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**Pg6**

There once was a Land that nobody believed existed.

And every day people passed by it or around it or over it or through it, but never once saw it or felt it or heard it or knew any person or thing in it.

**Pg8**

Until one day the Land revealed itself…

**Pg11-13**

The Land was not a land as you or I might think of it. It was not a place with borders and landscapes and laws and customs.

This Land was almost anything and everything you could imagine, whether likely or outlandish. It was every one of the myths and legends and stories you have ever heard or told yourself. It was all of the dreams you’ve not yet had as well as those which have woken you up laughing or weeping in the middle of the night. It was every person, animal, mythical creature, god and ghost, on every journey, adventure or quest there could be.

Everything in this Land crackled with a thrilling sense of being outside of the ordinary – extraordinary. But because of this it was unstable and unpredictable and mercurial and tricky. Some would say it was dangerous.

So it was packed away, shut inside some carefully labelled packing crates and hidden deep underground, far beneath the city of Kingston-upon-Hull.

Was it tucked up to keep it safe, or locked up to keep us safe?

Whichever the answer, a force like that will not be held fast for long and so came the day that the Land revealed itself. Not all of itself, because that would surely have been too much excitement for ordinary people to take in one dose and would likely have resulted in frenzy and panic on the streets of Hull! Instead it revealed itself slowly in a series of **Acts of Wanton Wonder**, across the city and throughout the year of 2017.

Perhaps you saw one of these Acts? Perhaps you witnessed them all? Perhaps you learned to recognise the signs which showed that another Act of Wanton Wonder was about to begin?

In this book, we’ll tell of six Acts which seeped into the cracks of everyday life to astonish, delight and thrill, and to leave a lasting change on everyone who came into contact with them.

Every Act began with the contents of one of the packing crates, but every time what emerged from those crates and then came to pass was wildly different. It was as if each Act was a “land” in itself, and each revealed something of the place where it happened.

What stories shall we tell of this Land and of these Acts of Wanton Wonder? Not all of the detail of what came to pass, because how could we succeed in describing the sights and the sounds when magic is afoot? Let’s talk, instead, of people – ordinary, everyday, decidedly unmagical people – who found their lives altered by the appearance of this Land in one of its many, varied guises.

One last thing, before we begin. The name of this Land?

The Land of Green Ginger.

**Act I: 7 Alleys**

**Pg. 16**

Scary Mary was her name,  
‘Knock ‘n’ Nash’ was the game.  
The boys would egg each other on,  
Ring the doorbell, then they’d run.

Chests bursting, hearts pumping,  
Feet pounding, legs jumping,  
Over fences, through a ditch,  
Running from the scary witch,

Down Preston Road till they reached the drain,  
Then back to do it all again.  
It was just some fun, just a dare,  
Just for kicks, just for the scare;

Just to fill the boring days,  
Till something different came their way.

Then, in the middle of their game,

Along that “something different” came…

Two black horses pulled a carriage;  
A sign behind read ‘7 Alleys’.  
Fiddlers playing on the back,  
Runners and riders dressed in black.

Horses’ hooves and bells ringing,

Strange people, eerie singing,

Scrolls tied up with red silk bows,

Passed from the carriage to those below.

**Act I: 7 Alleys**

**Pg. 18**

As the carriage pulled away,  
The boys returned to usual play.  
Now Richard’s turn to ring the bell;   
He turned to scarper – but he fell!

With twisted ankle, knee all scraped,  
He barely made it to the gate,  
When Scary Mary caught his eye,  
And beckoned him to come inside.

Something in her look that day  
Meant he dare not disobey.  
She washed and patched him up with care,  
And told him that she knew their dare.

“You think you’re brave,” she laughed with glee,  
“Young man, you’ve not a thing on me!  
When I was your age, just a scally,  
We used to run the 7 Alleys.

“One alley, two alley, three alley, four,  
We’d dare ourselves to run one more,

We never found the 7th one,

But searching for it was our fun.”

“There’s a search on!” Richard cried,

“The scrolls invited us to try.”

“Then go!” said Mary, on her feet,

“And bring me tales of who you meet.”

**Act I: 7 Alleys**

**Pg. 20**

He counted down the days from then,

With dreams of Alleys opening;

And ‘Knock ‘n’ Nash’ lost some appeal,

Though still up Mary’s path they’d steal.

One night in May, when it was dark,

He dragged his friends up to East Park,

Where lights were strung from tree to tree,

And no one guessed what they would see.

“What’s this?” his mates scoffed, with a groan.

“We’d have more fun by going home.”

“You really think we’ll find this alley?

They’re baby fairy tales, you wally!”

But then, the ground beneath them moves,

Vibrating with the beat of hooves.

A whinny, bells, the violin;

Smoke and sparks and it begins.

The cart comes down to guide them there,

7 Alleys, 7 dares.

Bombs are dropping, sirens wail,

Bubbles float up, round and pale.

Billowing sails cut through the night,

A harpy, spinning, dressed in white,

And reams of paper fill the air,

As Richard takes the final dare…

**Act I: 7 Alleys**

**Pg. 22**

The morning’s like a world away,

And all the boys are out to play.

But Richard? He’s not kicking balls,

Or lobbing tin cans off the wall.

Today he has a place to go –

To Mary’s house, to let her know

About the things he saw last night,

The past played out in firelight.

“Come in!” she says, and steps aside,

But Richard hesitates and smiles.

“Come out!” he laughs, “You really should.

A bit of sun will do you good.”

And so, they sit there, newfound friends;

He tells her how the story ends,

The Alley there before his eyes.

“It sounds amazing,” Mary sighs.

He nods, “Then pages fluttered free,

I found a few for you to see.

They’re all the same – you see the boar?

I think that’s trying to tell us more.”

She takes the paper, strokes her chin,

Reads the riddle held within.

“It might be Bransholme,” she declares,

“Shall we share a trip out there?”

**Act II: The Gold Nose of Green Ginger**

**Pg. 26**

A Gold Nose. A Gold Nose? What does that mean?

Chelsea stood wondering, idly.

Her wares seemed to taunt her, her doorway stood empty,

Yet over the road were people aplenty.

One week ago, her shop full to the rafters,

The hubbub of gossip and chit-chat and laughter,

Then suddenly – nothing. The shop door stopped swinging.

And worse still, her till had completely stopped ringing.

Everywhere round her shone trays of gold treasure,

Waiting for people to buy at their leisure.

Instead something new with a golden glow,

Had taken the shine from her shop window.

It started one Saturday, out in the centre,

Some kind of procession was starting to enter.

She stuck out her head to see trumpets and pleats;

A riot of colour disrupting the streets.

It looked ceremonial; a grand celebration.

They followed this gold thing with grave dedication.

Bemused, yet in awe, shoppers started to linger,

A whisper began: “The Gold Nose of Green Ginger?”

No one quite knew what this new thing was for;

Some talked of legends and ancient folklore.

Chelsea, for certain, just hadn’t a clue,

And her nose out of joint, wasn’t sure what to do.

**Act II: The Gold Nose of Green Ginger**

**Pg. 28**

As days turned to weeks her shop dwindled in trade;

The Gold Nose of Green Ginger was casting a shade.

She’d freely admit she was starting to hate

This odd-shaped gold thing found inside an old crate.

The girls who would always fawn over her gold

Were over there now, obsessed with The Nose.

Not a glance at her shop – was she going crazy? –

They were serving up tea and playing with babies!

They hung off the Guardian, talked to The Nose,

Jammed flutes up their nostrils, wore colourful clothes.

They whispered of wishes made true by Nose magic

(which Chelsea discarded as silly and tragic).

One girl, whom no one had ever heard speak,

Was first to arrive and the last one to leave.

She helped the small children make noses to wear,

And tidied the shop after craft sessions there.

Yes; something a little bit weird had occurred,

But no one else Chelsea met seemed to concur.

They were drawn to the Nose Shop like moths to a flame,

Going back to its glimmer again and again.

And yet – though she really was loth to admit –

Perhaps it was more than an old counterfeit?

There had to be something that made them go there,

But taking her business was more than unfair.

**Act II: The Gold Nose of Green Ginger**

**Pg. 30**

It got to week four and the stories got dafter,

She tried not to meet them with cynical laughter.

But really, she asked, is there no one I know,

Who hasn’t had wishes made true by a Nose?

So far – and this was on one single day –

She’d heard of arthritis just going away.

A new job, a pools win, an MOT pass,

A long-lost twin sister appearing at last.

“It honestly wouldn’t surprise me one day

To hear a world leader just pop up to say;

‘We’re pleased to announce that all fighting will cease.

This lucky Gold Nose is the cause of World Peace.’”

And yet, though she scoffed, at the back of her mind,

Was a creeping suspicion she tried hard to hide.

It started to bubble as every day passed,

And Chelsea had even more questions to ask.

There is more to this life than we oft dare to dream,

But luck from a Nose? How on earth can that be?

She couldn’t deny it had brought people joy,

So perhaps unimportant if real or a toy.

And as the time passed, Chelsea thought more and more,

Watching folk wish on The Nose from her door.

She knew it was nonsense but maybe, just maybe…

Could this silly talisman grant her a baby?

**Act II: The Gold Nose of Green Ginger**

**Pg. 32**

Another day passed with still no sale in sight,

And Chelsea was locking her shop up that night,

When curious thoughts entered into her mind,

And urgently whispered of what she might find.

She pulled down the shutters, stole straight to The Nose,

Creeping and balancing on her tip-toes.

Her heartbeat drummed louder than anything there,

But Chelsea was far too excited to care.

Was this really it? She smoothed down her suit.

Not quite like a nose, but more like a… root?

Was this really what people revered so much?

She couldn’t see anything magic, as such.

Then suddenly, out of the silence, it came.

She listened more closely and heard it again;

The barely-there sound of regular breathing.

She rubbed at her eyes in case she was dreaming.

How long did she stay there? She just couldn’t say.

But Chelsea would always remember that day.

For standing alone there with The Gold Nose,

The hope in her belly ignited and rose.

She put pencil to paper and took a deep breath,

Her hand scribbling furiously over the desk.

Then folding it over, felt tension released –

Now she must wait... Will her wish be Unleashed?

**Epilogue**

**Pg 74**

There once was a Land that nobody believed existed.  And every day people passed by it or around it or over it or through it, but never once saw it or felt it or heard it or knew any person or thing in it.

Until, one day, the Land revealed itself…

And because of that, people began to believe and behave in all sorts of strange and wonderful ways.  They wanted to leave work and play and wonder and be part of this amazing world.  They wanted to share it with friends and family and neighbours and visitors and strangers.

And because of that, this real world changed too.  The status quo was not so fixed and people questioned things they had always accepted.

And then, one day, the Land started to fade away and things began to return to something a little more akin to normal.  But traces and reminders and changes and memories remained.

Perhaps, one day, the Land of Green Ginger will return, but for now, our world is a little more like it.

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**Background**

Hull 2017’s groundbreaking community engagement project, Land of Green Ginger, invited Hull’s residents to immerse themselves in a magical citywide story, inspired by and celebrating the spirit of Hull.

Land of Green Ginger was presented as a series of events or Acts of Wanton Wonder united under an overarching narrative. The individual Acts were developed and delivered with artists who worked both independently and in collaboration to bring new kinds of art and culture into the neighbourhoods outside the city centre.

Six Acts of Wanton Wonder transformed communities across the city into places of wonder, delight, magic and possibility.

This book is the seventh and final Act of the Land of Green Ginger.

It has been delivered to residents and schools across the city as a record of the project that took place and as a keepsake for the people whose lives were touched by the magic of Land of Green Ginger.

Land of Green Ginger was delivered and produced by Hull 2017, the company which delivered the UK City of Culture 2017 programme and now continues as permanent organisation Absolutely Cultured.

The live Acts were created and delivered by the following artists:

Act I: **7 Alleys** by **Periplum**

Act II: **The Gold Nose of Green Ginger** by **Joshua Sofaer**

Act III: **The Longhill Burn** by **And Now:**

Act IV: **Re-Rediffusion’s Voice Park** by **Aswarm**

Act V: **Micropolis** by **The McGuires**

Act VI: **Land of Green Ginger Unleashed** by **Macnas** in collaboration with **And Now:**

Find out more about the live project by visiting [www.absolutelycultured.co.uk](http://www.absolutelycultured.co.uk)