

Toska of Toy Town Tunnel

by
Miranda
M Moor



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with illustrations by
Michael Hammond



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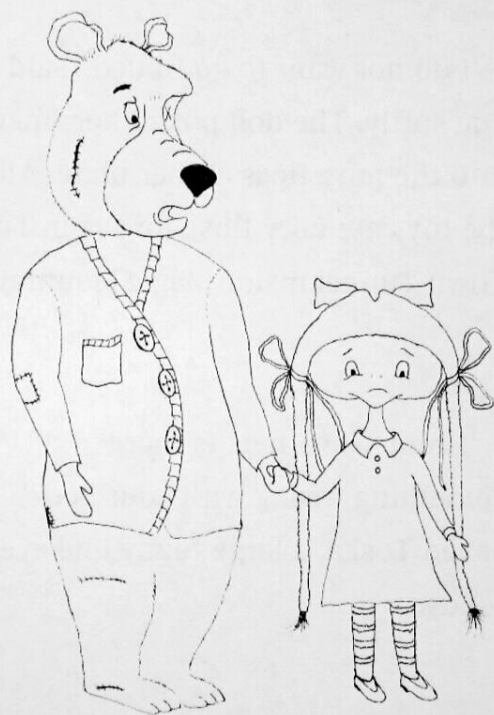
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sustainable sources.

'I do not want to go to bed,' said
Zoe softly. The doll poked her finger
into the fairy floss on her plate. All
the toys ate fairy floss for tea in Toy
Town Tunnel inside Magic Mountain.

'Hmm. Now then, is there
something wrong with your bed?'
asked Toska, a large fuzzy one eyed
teddy.



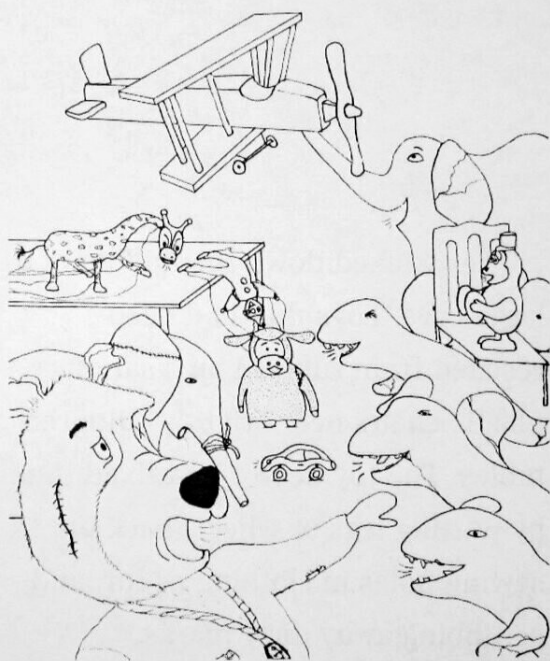
Zoe sighed, picked up her golden cup and took a sip of magic water. It tasted fizzy, but she couldn't even smile when the bubbles tickled the end of her nose.

Toska looked at her kindly and waited.

'I have bad dreams,' said Zoe, sniffing.

Toska patted her hand and said, 'It takes time to settle in here. When we found you beside the garbage bin you had texta marks on your skin, your leg was broken right off, and your dress was torn and dirty. The toy doctor worked very hard to make you better. Come on. I'll walk you to your room.'

They walked down the middle of a large cave. Toys that had been rescued from rubbish bins sat on plastic chairs near brightly coloured tables. The toy doctor had fixed them by putting legs or wheels back on, sewing holes in clothing or fur, and scrubbing away dirty marks.



Brmm, putt putt, putt went the toy cars.

Knock, knock went the wooden elephants' trunks on the table.

A group of puppets flopped about trying to move their heads and arms without any children's fingers to guide them.

A group of dinosaurs began to sing
the Toy Town Tunnel song, but
because their teeth had been bent or
broken it was hard to hear the words.

Toska began to sing in his big
booming bear's voice. . . .

Secret land in Magic Mountain,
Drink for free from
Golden Fountain
Enter here from any place
Friends repair your broken face
You'll grow strong
Drown all fear
Everyone is accepted here.

Toska waved as he and Zoe passed by. Toska knew everybody. He had lived there a long time. It was better to be in Toy Town Tunnel than the place that every broken toy didn't want to think about - the T I P. Nobody had ever returned from the T I P.

Later that night when the night-light glow worms were switched on and most of the toys snored, Zoe began to cry out, 'No! No!' She rolled from side to side on her car mat bed. 'Help her! Save her!'

She jumped up and ran into the rock passage.

‘Zoe, what is the matter?’ asked
Toska, as he and Rusty the rat sat up
in their beds, blinking and rubbing
their eyes.



'It is Zara, my sister. She is going away. She is going to the T I P. Oh no!'

She rubbed her eyes and kept sobbing and sniffing until Toska gave her a hug and handed her his bear sized handkerchief.

'You are dreaming, Zoe. Wake Up,'
he said.

Zoe blinked and looked around at
Toy Town Tunnel. She looked from
Toska to Rusty.

'Who is Zara?' asked Toska. 'You
came here alone. We rescued you on
garbage collection night when we flew
to Grown-Up Town on our magic
carpet.'

He stroked his hairy chin and looked at Rusty. Rusty twitched his whiskers and began to chew fairy floss he had found on the ground.

'I-I think I remember what happened now,' said Zoe.

She burst into tears again.

Zoe looked up and touched Toska's arm.

'Oh Toska, you could save Zara.
You, Rusty and Simon the soldier.
Please. Please.'

'Um, hm, er - You'll need to tell me
about it,' said Toska.

Zoe wiped her nose and began.

'Zara and I used to live at Lisa's house. One day we were outside in the backyard and Lisa was bored. She drew on our tummies, arms and faces. She did not want to bring us inside because of what her mummy would say so she hid us in some long grass. Her brother rode his pushbike over us when he got home. I was broken and very dirty so Lisa's mummy put me straight out with the rubbish. But she said she would put Zara at the back of the wardrobe and try and clean her later.'

Tears began to roll down Zoe's cheeks again.

She said, 'I know what happens to toys at the back of the wardrobe. They get put in plastic bags and the Grown-Ups take them to the T I P. We never see them again.'

Toska stood and thought. Then he
said, 'Okay. We will rescue her.
Tomorrow night I will collect dew fuel
from the sky and fly to Grown-Up
Town on the magic carpet.

'Thank you. Oh, thank you,' said
Zoe with a little smile.

'Alright, but it is sleep time now.
Good night Zoe,' said Toska.

'Good night,' said Rusty the rat
quickly, as he began chewing a used
bubble gum blob he had found stuck
to the back of a chair.

The next night Toska, Rusty, Simon and Zoe climbed the square stone stairs to the carpet's cave garage above the tunnel. Toska opened the sky door and looked up into the sky. A single dew-drop landed on his fuzzy paw. He caught another dew-drop and put it inside the button on his purple cardigan.

The sky door was a hole between the roots of a very old gum tree. It was a bit of a squeeze to get Toska through with his big tummy.



Toska tapped the paw that held the
dew drop on the magic carpet. It rose
into the air. The toys smelt the
eucalyptus leaves on the tree. The
branches tickled their arms and legs
as they went past.

Zoe looked up and saw the moon and stars. Then she looked down and saw dark shadows on the ground from bushes and rocks. She was not afraid because she was with Toska, Rusty and Simon.

They sped towards the lights of
Grown-Up Town at the bottom of the
mountain. Rusty started to chew
Zoe's hair. Zoe got a little cross.



The magic carpet flew along a straight road with trees on either side. Leaves dropped from the branches and floated to the magic carpet. Zoe caught one in her hand and made the magic carpet wobble a little bit.

Some little baby birds in a tree half
woke up and blinked their eyes in
surprise as the magic carpet
whooshed by. Then they snuggled
back up against their mother.

Lisa lived at the end of the road.
They were almost at the end of the
road when Zoe called out to Toska
and pointed to a house with a white
fence and a red door. It had a garden
on either side of the path.

Toska pushed his paws firmly down upon the magic carpet. Down they went and circled above the house. Zoe nearly touched the chimney with her fingers as they went past.

Zoe's hair blew in the wind and tickled Simon's serious wooden face. It made him sneeze.

'Food!' squeaked Rusty, as he spotted a broken pizza box beside a bin. He rubbed his feet together and twitched his nose. He stood on his back legs and sniffed. 'Food. Eat,' he squeaked.

'No. No. Rusty, get back in the middle. We are going all wobbly,' Simon yelled.

Zoe held on very tight to Toska's purple cardigan.

'Hold on everybody,' cried Toska.

KFLUMP! They landed on top of a scratchy hedge near Lisa's house.

'Ow,' shouted the toys.

Rusty was caught in a bush and hung by his tail. The toys waited till he said sorry for making them crash before they helped him.

Toska and Simon hid the magic carpet under a bush near the letter box.



They tiptoed up the path to the front door. The only sounds were the toys shushing each other. They crept into the dark house and went down the passage to Lisa's room.

They walked very quietly past Lisa's sleeping cat.

The wardrobe door was shut. Simon stood on Tosca's shoulders and tied Lisa's dressing gown belt around the door handle. They stood in a line and pulled. When the door came open they fell down on the ground.



'Sh sh,' they said to each other.

Toska lifted Zoe up into the wardrobe and she crawled over shoes, clothes and drawings.

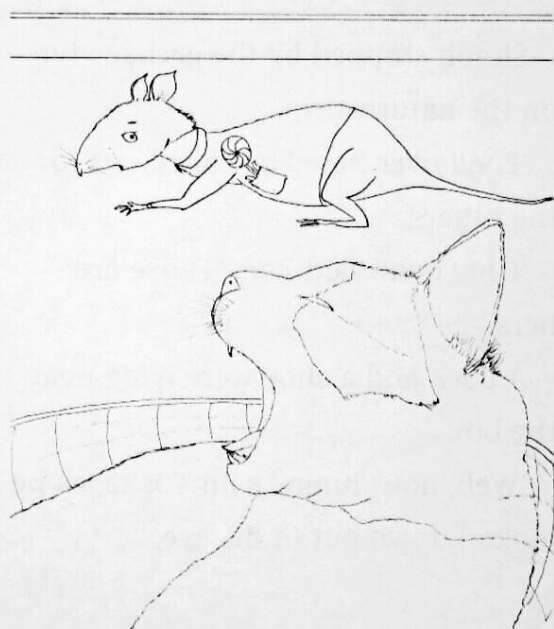
The toys heard her cry out from the back of the wardrobe. Toska pushed Rusty up into the wardrobe.

'Tell her she needs to be quiet or Lisa will wake up,' said Toska.

Noises came from the back of the wardrobe. Toska and Simon heard Zoe coming back. She was crying. Rusty followed. He had old crusts, broken biscuits and a sticky lollypop in his pocket.

Zoe slid down to the floor. She held Toska's paw and said, 'She -she is gone ... gone to the T I P.'

Toska led her out of the bedroom by the hand and they walked quickly down the passage. Simon pulled the dressing gown belt from off the door. Rusty just made it past the cat as it was yawning and opening its eyes. He ran out of the front door after the others



Simon stopped by the garbage bin
on the nature strip.

'Look over here,' he called out to
the others.

'Oh! Look!' said Zoe, 'Those are
hers.'

A sock and a shoe were lying near
the bin.

'Well, now, hmm,' said Toska, as he
looked down out of his eye.

'Over here. Come and see,' said Simon. He had followed a trail across the grass. He stood on the crumbly dirt of a newly planted lawn.

'Dog paw prints and the marks of a doll's toes being dragged across the dirt,' said Simon.

'Yes, yes,' said Rusty, 'Let us go and see.'

The toys walked to the corner of the hedge . Simon bent over a hole. He used a stick to lift something out of the hole.

‘It is another shoe. Is it hers, Zoe?’
Asked Simon.

‘It is. It is,’ shouted Zoe.

‘But she is not here now,’ said
Toska.

‘Look. Look,’ said Rusty, ‘I can see a
Grown-Up foot print.

‘She has been doll-napped,’ cried
Zoe. ‘I MUST FIND HER.’

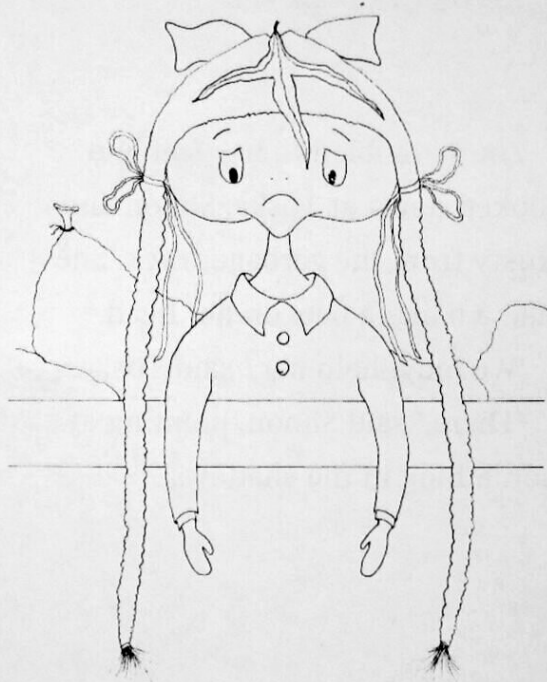


She ran down the footpath.

Zoe ran and ran until she sat down
to rest near an old broken doll's
house that had been put out in the
rubbish.

Toska huffed and puffed as he ran towards her. Rusty scurried back and forth in the gutter nibbling on chewing gum and shrivelled apple cores. Simon ran straight legged and his wooden boots went tap, tap, tap on the road.

Just before they reached Zoe a garbage truck turned the corner and stopped. The lifting machine caught Zoe by the hair and she was thrown into the back of the truck with the broken doll's house.



Zoe scrambled to her feet and looked down at Toska, Simon and Rusty from the garbage truck. She had a banana peel on her head.

‘We must help her,’ said Toska.

‘There,’ said Simon, pointing at something in the shadows.

A broken toy shopping trolley lay beside the fence. The three toys ran to it and pulled it to the road.

‘Quickly,’ said Simon. He pushed the trolley towards the garbage truck.

The garbage truck was two houses away before they caught up.

'Here. This will help,' said Simon.
He still held Lisa's dressing gown
belt. Toska fumbled with the belt in
his big paws. Simon helped him tie
the belt to the trolley and the garbage
truck.

'JUMP!' said Simon to Zoe as she looked down at them.

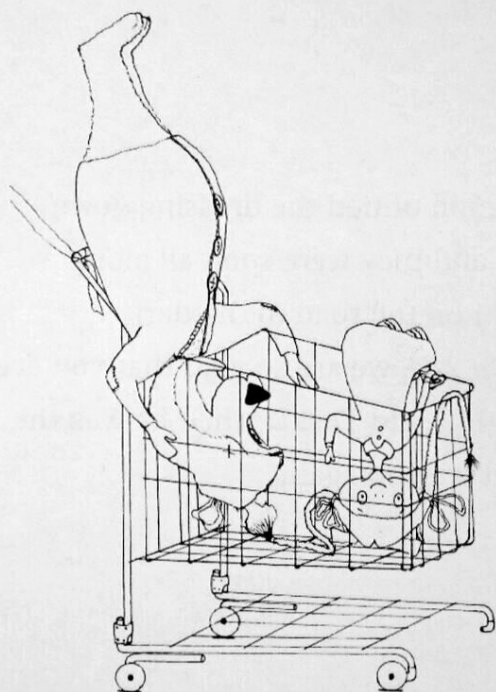
He pointed to the trolley. Zoe looked scared and hung on to the edge of the truck. The truck moved and pulled the trolley behind it.

Simon and Rusty hung onto the side of the trolley. Toska ran as fast as his chubby legs could move. The trolley scraped and bumped on the road where one of its plastic wheels was missing.

The garbage truck stopped at the next house. The brakes squeaked. Toska pulled himself up onto the side of the truck. He climbed to the top as it moved off again.

‘Zoe, you need to be brave. Come on. Climb on my back. You can do it,’ he said.

Zoe wanted Toska and the others to think she was brave. She put her leg over the side of the truck and reached out. She hung onto the Toska's fur so tightly that he thought she might pull some out. The garbage truck moved forward quickly and they fell. They landed upside down in the trolley.



Simon untied the dressing gown belt and they were soon all alone again on the road in the dark.

‘Oh Zoe, we are so glad that you are alright,’ said Toska, when he was the right way up again.

Zoe smiled. She stayed in the trolley. Simon and Rusty held onto the sides and Toska pushed them all back to Lisa's house to get the magic carpet.

The sun began to rise.

Toys have to return to Toy Town Tunnel in Magic Mountain before the sun rises completely or they lose the memory of their lives there. They would forget fairy floss teas and drinking magic water from the golden fountain.

'Sorry, Zoe. We tried to find Zara,'
said Toska, 'but we really have to go
now.'

'I'm sorry too,' said Simon in a gruff
voice.

'I understand,' said Zoe, 'but I will
still really miss her.'

They were all feeling sleepy when
they reached the hedge.

'It is gone. It is gone. The magic carpet is gone,' shouted Rusty from beneath the bush.

Toska rubbed the top of his fuzzy head and then shook it in disbelief. Simon began to march up and down the nature strip, looking to the right and then the left.

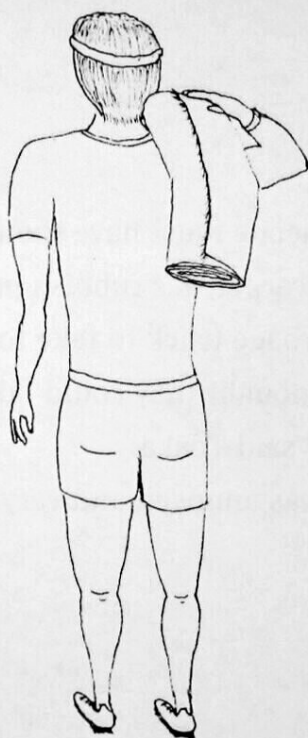
Toska looked worried.

'Now we cannot even get back to Toy Town Tunnel,' said Zoe, and she sat down on the kerb and put her head in her hands.

'Look over there,' shouted Rusty.

They all looked. A Grown-Up in jogging clothes was carrying something ...

... and that 'something' was the magic carpet.



'Someone must have thought the magic carpet was rubbish put out for the garbage truck to take to the T I P. They thought they could take it home,' said Toska.

He was annoyed and very worried.

The toys ran as fast as their very tired legs would carry them. They ran across a backyard. A big dog on a chain stayed asleep when they ran past, even though Rusty made a noise by running into its water dish.

Swish. Swish, went the grass as it touched their legs. The toys squeezed through a hole in a fence near the Grown-Up and hid in the shadows.

The Grown-Up had stopped to rest and put the rolled-up magic carpet down on the ground.

Rusty started making funny sounds. He scratched the ground with his feet and flicked his tail in the dirt.

Toska frowned and looked crossly at him. The big bear shook his head and put his paw up to his mouth to go 'Shhhhh'.

Simon bent down and pinched
Rusty's tail. Zoe sat and stared at the
road.

The sun was rising higher.

Simon moved towards Rusty and
held out some honeycomb but he
wouldn't stop.

The Grown-Up looked their way
once, but did not see or hear them.

Toska began moving towards Rusty.
He was going to sit on him to make
him be quiet.

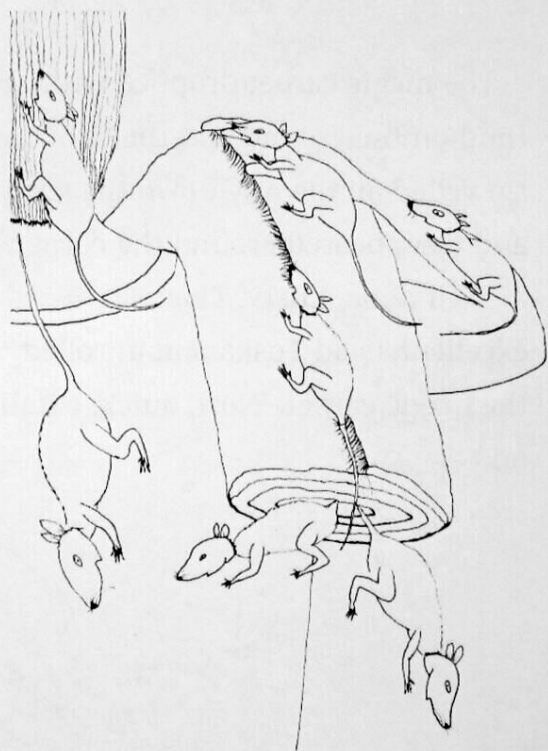
Then another noise make them look. Rats were coming out of the drain pipe and scratching about like Rusty. There were black ones and brown ones. They had long tails and bright eyes and moved towards the Grown-Up.

'Squeak. Squeak,' said Rusty.

The long line of rats turned and
went into the middle of the rolled up
magic carpet.

The toys waited.

The Grown-Up leant down and lifted the magic carpet. After only six paces the toys heard the Grown-Up scream. The rats began crawling out. Rats crawled along the Grown-Up's arms and started to nibble. Rats dropped from the Grown-Up's hair.



The magic carpet dropped with a thud on the ground and the Grown-Up yelled all the way down the road and disappeared around the corner.

‘Well done, Rusty. That was excellent,’ said Toska and unrolled the magic carpet. ‘Now, quick, climb on.’

Toska opened the glass button on his cardigan and tipped the dew drop on to the magic carpet. Up they went into the air.

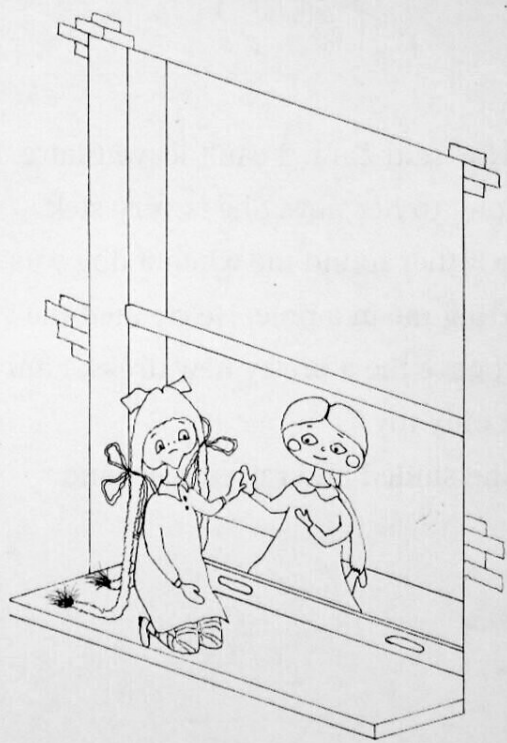
The rats had a picnic breakfast of the old crusts, broken biscuits and sticky lollypop that Rusty had given them.

Then Zoe yelled out, 'There she is. I can see her in the window of that house over there.'

'Okay,' said Toska. He turned the magic carpet towards the house. 'You have one minute.'

Toska stopped the magic carpet beside the window. Zoe tapped on the glass and woke Zara. She smiled at Zoe. Zara had new clothes on. Her hair was in a pony tail and the texta marks on her face had been turned into circles to look like rosy cheeks.

Zoe smiled and said, 'Open the window and come.'



‘No,’ said Zara. ‘I can’t leave Claire. I belong to her now. She is very sick. Her father found me when a dog was putting me in a hole. He cleaned me and gave me a pretty new dress. I am her only toy.’

She smiled and raised her hand.

Zoe undid one of her ribbons and laid it on the window sill.

'Keep this ribbon, Zara, and hold it to your heart if you ever need me. I will know and come to you.'

Zoe and Zara waved and the magic carpet streaked away.

The night time adventure was kept
a secret.

The toys did not talk.

The rats did not talk.

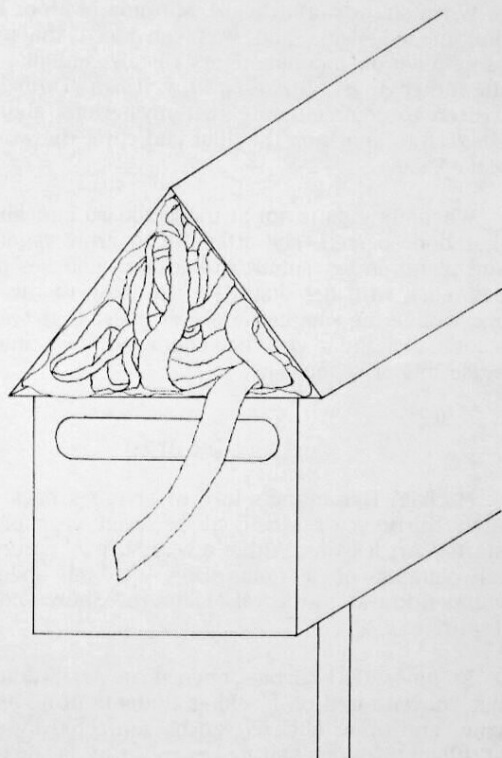
Zara did not talk.

The Grown-Up did not want to
think about it.

The garbage men did not know.

Only Lisa ...

... who puzzled for a long time
about how her dressing gown cord
got inside the letterbox wrapped in a
sticky lolly bag.



About The Author

When she was a little girl, **Miranda M Moor** had a doll named Valda and was convinced that Valda came alive on moonlit nights to talk and play with the other toys. *Toska Of Toy Town Tunnel* was written to commemorate that mysterious ability of children to knock on the door and enter the world of Make-Believe.

When Miranda is not at the keyboard knocking on that door herself, she attempts to grow vegetables and plants in her suburban backyard and lies in her hammock with her dog, Ayla, listening to the birds and wondering whether it is ever possible to walk on clouds. Miranda can be contacted by email at muse_moor@yahoo.com

About The Artist

Michael Hammond's love of art goes back more than thirty years when, as a seven year old, he started Art lessons. Within a year Michael entered an oil painting of a Collie Dog into an open age competition at the Royal Melbourne Show and won 1st prize.

In June 2000 Michael opened an Art Studio and has concentrated on teaching students of all ages to paint and draw. Michael can be contacted by e-mail at bhappy@dcsi.net.au or by post at PO.Box 147, Drouin, Victoria 3818.

Toska Of Toy Town Tunnel

Toska the teddy bear rides a flying carpet. He rescues Zoe, a beautiful doll, from being dumped on the dreaded T I P and takes her to Magic Mountain. Here, other rescued toys drink from the Golden Fountain and eat fairy floss. They sing and play and remember the children to whom they once belonged.

But Zoe is sad. She needs Toska's help to rescue Zara, her sister.

Will Toska, Zoe, Rusty the rat and Simon the soldier survive the magic carpet crash? Will they find more than just Zara's shoe? Will they return to the Golden Fountain before the sun comes up, or will they lose their memories of Magic Mountain forever?

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