had all got very high up indeed, Rick was most surprised to see a little window in the trunk of the Faraway Tree.

‘Goodness – does somebody live just here?’ he called to the others. ‘Look – there’s a window here. I’m going to peep in.’

‘You’d better not!’ shouted Joe. ‘The Angry Pixie lives there, and he hates people peeping in.’

But Rick felt so curious that he just *had* to peep in. The Angry Pixie was at home. He was filling his kettle with water, when he looked up and saw Rick’s surprised face at his window. Nothing made the pixie more angry than to see people looking at him. He rushed to the window at once and flung it open.

‘Peeping again!’ he shouted. ‘It’s too bad! All day and night people come peeping. Take that!’

He emptied the kettle of cold water all over poor Rick. Then he slammed his window and drew the curtains across. Joe, Beth and Frannie couldn’t help laughing.

‘I told you not to peep in at the Angry Pixie,’ said Joe, wiping Rick with his hanky. ‘He’s nearly always in a bad temper. Oh, and by the way, Rick, I must warn you about something else. There’s an old woman who lives high up in the tree who is always washing. She empties the water down the tree, and it comes slish-sloshing down. You’ll have to look out for that or you’ll get wet.’

Rick looked up the tree as if he expected the water to come tumbling down at once.

‘Come on,’ said Beth. ‘We’ll come to where the Owl lives soon. He’s a friend of Silky’s, and sometimes brings us notes from her.’

The Owl was fast asleep. He usually only woke up at night-time. Rick peered in at his window and saw the big Owl asleep on a bed. He couldn’t help laughing.

‘I am enjoying all this,’ he said to Frannie. ‘It’s quite an adventure.’

The children climbed higher, and came to a broad branch. ‘There’s a sweet little yellow door, with a knocker and a bell!’ cried Rick in surprise, staring at the door set neatly in the trunk of the tree. ‘Who lives there?’

‘Our friend Silky,’ said Joe. ‘Ring the bell and she’ll



open the door.'

Rick rang the little bell and heard it go ting-a-ling inside. Footsteps pattered to the door. It opened, and a pretty little fairy looked out. Her hair hung round her face like a golden mist.

'Hello, Silky!' cried Joe. 'We've come to see you – and we've brought our cousin, Rick, who has come to live with us. He's having a lovely time exploring the Faraway Tree.'

'How do you do, Rick?' said Silky, holding out her small hand. Rick shook hands shyly. He thought Silky was the loveliest creature he had ever seen.

‘I’ll come with you if you are going to visit Moon-Face,’ said Silky. ‘I want to borrow some honey from him. I’ll take some Pop Cakes with me, and we’ll have them in Moon-Face’s house.’

‘Whatever are Pop Cakes?’ asked Rick, in surprise.

‘Wait and see!’ said Joe with a grin.

They all went up the tree again. Soon they heard a funny noise. ‘That’s old Mister Watzisname snoring,’ said Joe. ‘Look – there he is!’

Sure enough, there he was, sitting in a comfortable chair, his hands folded over his big tummy, and his mouth wide open.

‘How I’d love to pop something into his open mouth!’ said Rick at once.

‘Yes, that’s what everybody feels,’ said Joe. ‘Moon-Face and Silky once popped some acorns in – didn’t you, Silky? And Watzisname was very angry. He threw Moon-Face up through the hole in the cloud, and put him into the strange land there.’

‘Where’s the Old Saucepan Man?’ asked Beth. ‘He is usually with his friend, Mister Watzisname.’

‘I expect he has gone to see Moon-Face,’ said Silky. ‘Come on. We’ll soon be there.’

As they went up the tree, Silky suddenly stopped. ‘Listen,’ she said. They all listened. They heard a curious noise – ‘slishy-sloshy-slishy-sloshy’ – coming nearer and nearer.

‘It’s Dame Washalot’s dirty water coming!’ yelled

Joe. 'Get under a branch, everyone.'

Rick wasn't as quick as the others. They all hid under big boughs – but poor old Rick wasn't quite under his when the water came pouring down the tree. It tumbled on to his head and went down his neck. Rick was very angry. The others were sorry, but they thought it was very funny, too.

'Next time I climb this tree I'll wear my swim-suit,' said Rick, trying to wipe himself dry. 'Really, I think somebody ought to stop Dame Washalot pouring her water away like that. How disgusting!'

'Oh, you'll soon get used to it, and dodge the water easily,' said Joe. On they all went up the tree again, and at last came almost to the top. There they saw a door in the trunk of the tree, and from behind the door came the sound of voices.



‘That’s Moon-Face and the Old Saucepan Man,’ said Joe, and he banged on the door. It flew open and Moon-Face looked out. His big round face beamed with smiles when he saw who his visitors were.

‘Hello, hello, hello,’ he said. ‘Come on in. The Saucepan Man is here.’

Everyone went into Moon-Face’s curious round room. There was a large hole in the middle of it, which was the beginning of the slippery-slip, the wonderful slide that went round and round down the inside of the tree, right to the bottom. Moon-Face’s furniture was arranged round the inside of the tree trunk, and it was all curved to fit the curve of the tree. His bed was curved, the chairs were curved, the sofa and the stove. It was very odd.

Rick stared at it all in great surprise. He really felt as if he must be in a dream. There was somebody very peculiar sitting on the sofa.

It was the Old Saucepan Man. He really was a very curious sight. He was covered with saucepans and kettles, and he wore a saucepan for a hat. You could hardly see anything of him except his face, hands and feet, because he was so covered with saucepans and things. He made a tremendous clatter whenever he moved.

‘Who’s that?’ he said, looking at Rick.

‘This is Rick,’ said Joe, and Rick went forward to shake hands.

The Saucepan Man was very deaf, though he did sometimes hear quite well. But he nearly always heard everything wrong, and sometimes he was very funny.

‘Chick?’ he said. ‘Well, that’s a funny name for a boy.’

‘Not Chick, but RICK!’ shouted Moon-Face.

‘Stick?’ said the Saucepan Man, shaking hands. ‘Good morning, Stick. I hope you are well.’

Rick giggled. Moon-Face got ready to shout again, but Silky quickly handed him her bag of Pop Cakes. ‘Don’t get angry with him,’ she said. ‘Look – let’s all have some Pop Cakes. They are freshly made today. And, oh, Moon-Face, do tell us – what land is at the top of the Faraway Tree today?’

‘The Land of Topsy-Turvy,’ said Moon-Face. ‘But I don’t advise you to go there. It’s very uncomfortable.’

‘Oh, yes let’s,’ cried Rick. ‘Can’t we just *peep* at it?’

‘We’ll see,’ said Joe, giving him a Pop Cake. ‘Eat this, Rick.’

Pop Cakes were lovely. Rick put one in his mouth and bit into it. It went pop at once – and he found his mouth full of sweet honey from the middle of the cake.

‘Delicious!’ he said. ‘I’ll have another. Oh, Joe, PLEASE let’s take our lunch up into the land of Topsy-Turvy. Oh, please, please, please!’