

You loved your last book...but what are you going to read next?

Using our unique guidance tools, Love**reading** will help you find new books to keep you inspired and entertained.

---

**Opening Extract from...**

# **The Little Teashop of Lost and Found**

Written by Trisha Ashley

Published by Black Swan

All text is copyright © of the author

This Opening Extract is exclusive to Love**reading**.  
Please print off and read at your leisure.

---

THE LITTLE  
TEASHOP OF  
LOST AND FOUND

Trisha Ashley



BLACK SWAN

TRANSWORLD PUBLISHERS  
61–63 Uxbridge Road, London W5 5SA  
www.penguin.co.uk

Transworld is part of the Penguin Random House group of companies  
whose addresses can be found at [global.penguinrandomhouse.com](http://global.penguinrandomhouse.com)



First published in Great Britain in 2017 by Bantam Press  
an imprint of Transworld Publishers  
Black Swan edition published 2017

Copyright © Trisha Ashley 2017

Trisha Ashley has asserted her right under the Copyright,  
Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be identified as the author of this work.

The references to fat rascals in the book are a fictional narrative device and do not imply or indicate the publisher or author as having any rights to the fat rascal name. Fat Rascal is the registered trade mark of Bettys & Taylors Group Limited, and this book is in no way affiliated with or endorsed by Bettys or any of their trademarks or brands.

This book is a work of fiction and, except in the case of historical fact, any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Every effort has been made to obtain the necessary permissions with reference to copyright material, both illustrative and quoted. We apologize for any omissions in this respect and will be pleased to make the appropriate acknowledgements in any future edition.

A CIP catalogue record for this book  
is available from the British Library.

ISBN  
9781784160913

Typeset in 11.5/13.5 pt Adobe Garamond by Jouve (UK), Milton Keynes  
Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Bungay, Suffolk

Penguin Random House is committed to a sustainable  
future for our business, our readers and our planet. This book  
is made from Forest Stewardship Council® certified paper.



1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

For  
Louise Marley  
with love

While Haworth and the beautiful moorland surroundings exist, Doorknocker's Row, Blackdog Moor, Upvale and all the characters portrayed within the novel are purely the product of my own imagination.

– Trisha Ashley

## Prologue

# West Yorkshire

Liz

2 March 1978

*There had been no signs to warn me of the imminent catastrophe about to overtake me, or if there had been, I was oblivious to them. When everything kicked off that night, I felt as if I'd been catapulted straight into a horror movie, and a gross one at that – or the nightmare from hell.*

*Fear and confusion were quickly followed by realization, panic, shock and revulsion, for who'd have thought a birth involved so much goriness? Certainly not me, even though, ironically enough, my sights had refocused on gaining an Oxford place to read medicine the very moment my brief first love affair the previous summer had come to an end.*

*But then, that wasn't because I felt any kind of vocation to heal the sick, the halt and the lame, it was simply part of my plan to mould myself so much in Father's image that he forgot I wasn't actually his biological child at all.*

*As these thoughts jostled chaotically together in my normally clear, cool and analytical mind, my eyes met Mum's over the small, misshapen, skinned-rabbit of a thing that lay weakly mewling on the bed between us and I expect the expression on her ashen, stunned face mirrored my own.*

*Her mouth moved silently once or twice, as if it had forgotten how to shape words. Then finally she whispered, 'Liz, your father must never find out!'*

*She always was entirely mistress of the bleeding obvious.*

# Once Upon a Fairy Tale

Alice

Autumn 1995

I grew up knowing I was adopted, so it was never a shocking revelation, merely one of the things that defined me, like having curly copper-bright hair, distinctive dark eyebrows, a fine silvery scar above my upper lip and pale green eyes (like boiled gooseberries, according to Mum, though Dad said they were mermaid's eyes, the colour of sea-washed green glass).

As a little girl I'd sit for hours painting with Dad in his garden studio, while his deep, gentle voice wrapped me in a soft-spun fairy tale, in which my desperate young birth mother had been forced to abandon her poorly, premature little baby, hoping that someone like Mum and Dad would come along and adopt her.

Or like *Dad*, at any rate, since eventually I came to see that Nessa (she'd insisted I call her that rather than Mummy, practically the moment I could string a sentence together) had had no maternal yearnings; she'd just been paying lip-service to his longing for a family, smug in the knowledge that she couldn't physically carry a child even if she had wanted to.

'A bad fairy had put a spell on baby Alice, but when the nice doctors had made her lip all better, everyone agreed



she was the prettiest princess in the whole of Yorkshire,' he'd finish his story, smiling at me over his canvas.

'And they put the wicked fairy in a metal cage and everyone threw rotten tomatoes at her,' I'd suggest – or even worse punishments, for some old fairy-tale books given to me by my paternal grandmother, including one strangely but wonderfully illustrated by Arthur Rackham, had had a great influence on my imagination. We lived near Granny Rose in Knaresborough until moving to a village just outside Shrewsbury when I was eight, and I can still remember her reading to me the long, long poem by Edith Sitwell about Sleeping Beauty, once she'd tucked me up in bed. I'd slowly drift off on a sea of musical, beautiful words about malevolent fairies and enchantments.

Other favourites of Granny's included *The Water-Babies* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* – the latter a favourite of mine, too, since the heroine had the same name. I begged for her lovely old copies after she died and Dad made sure I got them, even though Nessa was hellbent on having a clearance firm empty the whole house. She was a minimalist sort of person . . . except when it came to her own clothes, jewellery and shoes.

Our house was a tale of two parts, with most of the creatively chaotic clutter in Dad's studio, which might have been stables once upon a time – until he married a wicked witch disguised as a flamboyantly beautiful ex-opera singer and she banished him there.

Anyway, you can see why I have a tendency to turn every thing that happens in my life into a dark-edged fairy tale – I can't help it!

'They threw stinky rotten eggs at the wicked fairy, too,' I'd once added firmly to the familiar story.

'Well, perhaps, but only until she said she was sorry and then they let her out,' Dad had amended, kind-hearted as always.

Over the years we embroidered the story with increasingly ridiculous flourishes at every retelling, but it had served its purpose, for I grew up knowing that I'd been abandoned in the village of Haworth in Yorkshire and adopted, and the filament-fine silvery scar was all that remained to show I'd been born with a harelip.

Of course, later I realized Dad had had no way of knowing whether my birth mother was young or not and also, once I became quite obsessed with the Brontë family and Haworth, I knew that it was extremely unlikely that she'd tiptoed up to the steps of the Parsonage in the middle of the night and laid me there, in the expectation that he and Nessa would shortly swing by and scoop me up. I mean, it was a museum by then, so it would have been closed, and also, adoption didn't quite work like that. (I'm still surprised they let Nessa on to the register. I can only think that her opera training kicked in and she hadn't been able to resist throwing herself into the role of eager prospective mother.)

But while Nessa might make extravagant expressions of affection towards me only when her London friends were visiting (one of whom once cattily let fall the information that she hadn't had *that* brilliant a voice even before the operation on her vocal cords that ended her career), I'd known *real* love from Granny and Dad.

And I also had Lola, my best friend, and her lovely parents, who owned a nearby smallholding, growing herbs commercially. There we helped look after the hens and goats, ran wild in the fields and learned to bake in the long, cool, quarry-tiled kitchen. All my life, baking – even the scent of cinnamon and dried fruit – would have the power to transport me back immediately to those happy days and transfuse me with warmth and comfort.

So it was an idyllic childhood on the whole, though once

the rebellious teenage hormones kicked in I began to clash more and more with Nessa.

Still, the finer details of my distant past didn't seem to matter . . . until Dad suddenly died from a massive heart attack when I was nearly eighteen and my safe, secure world collapsed around me like a house of cards.

In any ordinary family, his loss might have pulled Nessa and me together, but she was not so much grief-stricken as filled with a volcanic rage, mainly directed at me. And she became so obsessed with money that immediately after the funeral she sold the entire contents of Dad's studio (he was quite a well-known artist) to an American collector without a word to me beforehand, locking the door so I couldn't even go in there to find solace among the comforting, familiar smells of oil paint and turpentine.

That was bad enough. But then, with even more indecent haste, she moved a new man into the house – and a horrible one, at that, who was scarily over-friendly in an old-lech kind of way whenever she was out of earshot – and I came to realize that now I was just an encumbrance and she couldn't wait for me to go off to university the following year.

The pain of Dad's loss was still raw and I couldn't bear to see another man in his place, so I had the row to end all rows with Nessa, culminating in my saying that I hated her and I was going to go and find my *real* mother.

'She has to be an improvement on you!' I finished.

'You're a foundling, darling, so there's no way you can find her,' she snapped cuttingly. 'And bearing in mind that she dumped you out on the moors on a freezing cold night, she'd be unlikely to welcome you with open arms, even if you did.'

Stunned into silence, I stared at her while I took in the implications of what she'd just told me. 'She . . . didn't leave me in Haworth village, but up on the moors, where she didn't think I'd be found?' I asked eventually.

Nessa looked at me, the fury dying down slightly into a sort of malicious, slightly shame-faced pleasure that shook me: I knew she'd never *really* loved me, but until recently I'd thought her as fond of me as her self-absorbed nature would allow.

'Your father never wanted me to tell you the truth, but I think that was a mistake. And maybe she was batty and thought someone *would* come across you,' she suggested, possibly divining from my expression that she'd gone too far.

'No, if she left me at night out on the moors, then clearly she hoped I'd die and never be found,' I said numbly, for the spell of Dad's fairy tale was now well and truly shattered and there was no way it could be glued together again. I felt empty, alone and lost . . . and unwanted – totally unwanted – by anyone.

'I hate you!' I cried with sudden violence as hot tears rushed to my eyes. 'I wish *you'd* died instead of Dad – though you couldn't have had a heart attack, because you haven't got a heart. You've never loved me like Lola's mum loves her.'

She shrugged. 'I expect Dolly actually *wanted* children, which I never did, even if I could have had them. Your father finally wore me down into agreeing to adoption and he was over the moon when we were offered a baby. But you'd only just had the surgery on your face and what with that and the carrot hair, you weren't exactly prepossessing, darling.'

Now the floodgates of frankness were open, there seemed to be no stopping the hurtful revelations, so I added one of my own: I told her that the day before, when she was out, her creepy new lover had tried to kiss me and made suggestive remarks.

'You lying snake in the bosom!' she hissed furiously, clutching those generous appendages as though she'd just been bitten there by an asp.

And though of course she didn't believe me (which

was why I hadn't already told her), there was no going back after that.

Dawn found me on a coach heading to Cornwall, with the loan of Lola's birthday money in my bag, to tide me over. I took only one case with me, leaving with her for safekeeping my most precious possessions, including Granny's books and a small portrait of me in oils, painted by Dad.

Of course Lola had wanted to tell her mum what had happened, but I'd sworn her to secrecy until I'd found a job and somewhere to live.

'I'll stay in a bed and breakfast at first, and there are lots of hotels and cafés there where I can get some casual work until I find my feet,' I assured her.

Inspired by some of Dad's old stories of the Newlyn artists, and our holidays in Cornwall, I had romantic ideas about joining an artists' colony, where my aspirations to become a writer and painter could be nurtured, though later I realized this was not only unrealistic, but several decades too late.

The stark reality was that my arrival, late in the evening and off-season, when many places were shut up for the winter and no one was hiring, left me without any option other than spending the first night huddled in a shelter on the seafront . . . and all too soon my over-active imagination was peopling the darkest corners with evilly muttering goblins and foully hellish Hieronymus Bosch creatures.

When the cold breeze blew a discarded cardboard cup across the prom I thought it was the clatter of running footsteps and even the soft, constant susurrations of the sea sounded like an unkind conversation about me.

I'd begun to write my own contemporary mash-ups of fairy tales, fables and folklore, spiced with an edge of horror, but when it came to the crunch, *this* princess was no kick-ass

kind of girl able to rescue herself, but a frightened waif in urgent need of a handsome prince . . . or even a kind, ugly one.

Hell, I'd have settled for a reasonably friendly frog.

Tears trickled down my face and I shivered as the cold wind picked up and wound its way around my legs.

Then, all at once, I heard the staccato tap of high heels and the excited yapping of a small dog. Before I could attempt to shrink even further into my dark corner, it dashed in and discovered me.

A torch snapped on and I screwed up my eyes against the dazzling beam, though not before I'd glimpsed the small and unthreatening shape behind it, so that my heart rate steadied.

'Well, what have we here, Ginny?' said a surprised female voice with the hint of a highland lilt. 'A wee lassie?'

*After completely putting the events of that dreadful night out of my head for so many years, it's odd that now I've moved back to live with Father in Upvale, I should suddenly find them creeping back in again.*

*I have decided to write a full account of what happened, and outline the perfectly logical reasoning that led me to act in that way, in the hope that it will exorcise them. My conscience is, and always has been, entirely clear about the matter.*