

Chapter 17

Dadda come home

Beth had fallen asleep in one of the leather armchairs in Grizzly's study. The bears were taking it in turns to keep watch in the study in case Baby Brother returned, but it was late at night and Beth had nodded off.

She dreamed she was riding a kelpie across Bearloch, just as she had really done once. They were going to find the Island of the Bishbirds and bring Baby Brother home. They sped across the Northern Ocean, where they met a vile sea monster. With one of its many tentacles and one of its three mouths it was playing the bagpipes – painfully badly.

The kelpie asked it the way to the Island of the Bishbirds. Several of its tentacles pointed in different directions, and so they went the way the longest of them seemed to be directing them.

The sea became rougher and rougher, and Beth kept getting washed off the kelpie's back by the waves. Usually she managed to hold onto the rope of seaweed round its neck and to get back up, but only to be thrown off again by another wave.

Once she got swept quite away from the kelpie. She was about to panic when a ginormous haddock came past and let her climb on its back. It was a very helpful haddock and took her back to the kelpie.

At last they reached the Island of the Bishbirds with its soaring coal-black cliffs. The kelpie stretched its very long neck and Beth climbed up it and stood on the kelpie's head. She could just see over the cliffs into the multi-coloured glow.

Cupping her paws, she yelled, "Baby Bother! Baby Brother!"

Beth was woken by a thud on the floor as the woolly mammoth landed in front of her armchair. She opened her eyes as Baby Brother bounced off the mammoth and into Beth's arms.

"Dadda come home!" he shouted. "Dadda come home!"

And, sure enough, there was Father MacBear in a heap on the floor.

"It's like I've always said," he mumbled. "It's not over till the fat bear falls on his face."