



Crowland Community Hub and library 500 words Writing
competition
Adult Winner

The Greenie by Helen Mills

Children in the playground liked to talk about the overgrown garden behind the large black gates. They told fantastical tales of a creature that lived deep in the dense foliage, a creature they called 'The Greenie'. Some mentioned big ears, others horns, but whatever 'The Greenie' looked like, it all sounded so peculiar to Meredith. If no-one had ventured inside, where had all these stories come from? Mr. Flowers, the eccentric school caretaker, seemed a good place to start. "Sir, is there a creature in the secret garden?" Meredith just came out with it, a little red in the face. Mr. Flowers seemed reticent at first, but Meredith was a sweet and kind child and the elderly caretaker pulled out of his pocket a very elaborate key encrusted with bright green gems. "I entrust this to you Meredith as this is the answer to your question." Before she could probe him further, Mr. Flowers disappeared behind the rose bush. Some of his blue shirt ripped off and was left behind on the thorns, flapping in the wind. Meredith put the key in the pocket of her pinafore and waited patiently for the school day to finish.

Not far from home, the black gates loomed and Meredith felt a large gulp form in her throat. She was a cocktail of nerves and excitement. She thought that she had been dreaming all day, but as she placed her hands in her pinafore pocket, there was the key, the key to the secret garden. The avenue was completely abandoned and with the sky now faded, two lights suddenly came on and lit up the large pillars either side of the gates. The glow from these lights seemed otherworldly to Meredith, but seizing on her courage she placed the key in the keyhole. The gates opened with surprising ease and as she followed the path of cracked stone tiles, her nose drank the sweet scent of all of the flowers that were gassing off in the evening. The garden was getting denser and night was fast approaching. Feeling she should turn back, Meredith readied to leave, when she heard something snap in the bushes. She moved the branches of a tree to get a better look and there sat on a log was a big furry green bottom. "Yikes!" cried Meredith, freezing on the spot. The bottom turned around to reveal a creature that resembled a cross between an ogre and a teddy bear dressed in a blue robe. "It's 'The Greenie!'" she yelled. As she tried to run away Meredith caught her foot in the roots of a gnarled tree. The creature approached and outstretched its arm. Meredith expected to be made into soup, but it lifted her leg out of the roots. "Only those who return the key can leave here!" it explained. Meredith handed over the key immediately and 'The Greenie' returned to the bushes, leaving behind a remnant of blue robe on the thorns. Could it be? wondered Meredith.