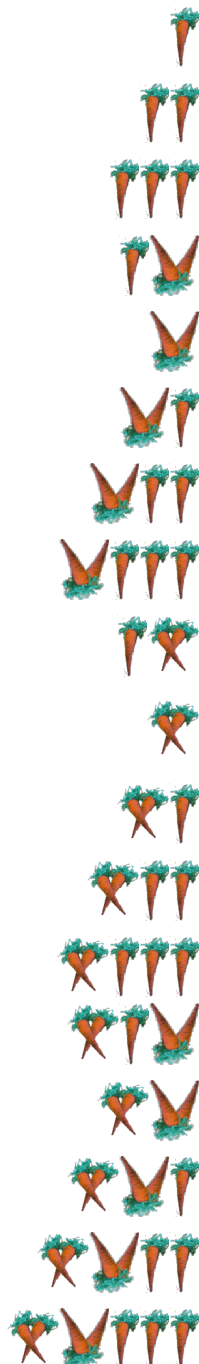




Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot



Season 2 (And Back Again)



What Goes Down Must Come Up

Lofty Ambitions

Going Underground

Tight Enclosed Space

Is This A Carrot I See Before Me?

Things Exploding

Dreading Water

Ra-Ra-Rasputin

Raiders of the Tomb of the Lost
Crusade

Tales of the Riverbank: The Next
Generation

Dear Diary

Half A Pound Of Tuppenny Rice

Half A Pound Of Treacle

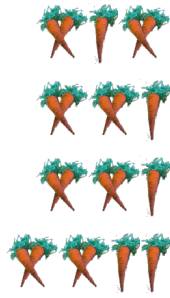
Gorden's Teddy

Remember When You Were Young

I Can See Clearly Now

Requiem

Dead Foxy. Like

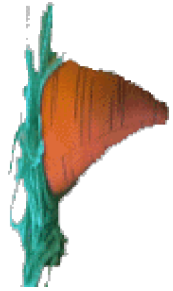
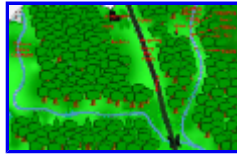
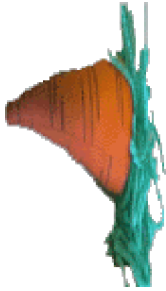


The Daily Leaf

There's No Place Like Home,
There's No Place Like Home

Just Like That

Some People Call Me The Space
Cowboy



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



<Voice-over by creators girlfriend

Incidental Music: "Welcome To The Pleasure Dome" by FGTH>

Previously on Gorden The Rabbit:

<snippets from last episode of season one:

"A bit of suffering is good for the soul "

"That's our David"

"No! Mrs. Wilberforce! Not the jelly!"

"Greetings Strangers! Welcome to the Chiltern Coney Commune!"

"Da da de da de de do do. De da de de do">

<Voice-over by Gorden actor

Incidental Music: "The Quest" by Willie and The Shakers>

**GTR: These are the voyages of Gorden The Rabbit and his intrepid band,
whose mission is to seek out the Golden Carrot and to boldly split infinitives that
no rabbit has split before.**

<Roll initial credits>

Starring

Dennis Waterman as Gorden T Rabbit

Jim Broadbent as David "The Joker" Gerbil

Michael Horden as Plessey Snail (Wizard first class)

Alison Steadman as Cola

Special-Guest-Starring

Bill and Ben as Rob and Rod

Pinky and Perky as The Two Guards

Also Appearing

St Winifreds School Choir as fields of rabbits

Created by Nobby

<Music fades to chirping of birds and other pleasant country noises>

David and Plessey plodded down the hill towards the burrow entrance.

"Quiet, isn't it?" Plessey pointed out.

"Strange," David replied, "We've passed *well* over three rabbits and none of them have spoken a word to us!"

Plessey just nodded. It was strange, there were tens of rabbits working on the hillside, but there was barely a murmur of sound. Plessey was unnerved by the lack of volume, but was doing his best not to show it to his rather excitable friend.

"Lookit!" David exclaimed "Gorden and Cola have gone in already! Why didn't they wait for us?"

Plessey made light of his worry.

"Maybe they wanted to hear other rabbits winging, instead of you, for a change?"

"You're slimy sometimes, you know.." David replied.

The pair had nearly reached the burrow entrance, a large imposing, dark hole in the side of the hill. To each side stood a prime example of a well-made buck, each one holding the proverbial sharp stick. (Although it was proverbial this didn't stop them from both holding separate examples of the stick..)

"It looks dark in there.." David began to whine.

Plessey muttered something under his breath, which we will not repeat here.

As they reached the entrance the Guardbucks lowered their sticks so that they crossed at gerbil-head-height. David backed up a few steps.

"Um," He said "We're with Gorden and Cola." The sticks didn't move. "The two rabbits that you just let in." Not a sign of recognition from the guards. "We're their best friends!" No emotion, no response. "We're harmless!"

"No lesser animals than a coney allowed." It had the sound of a rote saying.

"No space for larger than a coney." David looked at himself.

"I'm *not* larger than a rabbit!" David exclaimed.

"No lesser animals than a coney allowed.

"No space for larger than a coney."

David looked sideways at the nearest guard.

"Are saying that I'm a *lesser* animal?" David said, eyeing the guard with one *evil* eye, his fists clenched.

Plessey slid up behind him. "Dave," he whispered, "Lets go. They are a lot bigger than either of us.."

David's nose twitched. "They called me, called me, called me LESSER!" He whispered back, "Don't worry about me. I can take them."

"DAVID!" Plessey said in as loud a whisper as possible. "Don't be stupid. Think of Gorden, he's inside!"

"No lesser animals than a coney allowed.

"No space for larger than a coney." The guards intoned, ignoring the frantic pair's mumblings.

David turned at Plessey, fists tight, teeth clenched and eyes squinting

"They'd better not touch him. He's mine.. My friend." Plessey's eye stalks bent at David and nodded.

"Come on David, let's just back off." Plessey had his 'sensible' voice plugged in.

David backed away from the burrow entrance, knuckles white. He was still backing away twenty paces later. "You're going slower than I can crawl." Plessey remarked.

"Those are *big* sticks. I'm not turning my back on one of them."

"They'll leave us alone, we're the lesser animals, remember."

You have probably never heard a gerbil growl. It's not a nice sound by any measure.

Plessey "dragged" David up to the top of the hill, all the time David kept looking over his shoulder at the guards, and then scanning the rabbits on the hillside. All the rabbits seemed to ignore the pair completely.

"These rabbits are giving me the creeps." The gerbil said. "Why are they so....Quiet.. Disinterested. Boring!"

"The whole place worries me, "Plessey said, in itself this worried David even more, "but I'm mostly worried for Gorden and Cola."

"If they lay one finger on Gorden I'll..."

"Calm down David. We'll make sure they'll be safe. We'll get them out."

"Buggrit!" David said throwing himself to the ground as they reached the edge of the woods near the top of the hill. They both turned around and looked down into the valley.

"Gorden," David said, "What have you got yourself into now?"

"We warned him." Came a voice. "He didn't listen. They never listen." The voice came from just behind them.

In a flash David was up, a small, but wickedly sharp-looking, knife clutched in one paw.

"Woah! Little Buddy" One of the rabbits said. There were two young bucks, both with pointed sticks, both with a thin, plain white, bandana wrapped around the forehead.

"Who the hell are you?" David asked, the knife trembling in his hand as the two rabbits stood next to each other. They were nearly as broad-shouldered as the guardbucks.

"How do you be knowing Gorden?" Plessey asked.

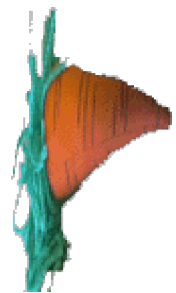
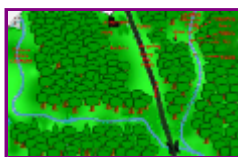
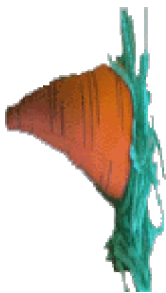
The two rabbits looked surprised.

"I'm Rob." "I'm Rod." They chorused. Then Rob waved Rod ahead.

"We met Gorden a few days ago, he came through our small village on the way to meet up with his friends.

"We know a thing or two about that 'Chilern Coney Commune' that's taken him in, you see."

<Play out to the tune of "Part Of The Union" by The Strawbs>



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Lofty Ambitions

Two rabbits climbed up a ladder in near-darkness.

“George” Said the lower one.

“Yes, Reg” The higher one said, so as to establish their names as early on as possible.

“Where are we going?”

George was silent for a minute, the only noise was the pad-pad, pad-pad of paws on the ladder.

“Reg,”

“Yes, George.”

“We’re allowed ‘time off’ yes?”

Reg nodded. George didn’t actually hear this, but continued anyway.

“So. In my ‘time off’, I explore the warren. The closed bits. The dark bits. The bits dug out but which were never used. The bits dug out but which became unsafe. The lost bits. The forgotten bits.” Pause. (Pad-pad)

“The interesting bits.” His hands came to the top of the ladder and he crawled up. “The bits like this!” He turned round and helped Reg up into..

It was a large, well you’d have to call it a space rather than a room– the ceiling was rather low and the two rabbits had to stoop all the time. The floor was domed– and was criss-crossed by wooden rafters. I’d have said it looked like a loft. Rabbits, unfortunately, don’t know the word – their living space goes down rather than up.

In myriad places, small tunnels led off the main loft space, too small for a rabbit to navigate. Light streamed up into the room through a dozen or so small holes in the flooring.

“It’s safest to tread on the wood rather than the flooring.” George said to his dumbstruck friend as he started off towards the nearest stream of light. Reg followed, tentatively padding from joist to joist.

“Look through here.” George said, pointing at the hole in the floor.

Reg knelt and gently lowered his eye to the light.

He jerked up with panic on his face.

“We’re above the Committee Chamber?” He whispered frantically. He started to nervously finger the wooden ring on his left hand. “We could get in trouble for this! No one’s allowed in the Committee Chamber unless they are summoned. We could loose our privileges!” He held his left hand up, meaningfully.

“Don’t be silly!” George hissed back at him, unconsciously fingering his ring “How will they ever know that we’re here.” He sat back a little. “Anyway. The rules are against being in the chamber. We’re not in the chamber. There’s no rule against looking. They think no one would dare.

“And, provided that we are quite quiet, they won’t ever know we are here!” He leaned forward and patted Reg on the shoulder. “We’re supervisors. We get the Privilege Ring. That means we get privileges that the mass don’t.” He sat back again. “Consider this one of them.”

Reg still looked nervous.

“Anyway,” George began, he was regretting bringing the younger rabbit up here and needed to calm him down. “Look again, see how high up we are. I bet you, you can’t even hear a word that they are saying down there. And, if you can’t hear them, they can’t hear you!” Reg’s excitement overcame his nervousness and he smiled.

“Well, what they don’t know...”

“Won’t hurt them.” George laughed – this was how the Committee talked about the worker rabbits, and was how they explained their decision not to educate the majority of rabbits, indeed how they explained their decision to deal with all external matters, even keeping them from the supervisors. Using the phrase about the Committee was tantamount to treason. But it was quite amusing.

“Well,” George said, encouragingly to Reg, “What’s going on then?”

Reg smiled and leant forward and put his eye to the hole.

“Wow! The chamber looks bigger than it did the day I got my ring. The Committee rabbits are sat on the outside of a U-shaped table. There are,” He counted them as best as he could.

“Three and three and three and more. I think. That makes lots!

“They have their grey robes on and have the hoods up fully. I can’t even see one nose let alone a face.

“Hold on the doors are opening. Two guards are bringing a rabbit in.

“Strange, I don’t recognise him. He’s quite tall and carrying a large staff.

“Wow! That’s staff is pretty impressive – its’ got metal shod ends. And it looks like it’s glowing. Just a little. But it stands out from the room or the rabbit.

“He doesn’t look like a worker-rabbit – he’s standing too confidently for that, but I don’t recognise him and I don’t think I can see a ring on his hand.

“That’s strange – he’s far too confident. If he’s not wearing a ring he should be cowering in front of the committee, not standing like that. Defiant, that’s the word I was looking for.

“I think it’s that staff. I think it’s magical.” Reg sat up for a second. And looked at George. George was grinning at his friend.

“I think we’ve picked an interesting time to relax in ‘the supervisors burrows’.” He sniggered.

Reg lowered himself to the light again.

“He’s talking to them – I can’t hear a word he’s saying, but he doesn’t seem cowered by their power at all. Weird.

“He’s stepped towards the table! They won’t allow that.

“Hey, I don’t think the Committee have said a word yet. I’ve not seen one of their heads moving.

“I can see the paws of a couple of the Committee members. Clenched fists! Their rings are faintly glowing too.

“The air above the committee looks strange, thicker almost. I think they are using magic on him!

“His staff is glowing, you can see it clearly now in the dark, and there are sparks on the wood! How can wood spark! Ouch!” Reg jerked his head up and rubbed his eyes.

“Spark! Lightning! That was bright!” He closed his eyes tight he couldn’t see anything in the dark loft, not even George. He closed his eyes again and counted to three. Then opened them and dropped to the hole again.

“The rabbit is lying on the floor! His staff has dropped from his hand! One of the committee has left the table and has walked up to him with his hood down! Is he? No he’s not going anywhere near the staff. Don’t blame him. I wouldn’t touch that staff with a long staff! He’s helping the rabbit up.

“The rabbit doesn’t seem the same as he was. He’s cowering properly now. His head is bowed and he’s shaking it slowly. They’ve got him! Another valuable member of our community! Doesn’t it make you feel proud!

“They have a number-tag for him! The committee member is putting it on him. Why do the committee use those big numbers? They are the only ones who can read them?”

“Oh I’d love a golden ring.

“They have called the guards and they are leading him out the chamber.

“They have called another guard to move the staff! I think they are scared to touch it!” Reg started laughing. “The guard can’t pick the staff up!

“How heavy can it be? The other rabbit carried it almost like a small twig.” Reg lifted up for a second.

“It he’s that strong I want him on my work party!” Then back down again.

“They’ve called another guard in! The two of them together can’t move the staff!

“The committee member who got down is ushering them away. Are they going to leave it there? They can’t do that!”

---*---

Reg was just leading his work team out into the afternoon sun.

“Reginald!” Called a voice. He turned, behind him was a cowled figure, followed by a tall rabbit.

“On Behalf Of The Committee,” The cowled figure intoned,

“May the Committee be Praised.” Reg replied.

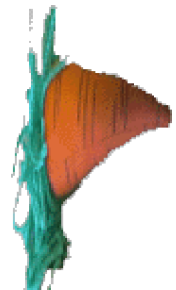
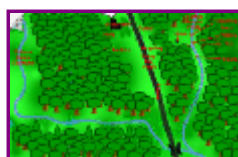
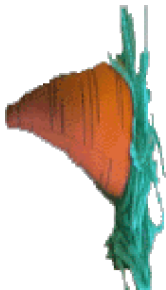
“I have a new addition to your work team. He’s quite strong. You should call him Buck Thirty-Seven.”

Reg ran the unfamiliar syllables around his mouth a couple of time. Only supervisors had real names. The masses were given weird long ‘Numbers’ and the Committee member were just ‘The Committee’.

The cowled figure turned and left.

Reg shivered. ‘Buck Thirty Seven’ was the rabbit from the chamber earlier.

---*---



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Going Underground

“So,” Rob said. “When they first dug the warren they used mice, gerbils and hamsters as labour – the warren is very complex and very deep. But they made the smaller animals dig ventilation shafts linking all the burrows.

“Their magical power doesn’t affect non-coneys.

“So a small animal, say a mouse or a gerbil, could run through the whole warren without being seen or sensed by the Committee. This, well for sake of arguments we’ll call it a gerbil,” He said smiling at Rod,

“This gerbil could scout the whole warren out, find out in which burrow particular rabbits were housed and spy on the committee. This gerbil could even take a ring such as this,” he said holding up a wooden ring sized to fit on a rabbit’s paw, “to a friend of his whom was under the influence of the Committee.”

Rod, Plessey and David nodded. David’s head suddenly jerked up.

“Ere,” He said, “This hypothetical gerbil of yours. He isn’t called Dave is he? Because if he is, he’s going to tell you where you can stick your small dark tunnels. And what you can stick up them.”

---*---

There is a certain convention in low comedy that immediately after a character is involuntarily volunteered for a nasty task, the character protests that they would not be caught dead performing said task. The director must then cut to the next scene where the character in question is carrying out the task mumbling dark words under his breath.

I hate to break with convention. I love a good cliché.

“Buggringforkingblurrybuzzardsfeckingbigrabbitsshouldputthelotoftheminastew.” David muttered to himself.

Behind him you can see a circle of speckled sky - black with stars as white spots, like a Dalmatian in negative. David was in a small tunnel, not much wider than himself. He was on all fours gingerly, slowly padding, along the tunnel.

He wasn’t happy, by any chalk.

A few yards head of him a small spot of light of light shone from the floor. David’s eyes were focussed on that spot. His head was locked in on it like a hawk on a rabbit. In Davids mind he was the hawk – the spot of light was a rabbit called Rob, and the tunnel was the whole wide open big and blue sky.

David’s breath came in short hard pants. He counted to himself to help him focus
“One Two Three”.

Pant.

“One Two Three”.

Pant.

“One Two Three”.

He reached the light and stopped. He counted to three again and peeked down.

Below him was a brightly lit corridor. Torches hung from the walls every few rabbit-strides. There was no sign of any rabbits.

David looked up. He was blinded for a few seconds whilst his eyes got used to the darkness. A few feet in front of him the tunnel split into two, one heading up and seeming to follow the line of the burridor below. The other bent off to the left. A speck of light came from each one.

David edged over the hole and a little way towards the fork.

“Buggrit”(*)

The light in the left fork seemed slightly nearer than the light in the right fork.

“So. Left it is.” David said to himself. “Blurryrabbits.”

He reached the light and could see that the tunnel ran straight for a long way. At intervals along its length little spots of light could be seen. He took a few deep breaths and looked down.

The room was empty of rabbit, but full of other things. There was a desk with papers on it and a bed which looked much more comfortable than the piles of leaves that David has spent the last week sleeping on.

David shook his head and, muttering things to himself, started towards the next light. As he neared this light he was pleased to hear voices.

“Have you managed to move the staff yet?” Said one of the voices.

“No. It’s still lying on the floor of the Committee Chamber.” A second voice said. “If two of the guards can’t pick it up then it’s a magical problem. We’ll leave that to Nis and Mela, it’s their area.”

“Wonder where he got it. Looks like a real wizard’s staff to me, he didn’t look like a wizard to me.”

“No, he probably stole it. What’s happened to him?”

“We’ve put him to work in the fields. He’s too dangerous to be given supervisor-freedom.”

“He’s number thirty-seven now yes?” A grunt, “That means his berth is quite deep in the warren. In the second chamber, yes?”

“The lower he is, the nearer he is to the Source. So the more control we have over him. We made sure he’s assigned to one of the close work parties. It wouldn’t do any good to have him any distance from the Source. He might be strong enough to break free without the staff.”

“And the doe?”

“She’s with Mela.”

“Dirty Doe. Didn’t you want her for yourself?”

David reached the light and peered carefully over the edge. Now, this was a comfortable

burrow. Two rabbits sat at a polished oak table, glasses of wine by their hands. There was a 'chink' as one rabbit picked his glass up to take a swig – the sound of metal against glass – the sound of a ring hitting the glass.

He closed his eyes and threw his head back.

"She's very intelligent." He said, righting his head, "She could count up to ten you know."

"I can count higher than that."

"But you're enhanced by the artefact. I mean she could count to ten without any help."

The other rabbit took a swig of wine, nodding sagely.

"South slopes?" He said nodding at the glass.

Their talk turned to vintages, boring David immediately.

"I want nothing this society's got." He thought to himself. "Deeper on it is. Where is this 'Second Chamber'?" He wondered.

He looked forward towards the next light. It was twice as far as the last gap.

Grimacing, he started again, as quietly as he possibly could.

About halfway to the next light his front paw suddenly fell straight through the floor!

"Buggrit!" He exclaimed, then pulled his arm back and clamped his paw over his mouth.

Below him something stirred and with a 'phssst' a light came on.

"Is there anyone there?"

David pulled back from the hole.

"Hello?"

Thu-Thud.

Thu-Thud.

Thu-Thud.

"What's that noise?" David thought frantically. "Shit, it's my heart!"

Thu-Thud.

Thu-Thud.

Thu-Thud.

David closed his eyes. That made the dark feel slightly better. Friendlier, almost. His teeth started to chatter so he clenched his jaw shut. His claws dug into his palms.

Thu-Thud.

Thu-Thud.

Thu-Thud.

"Oh I'm dreaming things again." Came the voice from below. A quieter 'phssst' noise. David opened an eye, sure enough the light had gone out.

Thu-Thud.

Thu-Thud.

"Wait 'till he's asleep." David thought.

Thu-Thud.

“Wait until you can hear him snore. Then creep onwards.” He told himself.

Thu-Thud.

“What if he doesn’t snore? I could be here all night!” He started to panic.

Thu-Thud.

Thu-Thud.

Thu-Thud.

His eyes clamped shut.

“I’m safe.

“He can’t see me.

“He can’t hear me.

“He can’t hurt me.

“I want to have control.

“I have control.

“I am in control.

“I’m safe.”

Thu-Thud.

“I am safe.”

Thu-Thud.

From below a gentle, snoring sound could be heard.

David released his breath. He’d been unaware that he’d been holding it.

Slowly, carefully, quietly he crawled past the hole towards the next light.

The next light showed a rabbit sitting up in bed reading.

The next light showed a rabbit sleeping with the light on. David looked at the comfortable bed and sighed, clamping his mouth over his face as soon as he realised that he had made a noise. There was no change in the sleeping rabbit.

The next light was a long way away, so David was very slow, he managed to gauge how far the hole would be and counted paces. Thirty paces.

He was really pleased to find the hole just where he expected it.

Smiling he made off towards the distant next light.

David started off at some speed, counting his steps. Unfortunately after ten steps the ground dropped away and became a vertical shaft.

David heart had time to beat thrice before he managed to get some control over his descent; his paws began to scrabble at the walls as he dropped. His eyes were wide in terror and he screamed out loud as he fell.

Thu-Thud.

Thu-Thud.

THUD. David hit bottom.

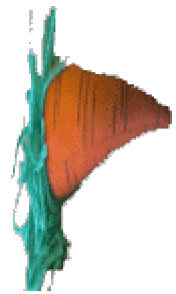
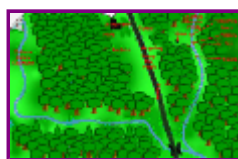
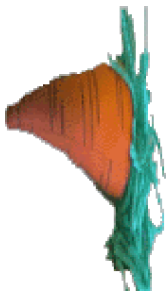
“Uck.” He said before passing out.

(*) Millennium shrimp as well, probably.

---*---

Links

[Going Underground](#)



Insults and Critique to : gorden@nobby.co.uk

"I'm in a wide open space I'm standing I'm all alone and staring into space."

He spoke the mantra to himself over and over.

He opened his eyes.

Sky.

Bones covered in ashes.

“I HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE!”

He kept going and counted three more exits until he came back to his marked wall.

He edged round to it and clambered up into the tunnel.

There was no sign of light. He took a deep breath and started forwards.

After three or four yards, the tunnel bent sharply to the left and David could see a faint glow at the end.

“YES!” He whispered as loudly as he could.

Being careful not to rush forwards, being wary of vertical drops he made his way towards the light.

Carefully. Slowly. He edged to the hole in the floor and the light. He peeked down.

His head jerked up and he hit the ceiling with a loud ‘bump’.

He swallowed.

“Hellfire.” He whispered under his breath.

“Well,” He thought to himself. “I’m not getting out this way!”

He edged back slowly.

Back to the bone-chamber. Next tunnel to the right.

Again after three or four yards the tunnel bent. This time it bent upwards. David stood on his hind legs and felt along the shaft.

He breathed a huge sigh of relief. There were paw-holds on one of the walls!

He started climbing up slowly. These paw-holds seemed to fit him perfectly. He thought about what Rob had said about the builders of these tunnels and made a chilling connection.

Thinking of the bone-chamber.

“Well. I know what happened to the diggers of these tunnels.” He shivered and nearly lost his grip. “Not now David. Not after all of this. Not with all this still to do.”

He climbed up and was soon happy to find his head popping out into a horizontal tunnel. A tunnel with evenly spaced spots of light. He grinned to himself as he clambered out of the shaft.

“This is something I can cope with.” He smiled to himself and scuttered to the first glow.

Below him was a long room full of bunks full of rabbits. These sleeping accommodations were not as luxurious as the first few rooms he’d perused. This must be the sleeping quarters for the masses.

Gorden could be here!

So, instead of just peeking and passing onto the next hole, he sat there and stared around the room. Luckily the rabbits slept with a small amount of lit torches so he could see.

He scuttered carefully to the next ventilation hole and spent a few minutes staring, looking for Gorden.

He scampered and scuttered from light to light until he’d passed along the entire length of the room. No sign of Gorden.

The next light was over a burridor. The next light after that was quite a way away. And David had learnt from his past adventures. He took it very slowly.

Partway to the next light he found a handle! Feeling around he discovered another.

Feeling brave, he carefully lifted the handles. The trap-door came up in his hands. Below

him was a small storeroom with a door, which was just ajar enough to show him this. He nodded and lowered the trap-door.

Still carefully, he crawled to the next light. It was another sleeping chamber. He scanned the rabbits in the room and passed from light to light slowly and carefully.

He rubbed his forehead. No Gorden in this room either. He scratched an itch on his back and made his way to the next light – it was over a corridor. Carefully, looking for more trap doors and vertical shafts he inched towards the next light.

No trap door this time, he could see straight into a room full of sleeping bucks.

One of the rabbits caught his attention. It was big enough to be Gorden. David scampered to the next light and peeked down. Ready to be disappointed.

“Gotcha!” He said to himself. Then “How the hell do I get to him?”

“If I go down into the storeroom I’ve got to walk through an entire room full of rabbits.

“Hellfire.”

David backed up and traced his paddings back to the trapdoor and the storeroom. He lifted the trap-door and dropped down. He stretched out. His hand hit a vertical pole. He grabbed it as it fell to the floor and he smiled.

A few seconds later, mop in one hand and bucket in another, David strode confidently from the storeroom.

He turned into the first sleeping room and marched through it. Not looking left nor right. Barely breathing.

He reached the room with Gorden in and aimed straight for his friend’s bunk.

He shook Gorden awake.

“Gorden, come with me!” He whispered hard.

“Go away.” He said “Who’s Gorden?” David was shocked for a second then remembered all that Rob had said.

“What is your number?” He asked the tired rabbit.

“Number Thirty Seven.” The half-asleep rabbit slurred.

“Good.” David pushed the mop at him “On Behalf of the Committee, I was told to get Buck Thirty Seven and bring him.” If you looked closely you could see that David’s fingers were crossed.

Gorden, or rather ‘Buck Thirty Seven’ stirred and sat up. “If the committee wills.” Buck Thirty Seven took the mop that David proffered and followed when David led him off, bucket in hand.

David thought back to the first room with rabbits in all those hours ago.

“We have been asked to the Committee Chambers’ He told Buck Thirty Seven. “You can lead the way.” His gamble paid off and Gorden strode off, leading the way.

Outside of the chamber, two guards stood. Buck Thirty Seven had been primed for this and walked up to them.

“We’ve come to clear the mess up.” He told them, showing his mop.

The guards shrugged and opened the doors and let the two ‘workers’ slide in.

David let a deep breath out – the chamber was empty. If not then they would have been in real trouble.

“Buck.” He said to Gorden, “Hold out your hand.” Buck Thirty Seven did as he was told. David slid the wooden ring Rob had given him onto Gorden’s paw. It had an immediate effect – Gorden fell over.

David was on him at once, slapping his face.

“Wake up you great lummo!”

Gorden stirred and sat up.

“What?” He said. “Where?” He continued. “How?”

“Oh shut up and listen to me!” David began, “Can you pull the head off that mop?”

Gorden did as he was told, but this time he was Gorden and questioned everything.

“Not now...” Was all David said.

A few minutes later they pushed their way out of the chamber.

Nodding at the guard Gorden couldn’t help to add:

“Cleaned that up easily, Bye now.”

“Be seeing you.” The guards said as Gorden and David walked away.

David was hoping against all hope that the guards didn’t realise that the mop now had metal-shod ends. And that the head didn’t fit properly.

Gorden led the way out of the warren.

At the warren entrance two guards stood.

“We’ve been asked to clean up some mess.” Gorden said and strode out into the open air.

The head fell off the mop.

“Hey!” Shouted one of the guards, Gorden swung the staff round and hit him in the belly.

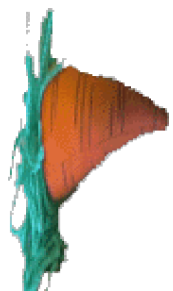
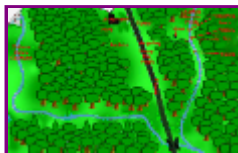
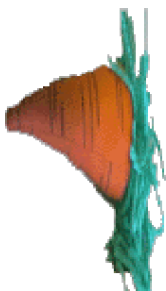
He jerked the staff back and hit the other guard (behind him) with the end.

“Run!” Shouted Gorden. Leaving the stunned guards, they raced up the hill before the general alarm could be raised.

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Links:

[Wide Open Space](#)



Insults and Critique to : gorden@nobby.co.uk



Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Is This A Carrot I See Before Me?

Gorden and David reached the wood's edge to be greeted by Plessey, Rob and Rod. Rod shook David's hand and Rob turned to Gorden and opened his arms wide to hug him. Gorden jumped back

"Who are you?" He asked this seemingly over-friendly stranger.

Rob looked at Gorden, head askew.

"It's Rob," He said, unsure of himself, "You came to our village a few days ago? I warned you about the Commune.."

Gorden shook his head. "I don't remember."

"Fools!" Plessey broke in, "I told you he has a hole in his mind." The snail turned to Rob, "He hit his head very hard and took a while to remember David and Cola and I! He would have me you on that day."

"So, I know you?" Gorden asked Rob who nodded. Rod came over to Gorden and offered a paw.

"I'm Rod, his brother. You know me too?" Gorden shook the proffered hand and his head at the same time."

"Oh, sit down you lot." David said to all of them, "I'm getting a crick in my neck watching you."

They sat.

"So," Gorden began, "We just have to get Cola and then we can be on our way"

David shook his head.

"No" he whispered.

"I think I have a plan for that too," Rob said, not hearing David, "A quick in and out tonight and none will be the wiser."

David shook his head.

"No."

"They'll be on their guard now, though." Rod said, everyone seemed to be ignoring David. David lost it.

"NO YOU BUNCH OF FIDDLING FOOLS!"

Eyes wide, everyone turned to the excited gerbil. David regained his composure.

"They've got the carrot." He said, quietly. The others leaned closer.

"You mean?" Gorden asked gingerly.

David nodded. "Well, I suppose there could be two five-inch long carrots made of gold in this world." No one said a word, stunned to a male. "With silver leaves." David finished.

Gorden shivered, this was the description he'd been given from the monk's vision.

"Oh bugger." Rob finally said.

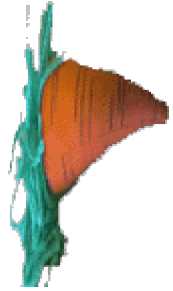
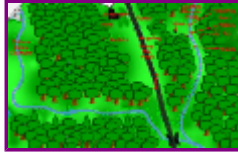
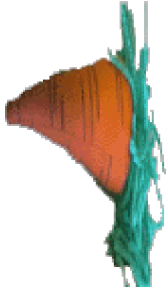
Gorden sat back.

"The Golden Carrot." He said to himself. "I'd been hoping it was further away."

David shook his head.

"I found it whilst I was searching for a way out of the ventilation tunnels." He took a deep breath before adding, quietly, "You don't want to know what else I found."

“Has anyone got a spare eyelash and maybe a bit of gum arabic?” Plessey asked. The others looked at him strangely. “I have a spell which will be useful, for a little while anyway.”



Insults and Critique to : gorden@nobby.co.uk



Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Things Exploding

It was early in the morning. The sun had risen, and the first few birds had decided to punish the later-rising animals with a rather boisterous dawn chorus which a stone from David's hand had little chance of stopping. The two guards had only been on duty a few minutes—last night's graveyard shift had been rather busy and had stayed on duty later than usual trying to find some runaways (to no avail) and were currently being dressed down (if not salted for the winter months). Dan and Al were surprised when two rabbits seeming came out from behind them.

"Got him." Said the first of the two rabbits smiling a happy grin—obviously a supervisor by his ring. "He gave us a pretty chase but, well, you know how it is." The second rabbit (rather a large one to boot) was on the end of a short tether held in the supervisor's front paw. Strapped to the back of the large rabbit was a metal-shod staff.

Dan stood aside to let them through.

"I thought the guards here gave up the search?" Al asked.

"They did." The supervisor explained, "Then they called me in. I've had experience in the outside world you know."

Al nodded sagely and stood aside to let them through.

Al hopped up as something trod on his foot. He looked down, there was nothing there.

Looking from side to side, he shook his head and moved back nearer Dan.

"Al," Dan said, "What was that slithering noise?"

Al shrugged his shoulders then lifted his back-right paw up from the ground.

"Urgh." He said, "I've just trod in some snail-slime!"

Dan screwed up his nose.

---*---

Rod waited until they had got a couple of feet into the main entrance before tugging Gorden closer.

"We'll aim for Mela's quarters. That's the last place we know Cola to be."

Gorden nodded. One of his hands was held around the rope— the other hand was wrapped around the first to hide Rob's ring that he was still wearing.

"They're along here." Rod said, leading down a side corridor.

A shadow followed them...

Rod stopped outside a door, nodded at Gorden and then burst through the door, dropping Gorden's rope to let it hang loose. Gorden and the shadow followed.

"What do you mean by this interruption?" Said a wide doe, probably Mela, as she stood up from her table, seated at the table opposite here was Cola, calm and quiet and ignoring everyone else.

Mela looked askance at Rod,

“So, you’ve come back,” She said, “I always knew we’d see you again. Did your girlfriend kick you out once she got her free-will?” Mela moved around the table as she talked.

“We just want Cola.” Gorden said, “There’s no reason to be nasty about this.”

“Oh, I think there is.” Mela said, and then as quick as anything she had a knife to Cola’s throat.

The light on the table flickered. Shadows moved around the room.

“Come on Mela,” Rod said, “She’s only one doe. You’ve got hundreds more to play with.”

“I quite like this one,” Mela began, “She’s quite, urgh!”

A wandering shadow had split in two – one snail-shaped piece stayed dark and nearly invisible, one small gerbil-sized piece jumped onto Mela’s back with a scream.

Mela’s paws went for her throat, but David had got there first. A wire, held in his front paws, was wrapped tight around her neck. Mela’s eyes bulged and she began to choke. On her back David was wide-eyed and frantic.

He was muttering under his breath “Gerbilkillingbunchofbussards”

He had climbed up her back and was virtually standing on her back, his back paws at the top of her back, his front paws holding onto the wire for grim death, hers.

Mela clawed frantically at her neck as the wire bit deeper and deeper.

“Stoo..” She tried to talk.

“David!” Gorden shouted, “She’s trying to surrender.”

With a grunt David stretched, stood up and fell off Mela’s back. Mela slumped forward, her neck severed by the wire.

Rod paled.

Gorden turned and threw-up his breakfast.

David stepped back slowly from the body, dropping the wire at his side, shaking his head. He grabbed at his left shoulder and massaged it, still muttering.

Rod went to the bloody mess that was until recently a committee member and pulled the gold ring from her hand. He was going to put it on Cola’s hand when Gorden stopped him. Shaking his head Gorden said “Let’s leave her under the spell until we’ve got away from the body – it might affect her more than you or I.” Rod nodded.

Gorden turned to David, “That was a little...” Then shook his head, his friend’s rage had left him speechless.

“David,” came a disembodied voice from the shadows, “Grab hold of my shell again.”

David tottered around the room, circling, keeping the dead doe as far away as possible.

Then he reached the shadow that was Plessey, touched it and faded from view again.

Gorden picked Cola up by the hand, “Come with us.” He said looking into her eyes. There was no sign of recognition; of Gorden nor what had just happened.

“Are you sure you know where we are going?” Gorden asked Rod.

Rod shook his head. “I’m not sure,” He said, “but I do know of a locked corridor which I was never allowed near in my time here – and this corridor leads near where David described.”

“Okay,” Gorden said, “Let’s go.”

Rod led the way out into the corridor. They had gone a couple of turns away from Mela’s room when Gorden stopped and motioned towards Cola. Rod nodded and, taking her hand, slid Mela’s Committee ring on.

Cola blinked, her eyes wide. Then she looked around the corridor and saw Gorden and Rod as if for the first time. She pretty much lunged at Gorden and threw her hands around him

and squeezed. Gorden was pushed back a step or two, then got his composure and started to pat Cola on the back.

He grabbed her shoulders and pushed her away from him so that he could see her face.

Tears were streaming down her face. He stared into her eyes.

“You’re safe now.” He said in a calm and strong voice. “We’re here to take you away from this.”

“Did.” She was speaking in fragments. “They.” She sobbed. “She.” Sob. “Oh Gorden” She hugged him again.

“Gorden,” It was Rod, “We can’t stay here, they will discover Mela soon. Then we will have the whole warren after us.”

At the mention of Mela’s name Cola burst into tears “Did David Really...” She tried to speak but failed.

Gorden squeezed her.

“Cola, we’ve got to go. It’s alright I’m here and you’re safe.” She nodded so he continued.

“We’ve got to go or else we won’t be safe. And Plessey’s invisibility spell won’t last forever – three rabbits in a warren can get around easily, but if there is a Gerbil and a Snail we will get all sorts of questions.” His hands patted Cola, on the head and on the back. He nearly patted her ass but decided against it. She was nodding at him. He looked into her eyes again. “And Cola, you have a committee ring. This makes you very intelligent and makes any rabbit we meet subservient to you. We need you to be in control of yourself.”

She gave three deep breaths and stood up straight away from Gorden.

“Any rabbit?” She asked, a twinkle in her eye shone through the tears. Gorden nodded, slightly worried.

“Gorden,” Rod said tapping him in the shoulder, “This way.”

Rod let off.

“Ah, isn’t that nice.” Came a snail’s voice from a shadow, “They’re holding hands.”

“No,” came a gerbil’s tones from the same shadow, “Rod is too far away from Gorden to hold his hand <Ouch> That was my foot!”

---*---

Rod led them to a long corridor, which spiralled gently downwards.

It ended in a flat wall – a dead end.

“I thought there was a locked door you were taking us to?” Gorden asked.

Rod shook his head. “So did I.”

There was a shimmer from the shadows, Plessey and David appeared.

“The spell was nearly through, and I don’t think we’ll be getting much company down here.” Plessey said, explaining his appearance. “Let me to the front, I want to see this end.”

He slithered past everyone and stared at the wall.

He turned to the group. “Illusion. Rod is right – there is a door here. It’s locked. Wizard Locked.” He began to chant – everyone else took a step back, except David,

“Can I see please?” He asked plaintively.

Suddenly the wall, bent, and a door was plainly visible. Gorden shook his head.

Plessey moved to the door and pushed it open. He slid in and everyone followed him.

Beyond the door was a small room. Everyone fit in it, but only just.

There was no sign of an exit.

“Any more invisible doors here?” Gorden asked.

“I’ve found it!” Called David. Surprised all turned their heads to see him tugging at a handle on the floor. “They like their trap doors here, you know.”

With a shuffle from everyone the trap door was open. Below them was darkness. David dropped a small stone which went Thud quickly.

"It's not deep." He said.

"I'm going first." Gorden stated. David nodded in a 'you wouldn't catch me going first' manner as he stepped back.

Gorden lowered himself down into the darkness, dropping to the floor so that his head was just visible.

"What's it like?" Rod shouted down.

"There is lambs wool under my naked feet." Gorden began, "The wall is soft and warm – gives off some kind of heat."

"Stop singing and tell us what it's like." David shouted back.

"It's safe." Gorden shouted back. "Come on down."

David extended his front paw,

"Rod The Rabbit, Come On Down." He said. Rod jumped down.

Cola followed, then Plessey floated into the hole. Before his shell disappeared he stopped and offered his shell to David.

"Jump on then my laddie. I'll see you safe to the bottom."

---*---

The corridor was carpeted, but wasn't as nice as Gorden had intimated. Small insects were crawling all over it, giving David the creeps.

"Why aren't you glowing?" He asked Plessey, who motioned him to silence.

At the end of the corridor was a short staircase leading down. David was suddenly aware that their entire journey has been downwards. The weight of earth above his head suddenly seemed rather real and his teeth began to chatter.

"Stop it!" Plessey hissed. "Stay close to me behind the conies. This is where it's going to get difficult."

At the bottom of the staircase was a door. This one was not locked and Gorden opened it and rushed in, Rod and Cola rushed after him. Plessey didn't rush in. He made David peek in first.

This was the chamber with the carrot. When David saw it last it was on a green baize cloth in a glass display case on a stone slab.

It was still on the green baize. It was still on the stone slab. It wasn't covered with a display case and, even more importantly, the room was not empty.

Standing at the head of the stone slab was a robed committee member, laughing.

Gorden, Cola and Rod stood, frozen in mid-step.

The committee member's front hands were hovering above the carrot. A glow of magic surrounded him.

"You fools!" He cackled in true villain style, "No ring can protect you from the full force of the carrot wielded in person!"

David was impressed, this was a real baddie – he stood in the correct World-Dominating pose. He talked in the correct World-Dominating voice. He was dressed in dark, voluminous robes. Ah, he must have been to Baddie School. All he lacked was the swivel chair and the white cat, but hey, no one's perfect.

“And more importantly,” David thought to himself, “He’s going to gloat.”

Gloat he did. The committee member stood up straight and laughed.

“You thought you could steal the Golden Carrot away from us? Fools! We have cosseted the carrot for generations. Protected it from generations of ambitious conies. We have used its powers to create a peaceful, harmonious community of rabbits who are committed to serving us.” He laughed the correct manic laugh and began to pace the correct world-dominating pace.

He even turned away from the frozen rabbits and threw his arms into the air in a perfect pose.

”A good candidate for the cover of this month’s issue of World Domination-By-The-Book.” David thought as he moved. “Not.”

David rushed from behind the rabbits. People forget gerbils they haven’t seen. And this committee member didn’t know that a snail and gerbil followed the rabbit. Plessey’s magic spell has hidden them from all the rabbits they had seen.

And the carrot allowed it’s users to sense all conies in the vicinity.

David launched himself into the air and onto the stone slab. His little paws grabbed for the carrot and lifted it high. In front of him, the committee member heard the noise and turned.

Too late.

David swung the carrot and hit the rabbit in the side of the head. The rabbit went down immediately and David jumped on top of him and swung the carrot at his head from the other side.

The rabbit made a sickly crunching noise as the carrot caved his cranium in. Davids muttering came to the fore and he raised the carrot and slammed it down again and again onto the committee member’s head.

Blood and rabbit–brains seeped from the cloth and David kept on hitting until the rabbit was mashed beyond recognition.

Breathing heavily, the carrot held in his paws as if he was at Lord’s waiting for the run up from a West-Indian spin bowler.

“David,” Plessey spoke, “He’s dead. You can stop now.”

David turned to face Plessey, his eyes were wider than a bush-baby’s and his front was splattered with blood.

David scanned the room. Gorden, Cola and Rod were still immobilised.

He raised the carrot up high.

“AAAAAAAAAAARRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRHHHHHHHHH!” he cried as he swung the carrot down.

There was a great CLANG as the carrot hit the stone slab. Then another. Then another. David bashed the carrot at the stone harder than he’d hit the rabbit.

CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG.

The carrot started to give, started to bend in the middle.

Plessey stood back, fully aware of what happens to powerful magical artefacts when you break them.

CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG. CLANG.

CLUD!

The carrot was definitely bent, David turned it around and began again.

Suddenly it broke! A blinding flash of light filled the room. David screamed out as the whiteness hit his eyes and blinded him. Plessey had had his eyes shut since David started with the carrot. Gorden, Cola and Rod were still paralysed when the blast came and they all fell over in a heap and held their paws to their eyes as they groaned.

David stood, a pathetic sight of bedraggled and sweating gerbil. Covered in blood and shaking, one end of the carrot in his hands, his knuckles white with strain. Panting heavily.

Plessey came to him first.

“David.” He said as matter-of-factly as he could. “Give me the carrot.”

David’s breath croaked.

“Mine.” He spoke.

Plessey shook his head, eye-stalks waving from side to side in a hypnotic pattern.

“No. Put the carrot down. It can’t harm you any more.”

David’s eyes’ shut. He dropped the carrot and then began to cry.

Eye’s shut he stood and sobbed to himself.

The rabbits had begun to recover. Groans could be heard in three different rabbit voices.

Gorden sat up and rubbed his head.

“Oh Bugs!” He swore.

To ward off evil Rod spoke “What’s up Doc?”

Cola laughed.

The three rabbit helped each other up. They didn’t seem to have been aware for the last few minutes because as soon as Cola stood up she saw the dead committee member and retched. Gorden held his hand over his mouth, eyes wide as he looked at the destruction of the rabbit. Rod gulped then picked up the carrot-top end of the golden carrot.

“Is this what you’re after?” He asked, handing it to Gorden.

Gorden nodded.

“I think so.” Gorden walked to David and picked the pointed end up off of the floor.

David still stood there with his eyes shut, breathing heavily.

Gorden was wondering what to say to David when the floor shook and nearly knocked him off his feet.

“What?”

“Lordie!” Plessey exclaimed. “Its what I hoped I was wrong about.” He turned to Gorden.

“They must have used the magic of the Carrot to sheer up their building work!” Gorden blinked, not understanding. Cola did.

“The warren is going to collapse?” She asked. A piece of earth fell from the ceiling.

“I think we’d better get out of here and up to the surface, pretty quickly!” Rod added.

A wall started to shake and a crack appeared.

“Quickly!” Gorden said.

Water started to seep through the crack.

“Oh Roger!” Gorden swore for the second time that day.

He went over to David and put his paws on David's shoulders.

"David. You saved us. Come on. We've got to go. This place will be underwater soon. And I know you can't swim."

David opened his eyes, bloodshot and full of tears. He stared at Gorden, then nodded.

Rod led the way, followed by Gorden and Cola. Plessey told David to ride on his shell and the small gerbil was not about to complain.

They went through the carpeted corridor, through the trap door and along the long and winding corridor. As they raced along the corridors shook and earth fell from the ceiling and walls.

"This way!" Rod shouted, pointing to a corridor which they had definitely not passed along on the way down.

In fact the corridor seemed full of rabbit going in the other direction.

"Are you sure?" Gorden shouted.

"Trust me!" Rod shouted back as he pushed his way through panicked conies.

This burridor led downwards, and started to get damp. Pretty soon they were splashing through bigger and bigger puddles until they came out into a large cavern.

This was an underground dock area! The river flowed past them, in front of them, inches away.

"This doesn't look good, Rod." Gorden said, "I think you'll find that none of us can swim." "I can." Cola added, her first words for a few pages and anxious to get back in the readers mind.

"Smartypants." David added.

"We don't need to swim to ride one of the rafts." Rod pointed. Gorden would have said that these were just planks of wood. But Rod insisted that these were river-worthy rafts. He found some long poles and a couple of honest-to-goodness oars.

"Come on." He said as he started to untie one of the 'Rafts'. The water was over everyone's feet now.

Some noises came from David. They sounded a little like "Duck this for a game of soldiers." They sounded like.

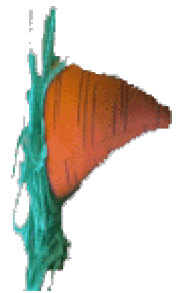
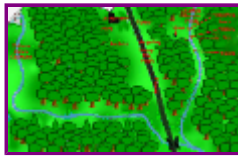
The party squeezed on to the raft and Rod let go of the last rope. The raft suddenly realised it was free of the dock and that there was a lot of water here. With a current.

The raft was swept out into the river.

Unwilling to let everyone else have a go, David lost the contents of his stomach over the side of the raft.

Links:

The Carpet Crawlers



Insults and Critique to : gorden@nobby.co.uk



Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Dreading Water

The raft rushed out from the underwarren docks and flew out into the river like a cork out of a rather well shaken grand-prix bottle.

Rod had hold of an oar and used it to steer the raft. This was not an easy task. Everyone's attention was on Rod as he fought with the river. Then he stopped and nearly dropped the oar. His mouth dropped and he pointed back the way they had came.

“Hellfire!”

“Wugga-wugga!”

“Amazing!”

<Stuck for words>

The warren was imploding! What was once quite a large rounded hillock was slumping – the Committee must have used the power of the carrot to shore up all the tunnelling because the whole thing seemed to be collapsing. Rabbits streamed out of the warren though a million and one (new) holes(*). All the rabbits seemed rather confused – most of them had grown up under the influence of the golden carrot and didn't understand this strange feeling of freedom.

Rod's grip on the oar tightened and he called “Gorden, grab the other oar we have to get this to shore!”

Gorden looked around and picked up the shortest stick.

“Not that one!” Rod shouted as he tried to paddle shoreward – with only him rowing the raft was trying to go round in circles. “The one with the flat bit!”

Bemused and confused, Gorden picked up the oar and rushed to the side. He then attempted to do what Rod was doing with his oar. To some degree of success.

Cola went to Gorden and grabbed the oar and showed him – push the water with the flat bit! They held the oar together, Cola aiming, Gorden supplying the muscle. Together they managed to match what Rod was doing and between the three conies they managed to push the raft towards the bank.

Rod's corner beached first – he threw his oar to terra-firma and then jumped ashore holding one of the mooring-ropes and one of the short poles. He wrapped the rope around his middle and held the raft still with his body weight. He leaned against the short pole and it dug into the soil. He used the pull of the river to help him bed the mooring pin in. Finally, satisfied, he hitched the rope around the pin and breathed a sigh of relief. Then he noticed that Gorden was trying to emulate him, without actually know what was going on. Rod quickly rushed to Gorden, who was just about to be pulled into the river by the raft and between the two of them they managed to pull Gorden's corner of the raft back and to ground the second mooring pin.

Once the raft was secure David rushed ashore and bent over and kissed the ground. His arms tried to hug the world, or the ground at least. Plessey floated ashore and Cola hopped onto solid ground behind him, carrying their spoils of war.

Gorden sat down facing the collapsing warren and shook his head. Cola sat to one side and David to the other. Rod turned to look at the flood of rabbits as they swarmed from the safety of their burrows into the strange free world.

Rod turned to others, shaking his head.

"I've got to go and find my brother. We've got to help these rabbits." He gave a cracked smile. "They've got to learn freedom. It took me a year to understand what it meant" He looked at Gorden, "Will you be alright with the Carrot. I think it's pretty harmless now it's broken."

Gorden nodded "I'm not sure this is how I expected the Quest to end." He looked down sheepishly at the two halves of golden carrot in his lap. "I think I was supposed to find it in one piece."

"Look," Rod said, thinking hard, "if you take the raft down river you'll get to the emway in about two days. I think. Is that quicker than it took you to get here?"

Cola nodded but managed to ask an important question "Can we get under the emway on the river?"

Rod nodded. "It's how I left the Commune in the first place – Rob and I were swept away on a raft and we got freedom of thought once we'd travelled far enough from the Warren – far enough from the Carrot I supposed I should say. We were knocked off the raft just before the river went under the emway. So I suggest you take it easy and try to keep near to the edge."

"I'll say!" David interjected. Everyone looked at him. "Well, I can't swim, you know!"

Gorden shook his head, smiling.

"I've got the idea of the pushing poles, and the poles-in-the-ground now." Gorden said.

"We call them oars, and mooring pins, but," Rod added smiling, "No one really minds what you call them."

Rod bent to Gorden and offered his hand. "Good luck." They said simultaneously, then they laughed.

Rod took Cola's offered hand and kissed it, he then patted David on the head and bowed at Plessey.

With one last "Good Byeeeeeeee!" he rushed off to find his brother.

"Considering all we've been through." David began. "All the places we've been and all the strange things we've seen and all we've done." He paused, "Do you know what?"

Everyone left looked sideways at the small gerbil, expectant.

"I'm quite hungry now." David finished. Gorden smiled. Cola laughed out loud and Plessey's shell shook with mirth.

"Well," Cola said, tapping the Golden Carrot in Gorden's lap. "We can't eat this." She stood. "I'm going foraging. Plessey," She looked at the snail, "Would you help me?" "Delighted, young lady." Plessey said with a flourish.

David tapped the Golden Carrot.

"Wonder what the Great Buck is going to say to this?" He asked.

Gorden shrugged. "We weren't on a Quest for him. He only took control of the quest after we'd begun." He gave a sigh. "If he wanted it in one piece he should have said!"

David looked at the raft. “Can we really sail this?” He asked.

“I hope so. It’d be nice to cut a week off of our journey home.”

“Do you think we get our jobs back?” David asked.

Gorden went to speak and then stopped. He closed his eyes and shook his head slowly.

“Bertram.” He said in a low voice, thinking.

“Bertram’s not in charge anymore.” David said.

A creaking noise came from the nearest mooring pin—Gorden’s one. Gorden jumped up and rushed over and pushed it hard into the ground. He turned to find David holding out the blunt end of the Golden Carrot.

Gorden looked from Carrot to mooring pin and back again. He smiled, took the half a carrot and used it to bash the mooring pin firmly into the ground.

Plessey and Cola weren’t long foraging, and returned with a good selection of carrots and other green vegetables.

“We’re not far from some of the Communes’ fields.” Cola explained.

“So the hunting is good here?” Plessey smiled.

Cola made an early lunch, or late breakfast.

“Are we really going to travel on this raft-thing?” David asked once they had all eaten their fill and were digesting.

Gorden nodded.

“You do realised I can’t swim, don’t you?” David finished.

Gorden nodded.

“Just checking.” David said quietly to himself. Then he jumped up.

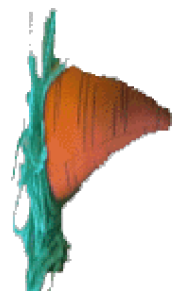
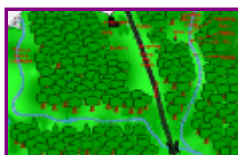
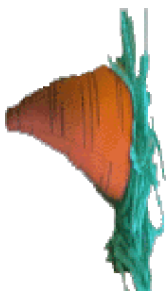
“Well, its the tale of Joker, Plessey, Gorden and Cola and the Quest to take the Golden Carrot Bits Home!” His mouth curled. “Doesn’t flow as well as it used to...”

Gorden stood up, helped Cola up and then ushered everyone onto the raft.

Gorden and Cola cast off then jumped onto the raft, grabbed an oar each and started to steer the craft down the river.

To home.

(*) We know because Plessey counted them.





Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Ra-Ra-Rasputin Nope, wrong dude

By mid morning the next day they had grown used to the routine.

Gorden and Cola connied the oars. (You know the score– it’s like manning the oars, but done by rabbits) They couldn’t exactly row the raft, but they could use them to direct the way in which it drifted. Plessey stood near the front (You could call it a prow if you wanted to, it just doesn’t seem pointed enough to be a prow) and offered advice as to whether Gorden or Cola should be pushing at any one moment.

David lay face down in the middle of the raft, eyes shut, holding on as tight as he could.

Suddenly something blotted out the sun– a sharp-edged shadow passed over the raft, and the exactness of the edge caused them all to look up.

Obviously, all except for David.

“What the hell’s that?” Chorused two rabbits and a snail.

David, eyes still tight shut, mumbled something under his breath which could have been

“It’s a fleet of flying saucers, what do you think it is?”

He didn’t know how right he was.

Well, not about the “fleet” part.

And it wasn’t exactly saucer shaped either.

“It’s square!” Cola exclaimed.

“It’s pointed!” Gorden cried.

They looked at Plessey.

“Is it a bird?” David whispered to himself.

“It’s a pyramid.” Plessey said.

“I’ve heard of them,” Cola said, “Are they supposed to fly?”

Plessey shook his eye-stalks, “No. Look – it’s getting lower!”

“I don’t want that landing on me!” Gorden worried, “It’s rather large!”

The pyramid slid over them exactly the way that huge stone edifices normally don’t and seemed to be aiming to land on the shore just a short way in front of the raft.

Plessey barked orders; Cola and Gorden pushed and oared and steered the raft to bring it close to the river bank. Gorden jumped ashore with a rope and mooring pin and, expertly

this time, hitched the raft up.

David shuddered as the raft jerked to a stop. He whimpered a little. Just a little.

Gorden raced to the other end of the raft, Cola threw him another rope and he held the raft until she could jump off with another mooring pin.

A few seconds later Plessey was sliding off the raft. David clambered over him to reach solid ground first.

David threw himself at the ground.

"I LOVE YOU!" He shouted, trying to throw his arms around the world.

"Careful!" Cola shouted to him, **"You're getting close to The Edge!"**

"Wow!" Gorden exclaimed, staring at the pyramid.

It was an impressive sight. About fifty rabbits tall, it dwarfed any structure Gorden had ever seen. It appeared to be made of stone; perfectly carved stone blocks, each one of which would weigh more than ten rabbits.

The outside was pock-marked with a million small indentations, none exactly regular but all roughly circular.

It seemed out of place on the bank of a river, next to a wood, in England. It belonged somewhere else.

No one present had any idea where it would fit in.

Entranced, the four friends stepped carefully towards the misplaced object.

A sharp crack appeared in the side of the pyramid, a thin splinter of bright pure white light shone out.

Gorden gripped his staff tightly in his left paw, he raised his right hand to shade his eyes.

The crack spread and the light seemed to race a semicircular path, peaking about three rabbits high. With an industrial KER-SHUNK the inner part swung inwards. The light attempted to blind them all, suddenly the light was dimmed— a large shape appeared in the doorway and a voice boomed out:

"I say," It began, **"Does this happen to be the Nile by any chance?"**

David recovered from surprise first **"Neil?"** He said in a characteristically hard-of-hearing manner, **"No 'Neil's here?"** He paused for a second and tried to make out the shape in the light. **"But if you turn the light off, we might be able to think enough to help you find him?"**

"Good idea." Cola said, squinting.

"Oops, Sorry there chaps," Said the voice, he barked a command back into the pyramid and the light cut off.

Barked was the word. The 'creature' was a small dog.

"Hello there," he said advancing on the four adventurers, **"I'm looking for a king, oh what was his name?"** The dog frowned for a second or so, looking down, **"Ah! 'Rameses' That was it!"** He looked at the four bemused animals, **"Anyone of you chaps, oh and chapp-esses, sorry there didn't notice at first, my apologies, happen to be him?"** He read their looks. **"I take it the answer's no?"**

Gorden nodded, then stretched out a hand in greeting.

"I'm Gorden." He begun, **"This is Cola,"** he nodded to the young lady in question, **"Our half-deaf friend is David,"** David took a small bow, **"And the esteemed gentlemen to my right is Plessey, wizard extraordinaire."** Plessey nodded his eyestalks at the dog.

“We were on a quest.” He suddenly realised how silly it seemed to mention this. It’s fine to be on a quest. But when you’re on the way home and the object of the quest is laying in pieces in a bag on your shoulder it can be a mite embarrassing explaining matters.
“Oh a quest!” the dog said, excited, “You must tell me how it went! Oh I love quests! Used to send people on them all the time.” Then he remembered. “None of you know a king called Rameses?” All shook their heads. “Or a river called the Nile?” Again the negative.

The dog sat down. “Oh Bother!” He said to himself. “Just because I got a little distracted and lost track of what the time was. I knew I should have turned left at that sea. Oh well!” He motioned for the friends to sit with him.

“So,” He asked, “Tell me about your quest!”

“Well,” Gorden began sheepishly, “We were on a quest for the Golden Carrot.”

“Golden Carrot!” The dog interjected, “My my! Do you know,” They didn’t, “My Brother is still looking for one of those you know, It’s the only one he needs for the set.”

“Set?” Gorden asked, so far beyond ‘confused’ it needed a new word to describe it. Pity my thesaurus isn’t up to finding it.

“That’s the one, do you know him?” The dog rambled on, “Oh, my favourite is the Magnesium Mange-Tout, a real whizz at a party.” The friends were lost, “Guaranteed to break the ice that one!” He looked thoughtful for a moment, “But then again, the Platinum Pear is altogether the prettiest to look at.” He stared hard at Gorden, “You don’t know how many packets of crisps my brother has eaten trying to find a golden carrot.” They didn’t. The dog laughed.

“Oh well,” he said standing up, “Can’t sit around here chatting all day. Got a king to find. Or at least a river.”

He seemed to have ignored them completely.

“Ta-ra!” He said as he turned his back on them and walked back to his pyramid.

“Did anyone understand a word he said?” Gorden asked.

“The words, yes.” Cola said, “The sentences. Not one.”

“He seemed a nice enough fellow ‘though.” Plessey added.

“Wonder where that Neil he’s looking for is?” David added.

The dog entered the pyramid and the doorway KER-SHUNKed behind him.

A few seconds later the pyramid hopped up into the air like a frog. Well, a frog made of stone and weighing the odd-tonne or so.

It seemed to whooosh and then flew rapidly off into the distance.

David looked at the diminishing shape.

“How about lunch?” He asked. Cola giggled.

The dog padded about his pyramid. The interior was a galaxy of colour. He’d have wanted you to say so because that’s where he bought the interior fixtures and fittings.

The floors were tiled in sparkling stones taken from the beaches on a hundred worlds, the work actually done by ‘Phisnab And Sons’ of the Andromeda-cluster.

From the walls hung a thousand works of art from a thousand orbital habitats, the zero gravity artists were the best, he always thought.

The IPE () sound-system was a gift from the arch-duke of Regina from the time he’d fought behind the Zhodani line.**

His pilot’s seat was crafted in the asteroid belts of Sirius (one of his favourite places).

He padded up to a seemingly blank wall and touched it, Here and Here. A doorway opened

and he passed into a small, darkened room. He waited until the doorway had shut before he barked “Shirak!” A bright light sparked to life.

He took a deep breath and smiled. This was his trophy room and he'd worked hard for every item. He walked over to one wall.

He stroked a silvery-white looking rather flat seeming pod of peas. He moved to a shiny pear which was encased in a glassteel case and smiled. Then he stood back and looked up at the wall.

Hung on the wall, crossed, at head height, were two carrots, glorious in their goldenness.

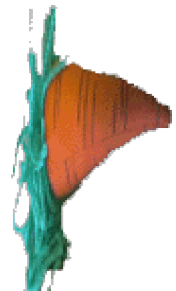
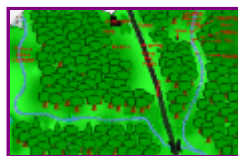
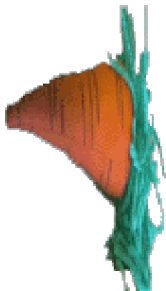
“One day,” he said to himself, “I might sell one of these to Sett. But he'll have to be nice to me for a few hundred years first.” He smiled, then turned to leave. “Wonder what those chaps are going to do with their one?”

(*) In-Pyramid Entertainment, of course.

A couple of the things ripped off or commented on belong here:

[Trying to Throw Your Arms Around The World](#)

[Rasputin](#)



Insults and Critique to : gorden@nobby.co.uk



Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Raiders of the Tombs of the Lost Crusade

Plessey slithered towards the front of the raft. He reached the front (Alright, I'll call it a prow, if it'll make you happy), stretched his neck and looked up to the sky.

Huge cotton-wool clouds filled the heavens, grey and menacing to the South, light and wispy to the North. The wind was blowing from the South. Plessey smiled a wry smile as the first drops pattered down on his shell.

"To be in England.

"In the summertime.

He looked down, "Close to the edge."

Happy to have got the first obscure reference of the episode in, he turned back to the middle of the raft and his friends, determined to monopolise the episode

"You know," He said, "This reminds me of the first raft-trip I took in my youth."

He was silent for a second, then smiled "But that one was not *exactly* the same.

"For a start we were in a Central American jungle.

"Secondly it was hot....

It was the sort of heat British air-conditioning companies dream of. Where you could order Extra-Chilies on your pizza and not notice.

The stoat, Derek Peartree, sorry, the Esteemed Stoat *Sir* Derek Peartree, was in charge of the expedition. We were to bring back riches and jewels for King and Country.

I somehow doubted that the Country really wanted the trash we could pillage from the savage natives.

We had a guide - 'Thai Tenning' he called himself, but I doubted he'd ever seen *that* side of the ocean. His Spanish was flawless. Pity about his English; pity about my Spanish. So we didn't talk much. We started the journey with seven native bearers. They left us three days into the trip as soon as they realised the direction we were taking- filching half our supplies at the same time.

This did not faze Sir Derek, he seemed to have been expecting it.

So there we were, Sir Derek, his badgerservant Wellings, Thai Tenning and myself, rafting along a tropical river following a map that Sir Derek would only show to Tenning, a map Tenning professed to being the only one who knew it's secret.

There we were searching for Eldorado. The city of Gold.

The rains begun. They begun every afternoon at 2 o'clock. If I had a watch I could have set it by those first drops.

Suddenly Tenning pointed in front of our raft and shouted: "Water Dragon!" We rushed from our polling to see the beast.

The water dragon of Central America is a water-bound cousin of the flying feathered serpents the natives worshipped as gods. Seeing the bulk of this serpent I nearly caught their religious fervour.

"It's fifty yards long!" I exclaimed.

"Ach!" Tenning spat, "Only a baby."

I gulped. If this was baby I didn't want to meet mum.

"See!" Tenning shouted to Peartree, "It is as I said - the meaning of the rhyme!"

Sir Derek nodded, his eyes wide and green.

"I can almost *smell* the gold!" He smiled.

"Ah," Wellings pointed out, "I think it's me. I'm terribly sorry sir, but when we saw the serpent I just lost control."

"No worries, Wellings old chap," Sir Derek said slapping the aged badger on the back.

"Everyone loses it once in a while."

"Fork!" Tenning shouted.

"No need to be rude!" Sir Derek said.

"No," Tenning said pointing. "Fork."

The river was splitting - the main flow continued on, but a thin tributary led off to the south.

Sir Derek nodded to him and the two of them started polling us towards the tighter path.

The river dragon had made three or four hundred yards past us, but suddenly turned and headed straight for the raft.

Tenning screamed and he and Derek attempted to pole us out of the way. But they didn't have the speed or the flexibility of the dragon and it reached us in no time.

The serpent's head erupted out of the water and it lunged for Sir Derek.

Wellings jumped at his master and pushed him out of the way just in time. The serpent's mouth chumped around Welling's tubby body and the badger's servant gave one final, long, odorous fart as the dragon bore him away.

The raft was soaked and we were all knocked awry by the dragon's impact. The raft spun out of control and aimed straight for the southern bank.

I recovered in time and cast a Boing! spell on the raft. We hit the bank and then bounced straight back into the middle of the river. This knocked us all over again, but we managed to get up and get control of the raft.

"And Then There Were Three." I said to myself.

"Rather weak, I thought," Sir Derek said, adding, "I much prefer Trick of the Tail."

Tenning didn't understand what we were going on about. Luckily.

We moved down the tributary, this involved a lot of hard work as we were moving up a rough stream now.

The sweat poured from us in the heat of the afternoon. I was praying for a decent rainstorm to cool us down.

Sir Derek didn't approve.

"Get off your knees and help us!"

"Show me your enemies and I will make them tremble!" I said going into my schpiel. "Show me your friends and I shall lighten their load!"

I waved and gestured and cast a spell. Derek nearly fell over.

"My God snail! I feel strong enough to fight a lion!"

"Don't say things like that!" Tenning interjected, "Remember that we are moving into lands where words are power!"

"Good," I thought to myself, "I'll hit you around the head with a dictionary..."

Half an hour later the river had become a stream.

Half an hour after that the stream became a trickle. The raft grounded.

"It's on foot from now on." Derek said with a cheery smile. I grimaced. Feet maybe fine for them, but I hadn't yet learnt the floating spell I use these days.

So I was slithering my fastest through the jungle, getting further and further behind the other two.

The undergrowth was thick and I could only 'see' where the other two had gone by the noise they made.

There was a sharp scream - but only one - then silence.

I gulped and then pulled myself together and slid in the direction of the cry. Without warning the floor fell from beneath me and I rolled into a steep tunnel! I rolled hard and fast. I was bounced from side to side and I tried to keep track of how far and in what direction I was travelling. Unfortunately, apart from knowing for sure that the slideway branched at least twice; I had no idea where I was.

I rolled out into a deep pile of feathers and started to catch my breath. A shrill "Squark!" brought me round. A vicious looking beak thrust in my face. I jerked backwards.

Getting a good look at my companion in this fluffy bedding I was surprised to see it was a small feathered serpent. I shivered, thinking about its cousin we met earlier and I backed away from the squeaking, squarking animal, looking for a way out.

There were three exits. Two sloped tubes leading out- I think I'd entered through one of these. Another tube seemed to lead downwards. The top of the nest was open to the skies but I could see very little up there - the top was far far away.

I looked forward to meeting the white rabbit.

A flapping noise assaulted my ears from above. Mother was coming to see her baby.

Luckily this distracted the small serpent and I rushed past it into the downward leading tube.

This was not a steep slope and I managed to slide down, in control, quite easily.

I came to the end of the tube and I peeked carefully out.

It exited eight feet up a stone wall. The room below was about forty feet long and ten feet wide. A trail of bare flames led along each wall. One end of the room held a pair of great, heavy wooden doors. The other end held a stone altar, stained brown. Tied to the alter was Sir Derek.

The brown didn't look like gravy powder.

I was about to jump down when the doors creaked open.

In marched seven hooded figures, the one in front carrying a cross held high in the air.

He laid the cross down on top of Sir Derek.

"This is the Supper for the mighty one!" He intoned, holding a wavy-bladed knife up.

I knew that voice - Tenning.

So. He knew all along.

I could see one way of saving Sir Derek. I had *one* spell left.

With my last magic words of the day I jumped from my hiding place.

At my word the flames flared up and inwards! Each of the robed and hooded figures panicked as the flames licked at their clothes.

They caught alight like tissue paper, turning into living torches in moments.

Tenning turned to see me.

"Cursed wizard!" He shouted, and rushed at me with the knife. I was out of spells! Through the flames he jumped and stabbed down at me with that evil blade. I ducked and the blade hit my shell, shattering into a thousand pieces. I used my last wisp of power to flare the fire near me and he crackled in the heat.

The place was full of the smell of burning flesh. I held my breath and slithered up to the altar.

"Jolly Good Show, young fella!" Derek said. I began to wish I'd been slower.

I loosened his bonds.

"There'll be more of these chappies along soon." Derek said as he massaged his wrists.

"We'd better be on our way."

He led the way out of the room at speed, so I was shocked to bump into him as soon as I'd

left it.

Before I insulted him I looked forwards, and upwards.

We were there - Eldorado, the golden city!

Above us was a tiered city, built from golden bricks! The walls shimmered - we were stunned by the sight. But not so stunned as to miss the sight of a few hundred natives rushing towards us, knives at the ready.

"This way!" Peartree said rushing off to the left. I didn't know what he'd spotted, but I hoped it was good.

We piled into a crude elevator. It was a huge basket full of rocks. A rope led up and I could see another basket hanging far above us from the other end of the rope. We began throwing ballast out.

The basket started upwards just as the first angry native reached us. He jumped for the edge of the basket and managed to grab hold, the basket stopped its rise and I felt the panic rise in me.

Sir Derek didn't hesitate - He jumped at the man and shouted

"Your shoelace is undone!"

The man looked down at his feet and Sir Derek stamped on his fingers.

With a yelp the man let go and we resumed our ascent.

I worried that natives at the top of the lift would attack us - or even cut the rope. But the lift-top's didn't know what was going on. We jumped out into a group of five natives waiting to go down.

"Beware!" Sir Derek shouted to them, "They'll be coming up behind us!"

Fools. They fell for it.

Derek and I rushed out. Finding ourselves at a small dock area at the side of the main river.

We jumped into the nearest boat.

A proper boat with proper oars!

Travelling down stream, we were out of the jungle in two days flat.

Sir Derek and I parted company soon after that. We vowed to tell no one of our discovery.

I returned two years later at the head of an army of mercenaries paid in promises.

We met up with Sir Derek and *his* army of mercenaries holding the same IOU.

There was a short and bloody battle, which led to a quick cease fire, once we'd let the mercenaries whittle themselves down.

We headed to the place we'd found.

There was no one there.

No docks.

No lifts.

"And certainly no Golden City."

Plessey sighed and shook his head.

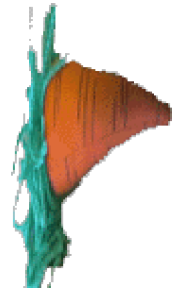
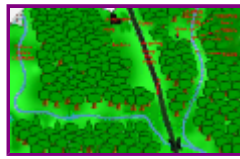
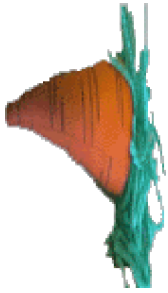
"I bet you wish you'd taken some gold the first time." David said, entranced by the story.

Plessey shook his head.

"No," he said, "I wish I'd taken enough to line the outside of my shell as well as the inside!"

Plessey turned to face the prow (Happy now?)

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Insults and Critique to : gorden@nobby.co.uk



Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Tales of the Riverbank: The Next Generation

The drizzle had been going for nearly half an hour when David came over all strange and took it into his head to cheer everyone up. He decided to live up to his nickname and tell some jokes. Some of them would even be repeatable in polite company.

“So the badger says ‘But they all come in blue..’” David stifled a giggle as he told the punch line. Gorden roared with laughter, Cola closed her eyes with a broad smile on her lips. Plessey gave an almighty cackle.

“..and mine’s fallen off!” He finished. Failing to stifle any longer he giggled profusely. With the final part of the punch line Gorden stamped his foot and Cola actually laughed out loud.

“No more! No more!” Plessey squeezed out between fits of laughter. “I can’t hold my sides in any more!”

There was an almighty lurch in the raft which brought them to their senses, the raft span through nearly ninety degrees before Gorden and Cola took a tight hold of their respective oars and began to paddle. The raft had swung towards the middle of the river. The water was much faster there, not so safe for four small animals to travel on.

“HARDER!” Gorden shouted to Cola – he had managed to gain some control over his side but she was still fighting with the river. Cola was losing.

“That’s my line.” She managed between clenched teeth.

Suddenly, with a flash of lightning, shortly followed by a crack of thunder, the heavens opened. What was a friendly shower turned into a monsoon. Or, at least, as much of a monsoon as you get in England in the springtime.

“David!” Gorden shouted, “Help me!” Gorden gave a couple of hard kicks with his oar and handed it to a rather intimidated David. “I’ve got to help Cola.” He explained as the gerbil took the oar.

“What am I supposed to do with this?” David said to himself as Gorden rushed towards the other end of the raft.

Gorden got to Cola and, standing beside her, put his hands on the oar, together they pushed against the water and started to aim her end back towards the riverbank.

In the centre of the raft Plessey was trying to stop their supplies from getting too wet. At the aft end David was feeling a little lost, he made a couple of token paddles in the water but knew that his strength wasn’t up to much. He started making a high-pitched whining noise.

Gorden was just breathing a sigh of relief that he and Cola had got control of the raft when David’s plaintive cry entered his body through the ears and made his back-bone shiver. His eyes opened wide and he turned back towards his small friend. David wasn’t trying any more; he had the oar out of the water and was waving it in the air, well a few inches in the

air. The rain had soaked his skin and he looked half the size he normally did. Gorden grimly smiled to himself, he probably didn't look much better himself.

Suddenly the raft dropped down; Gorden looked towards the front– whilst they had been wrestling with the current the river had narrowed and ahead he could see white water– a stretch of rapids.

“Shit.” He said to himself. Cola was just getting up; she had fallen down when they hit the first rapid. She was facing him and seem slightly dazed. Gorden took a step towards her and shouted, “RAPIDS! HOLD ON TO SOMETHING!” Cola turned to look to the front and the raft took another almighty drop, she was knocked to her knees by the force of the bumping.

This team had not signed on for white water rafting – it looked like they were about to experience a bonus on their pleasure trip.

Gorden started towards Cola then remembered David's consternation. He spun around to see how David was coping.

David was on all fours and had dropped the oar. He appeared to be attempting to hug the deck, the oar trapped under his back legs. Gorden nodded to himself and turned back to Cola.

Three steps and he was with her. He took her oar in one hand and used the other hand to pull her half up, half towards the middle of the raft. She grabbed the oar and he helped her to stand up. She smiled and they took a step towards the middle of the raft.

The raft dropped again, water splashing everywhere and the raft was swung wide and spun fast – Gorden felt like the ball on a pin table when it goes just right between two kickers and is hit back and forth, back and forth, back and forth, racking the score up.

Or he would have done if he'd ever seen a pinball table.

But at least you know what I mean.

Cola and Gorden fell in opposite directions. Cola let go of the oar they were holding.

Unfortunately Gorden let go as well and it dropped out of his hands and rolled away from both of them towards the back of the raft.

“Got it!” Shouted David – he lunged across the raft at the spinning oar and grabbed it before it could go over the edge.

The raft dropped again and the waves rushed over thee rabbits.

“Bugger this for a game of tin soldiers.” Gorden swore. Then he noticed.

David had been swept off the raft and was holding on with one paw. Gorden could see the look in David's eyes – that hard, pin-like look that meant his friend was holding something in. Probably a few mouthfuls of river water this time.

David's other front paw waved frantically at the raft. Gorden looked at Cola to check she was alright then crawled towards David.

David's paw connected with the raft as Gorden reached him.

He raft dropped and spun again.

David lost hold of the raft - Gorden lunged at him, trying to get hold of his front paws. He missed.

[illegible]

Gorden shook with emotion. He just stared up the river, his eyes trying to see a small damp and not -very-furry-at-the-moment animal.

He thought he could just see a small arm waving through the white water.

The raft dropped again.

Gorden felt a paw on his back, and an arm curl around him. Cola had reached him and was

hugging him. Plessey carefully slid under her other arm and the three, remaining, animals crouched together in the centre of the boat.

The raft dropped.

The raft spun.

Waves crashed over the raft.

Abruptly, the rain halted but the sky got darker. Gorden looked up and saw that they were passing under a bridge.

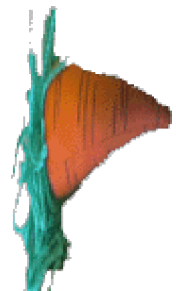
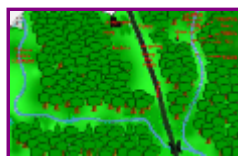
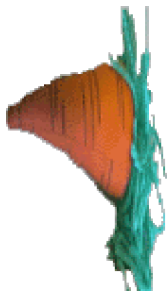
Suddenly the raft was back out into the torrent, but the flow of the river had changed as well. Raising his head Gorden could see that the river had joined into another. The realisation dawned that they were now being forced South, away from home, not towards it.

He needn't have worried much.

With one almighty crunching noise the raft hit the river bank and splintered. The three animals were thrown onto the bank along with the source of a thousand matches.

Gorden raised his head and howled in anguish, squeezing Cola tightly.

---*---



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Dear diary...

This has been a tough day.

David is gone. Gorden has taken the loss very, very badly. Gorden has been...

Quiet.

Difficult.

Sad.

I think we lost Gorden as much as David.

That poor little, frightened, gerbil. I remember seeing his hand as the waves crashed over him and we were dragged away by the raging tide. You could see the fear in him. I know he was permanently frightened - everything seemed to put him on edge - and his sense of humour was quite acidic at times - but this time I could feel, even taste his fear.

I slept soundly last night. Fighting the river had completely worn me out and as soon as I laid down on the river bank my eyes turned to stone and slammed shut.

I woke at dawn, feeling groggy but refreshed. I immediately worried about Gorden.

He was easy to find, but it wasn't easy to stop worrying about him.

He was squatting by on the bank, staring up the river, eyes riveted on a point under the bridge, towards the rapids.

*I didn't need to ask. He was looking for David. I didn't want to ask if he'd been like that all night. It was a stupid question, *of course* he'd been watching all night.*

I walked up to him and laid my paw on his shoulder.

It didn't interrupt his vigil.

"He'll be along soon." He said. "He won't be long." I squeezed his shoulder. "He'll catch up with us soon."

Tears welled up in my eye. I didn't see eye to eye with David.

Correction. I hadn't seen eye to eye with David... But he was Gorden's best friend.

Gorden depended on him in a strange way - David was always there to let him know whether he was having good ideas or not. David was always there to pull someone's leg.

*"He *can't* be much longer." Gorden continued. I closed my eyes to help hold back the tears.*

I needed a break from listening to Gorden. I decided to forage for a bit.

Half an hour later I was back. Gorden hadn't moved.

I tried to make him eat. I'd found a Wotsit bush, Cheesie flavour (Gorden's favourite). I pushed a couple into his front paws.

He was silent for a second then pointed out that David had preferred Barbecue Beef flavour.

*"I think he did it *just* to be awkward." Gorden laughed. I'd never heard such a sad*

*laugh. "No," he continued, "I *know* he said it just to be awkward."*

There was a strange smile on Gorden's face, I could just make out a teardrop welling in the corner of his eye.

*"I think he did *everything* just to be awkward."*

I gave his shoulder one last squeeze and walked back to where I had slept, where Plessey was still snoring.

I shook Plessey awake and we busied ourselves getting ready to go. We traced along the river bank gathering our scattered belongings.

Gorden's staff had been thrown clear of the river - I found it nestling in a small bush. I dragged it back to our "camp" as a symbol of hope.

I've done a lot of hoping today.

I made a small breakfast, which Gorden ignored, and we packed all our belongings away, ready to travel.

*I suppose there *was* some chance of David surviving in the water. But I couldn't see how he would be able to continue the journey along the river. He couldn't swim and couldn't build a raft on his own.*

*Isn't it strange how easy it is to start talking about how someone *was*?*

"We've got to go." I told Gorden. "We've got to head for home." Gorden didn't so much as flicker an eye away from the river. I hated myself for it but I continued: "If David survived he would head for home." There. I'd done it. I'd pretended to Gorden that I thought David could have survived. I froze when I realised I was trying to manipulate Gorden like that. I gave up and said all I could. "Please?"

Gorden looked down and I could feel the internal fight. I knew that if he moved he'd think he'd betrayed David by leaving him for dead.

Gorden was crying as he stood up, the tears streaming from his face.

"David..." He was trying to put his emotions into words. "David..." He shook his head, "David."

My heart twinged at the loss he felt. I wrapped my arms around him and hugged him tightly. His head dropped on my shoulder and he began to sob out loud, shaking as he did. I rubbed his back; soothing him as he tried to talk but he just ended up saying "David" over and over again.

I cried with him. Not for David, as such, but for Gorden's loss, for Gorden's pain.

*We made a sorry sight as we shambled off through the forest. Plessey led the way, I followed and Gorden tagged along behind. I kept having to call to Plessey to slow down, Gorden didn't have any *go* in him.*

I started feeling nervous when I heard a noise beside us and I realised that I'd been hearing the noise continuously for the last hour or so. My concern for Gorden was overpowering my survival instincts. I padded faster ahead to Plessey and whispered for him to slow down with me. We slowed until Gorden caught up with us. I tried to make Gorden aware of what I was about to do, without actually telling him. No use; wrapped up in his grief, I couldn't make him understand me.

I stepped towards the noise.

"Come out and show yourself!" I shouted. The bushes rustled and Gorden shouted "David!"

*It wasn't a gerbil that appeared. To start with we couldn't tell what had appeared. It was a *long* animal, all dressed in rags, its face and hands hidden behind cowl and mismatched sleeves.*

A sob came from the animal.

"food" It said in a low, slurred, weak voice, so weak it couldn't manage a capital letter.

I told him that we didn't have much. But he still asked for food and moved nearer. I could finally see under his hood and jumped back in alarm!

It was a ferret!

He shook his head at my dismay.

"No weapons" He said. I didn't understand what he meant until he pulled his hood down and said again, "No weapons." His mouth seemed deformed - then I realised that he had no teeth! Scabs around his lips testified that this was a recent injury.

Then I looked to his paws - they too were scabrous. It sunk in what he had meant- no teeth and no claws- he truly didn't have any weapons. For an animal like him that would mean that he couldn't catch any food and couldn't chew it if he did.

This was getting too much for one day, Gorden's emotional pain and a maimed and physically pained Ferret. I told the ferret I'd try to cook him something.

*What could I cook for a carnivore? Well, all I can *really* cook is carrot stew.*

The ferret had obviously not eaten for a few days because he wolfed it down. Any sustenance is better than none I suppose.

He must have been very hungry.

Gorden hardly ate anything.

I tried to get the ferret to talk.

I asked him what happened.

"Disgraced." He mumbled. "Failed." His head twitched from side to side as he talked.

He held his head up and his eyes drilled into me.

"I failed a commission. My order does not take failure lightly. They took away my tools - maimed me. Turned me out. Helpless. Defenceless.

"That was a week ago. I haven't eaten until now."

He thanked us and asked if he could travel with us. I was about to agree when Plessey asked him his name. His head shook violently.

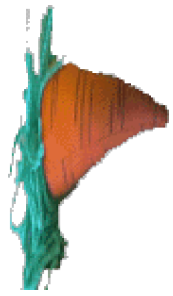
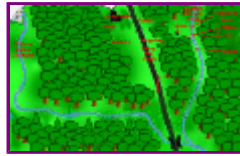
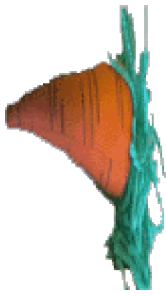
"No Name!" He shouted, "Nameless! No-one!"

Gorden had been silent until now, but he piped up:

"Good! There's no room for more names in this song." I could see his knuckles whiten on his staff. The ferret nodded, not understanding but accepting Gorden's words..

So, this afternoon, we were four again. 'Cola, Plessey, Gorden and No-one' It doesn't have the right ring to it.

---*---



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Half A Pound Of Tuppenny Rice

---*---

"Sister?"

"Yes Sister.."

"Sister.. The time.."

"Time is near. Yes I.."

"I can hear it on.."

"On the wind. Sister.."

"Sister.. Yes.."

"Yes Sister it.."

"It was good, Sister."

---*---

"Three days.", Cola thought to herself. "Three days and we still don't know his name." She shook her head, "Who is that ferret?"

"And Gorden had hardly said a word."

The river was still to their left, they walked north. Gorden led the way despondently, followed by the ferret-with-no-name, followed by Cola with Plessey bringing up the rear. They still had to find a way across the river, but they were still a couple of days walk south of the warren.

All in all the river journey had not saved them much time.

Gorden put his foot down and picked up a burr. Stuck to his foot it began to aggravate him as soon as he took his next step.

So, the step after that he raised his paw and shook it to try to loosen the burr. It stayed resolutely stuck to his back paw.

He got into a rhythm, one step with his left foot, raise the right foot and shake it to try to lose the burr, then another step with his left foot and so on.

Step, wave foot.

Step, wave foot.

Step, wave foot.

The ferret didn't notice the burr, he just saw Gorden stepping along and waving his foot about. Shrugging his shoulders the ferret copied Gorden, walking in step with him and shaking his right foot every time he lifted it.

Cola stifled a giggle and decided to join the dance. She could tell what Gorden was trying to do, but even so, she joined in the movements.

Step, wave foot.

Step, wave foot.

Step, wave foot.

Bringing up the rear, Plessey wasn't sure what to do, not having any feet to wave as such.

He decided just to rock from side to side as he floated along.
Beat, rock to the left, rock back.
Beat, rock to the left, rock back.
Beat, rock to the left, rock back.

A sound in the bushes to their right caused Gorden to spin round, this was at exactly the same moment that everyone was waving their right foot.
His mouth dropped open as if to speak. Cola laughed out loud at the "what the hell is going on" expression on his face.
Gorden's face cracked in a smile as he realised what had been going on behind him. He was about to say something when the noise in the bushes became something more.
Two weasels jumped out of the bushes and lunged towards the ferret. The poor toothless creature whimpered and cowered.
Quick as a flash they were at the ferret. Their hands were on his shoulders.
One faced towards Gorden, he'd never seen an animal move so fast.
"This is none of your business, buckie." The weasel said with a sneer.
The other weasel turned to Cola, "Keep out of the way, Bright Eyes, and you won't get hurt."
Cola's lip raised in a sneer. That these weasels would blaspheme like that!
The forest was suddenly silent.
The first weasel turned to the ferret. "Louis sent us."
The ferret looked down. His shoulders shook and he sobbed.
Gorden had been walking with his staff like a walking stick, he shifted his grip ever so slightly
The ferret looked up at Gorden, smiled, then winked. He threw himself at the ground as Gorden swung his staff at the weasels. The first weasel was too near Gorden and got the staff in his neck. The second was quicker and ducked out of the way. Remembering his job the weasel dug his claws into the ferret and raked them down his shoulder. Cola aimed a kick at the weasel but he dodged her and kicked his downed comrade as he "floated like a butterfly" away from Gorden, whom was attempting to get another swipe of his staff in. The downed weasel got up on all fours and started to shuffle away from Gorden and Cola.
Plessey threw a magic spark at the second weasel, which burnt on his nose. Helping his compatriot up he snarled at the party and backed away.
Gorden waved his staff as menacingly as he could.
The two weasels were out of range now and leaving fast.
"Well be back, buddy!" The second weasel shouted as they melted into the forest.
Gorden watched them go then turned back to his friends. Cola was bent over the ferret, trying to staunch the flow of lifeblood from the weasels claw marks.
Cola rummaged through her pack but couldn't find anything of use.
"Vicious pair, weren't they?" Gorden said. Cola nodded and the ferret just moaned in pain.

"Gorden," Cola asked, "Could you look for some Doc leaves please?" He nodded and padded off.
"You could have sparked earlier." Cola reprimanded Plessey.
"I've never seen anyone put up any fight after Gorden's waved his staff before." Plessey explained. "I was confused."
"What did you do?" Cola said quietly to herself, shaking her head at the violence of the weasels.
Gorden crashed back through the woods.
"Got Some!" He shouted, virtually throwing the doc leaves at Cola. She nodded a thank you and then concentrated on her first aid.

"He's not eaten properly for a week and a half." Cola and Gorden were sat down a little way a ways from the ferret, whom was being told a, probably, tall tail by a small snail. "I can cook him things he can eat, but he's a carnivore. He can't survive for long on carrot stew."

"That weasel **really** hurt him." Gorden said, "I'm sure they'll be back again." Cola nodded at that.

"They don't seem the kind to start this sort of thing and then back off at the first sign of trouble."

"I'll ask Plessey what spells he can prepare, my staff didn't look like much of a deterrent." Cola rested her head on Gorden's shoulder with a sigh. "And we're so close to home as well."

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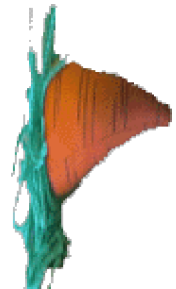
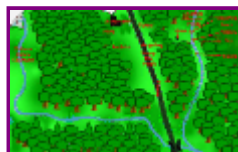
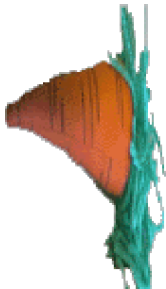
"I've got a spell that should protect us tonight." Plessey began, "I think we should all try to get a full night's sleep. Then we can make as good a time as possible tomorrow."

Gorden looked up from his work. "I should have this stretcher ready soon." He frowned.

"Trouble is, if I'm carrying one end of this stretcher with the ferret on it, I can't carry the staff as well." He took a deep breath.

"We'll be defenceless if they attack again."

---*---



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Half A Pound Of Treacle

Plessey shook Gorden awake. "We had visitors during the night." He said.

Gorden's eyes shot open, his mouth opened questioningly. Plessey floated away, motioning for Gorden to follow. He led Gorden to the edge of the circle he'd drawn around their camp the previous night. On the outside of one section of the circle the ground was scorching and the nearest bush was smouldering, the dew steaming off.

"We're all alright." Plessey smiled, "But at least one of them has a burnt nose!"

"The spell worked then." Gorden stated.

Plessey nodded. "But that spell drained me. I won't have enough manna to cast anything more for, well, probably until tonight."

"It's all sweetness and light today." Gorden grimaced as the first rain drop of the day landed on his nose.

---*---

It was a short shower and refreshed the friends rather than soaked them. Cola fixed a quick breakfast and they ate in near silence. The ferret managed to drink something, but he wasn't looking well and didn't look strong enough to walk. Gorden had hoped he'd strengthen up over night and let them get away without having to stretch him.

No such luck.

Gorden and Cola conie-handed the ferret onto the makeshift stretcher. Gorden laid his staff alongside the ferret and took hold of the poles. Cola grabbed her end and they started off. They travelled on in a silence only broken by the occasional moan from their patient and the padding of their feet over the undergrowth.

---*---

"When do we take them Steve?" The first weasel said, "Look at them, ripe for it!"

"Not yet, Bert." Said the second, glad that their names were out in the open and they could stop being numbers. "They are pretty fresh after their night's rest. Let them get tired from stretchering a dying ferret for a few hours first."

Bert nodded and they started along, shadowing the rabbits, snail and ferret a few hundred

yards away. Steve stopped and turned to Bert.

"Hey," He said, pointing, "Was that a bustle in the hedgerow?"

"Nah," Bert replied, "Don't be alarmed. It's probably a spring-clean for a May-queen. Or some such." Steve nodded and they continued on their way.

A few paces on there was a low rustle and a shape like a small ghost slid out of the undergrowth. The only thing the weasels knew was the pain of a thousand knives as Bert keeled over in agony, blood gushing from a wound behind his knee. Steve clamped his paw over Bert's mouth.

"Shaddapa your face!" He hissed, "If you make a racket like that they'll hear us!"

"My leg!" Bert wailed. His paws desperately squeezing his leg, trying to staunch the flow and failing. Steve jumped up and looked in the direction of their prey - there was no sign that Bert's cries had been heard and he breathed a quick sigh of relief. He bent to Steve's leg and whistled. It was not a pretty sight. He made some mental calculations and they came out in Bert's favour, *just*. Bert could see the thoughts behind his eyes - the Lords only knew how many times he'd had to make the same decision in the past.

"Let me live." He whispered. Steve nodded a small nod.

"We'll bandage and splint your leg. We'll still be as fast as two rabbits carrying a stretcher. But.." He hesitated and Bert finished for him:

"I'll not survive the next fight." Steve shook his head.

"But having you alive will give me an edge I won't have on my own."

---*---

"Is it time for lunch yet?" Cola asked. Although the sun was nowhere near it's zenith, Gorden could understand her wish for a break.

"Not much farther and we'll be at the Hart's Watering Hole. There could be some friendly faces." Cola grunted so Gorden continued, "And I still thing that sound we heard was a scream of some sort."

Plessey came floating back from Point. "Good news!" He said with a smile, "We've got some company not far ahead!"

A long drawn-out sigh came from the ferret, the first sound from his lips for over an hour.

"I know, I know." Gorden said to the ailing creature, "We'll all be able to rest soon."

He didn't want to mention that he didn't think the ferret would wake up from his next sleep.

They rounded a large tree and were pleased to see a young deer lapping at the water's edge.

"Yo! Bambi!" Gorden shouted, "How's the water?" The animal raised up and fixed Gorden with a hard stare.

"I'll have you know," He said, "my name is *not* 'Bambi'"

Gorden gulped, "Sorry sir," He said, "But your age makes you look a little..." He tried to stop as he realised he was digging himself in a deeper and deeper hole.

"You saying I look like a woman?" The young antler-less stag said. Gorden tried to say something and failed, his eyes bulging as he tried to think of the right thing to say. The staglette laughed out loud.

"Look at you!" He roared. Cola sniggered, seeing the rougeness of Gorden's cheeks, then she too burst out laughing. "I hear you would like a lift across the river?" Bamber asked.

Gorden would have replied, but instead there came a crashing noise from the woods.

Suddenly the weasels were rushing upon them. If Gorden had had time to think he'd have noticed that one was hobbling rather than running and was a lot slower than the other. But he didn't.

Gorden nearly threw the stretcher to the floor and grabbed at his staff. The ferret groaned in pain. Cola held onto her end. Gorden's hand grasped for his staff, unfortunately it bounced when the stretcher hit the floor and he missed it and the end rolled to his right. The first weasel was upon them and Gorden had to dive under him to try for his weapon. Gorden hit the weasel's legs and he felt the wiry predator roll over him. Gorden grabbed his staff and spun up, swinging for the weasel. The weasel dodged Gorden's swing, but as Gorden was spun round by the force of the staff the second weasel was upon them and took the staff full in the face.

With a crunch and a scream the second weasel (Oh god we're back to numbers. Look, I know Gorden doesn't know who they are but I'll call them by their names, okay?)

With a crunch and a scream, Bert collapsed in agony, his nose crushed by the force of the metal-shod wood. Without that scream Steve would have been on the ferret, but it broke his concentration just enough for Cola to drag the stretcher forwards out of his immediate grasp. Plessey rushed in and tried to prop up Gorden's end of the stretcher as our hero turned his attention to Steve.

Gorden fainted one end towards the weasel and he dodged. Gorden attempted a low strike, but Steve hopped back and out of the way. In front of Gorden, behind Steve, Plessey and Cola were dragging the stretcher onto the back of Bamber, whom had knelt down for the purpose. Bamber's eyes were wide with youthful panic, but you could see he was doing his very best to be an adult and keep his calm.

Gorden's staff whisked forwards and Steve dodged back. A sharp set of claws attempted to come in underneath Gorden's guard, but a light tap from the staff and Steve withdrew his paw. They circled each other, first one feinting, then the next. One taking a swipe and the other dodging, then in reverse.

Gorden was facing the river, but his concentration was on Steve when Cola shouted his name "Gorden!"

He looked up to see that Bamber was half into the water and Cola, Plessey and the ferret perched on his back ready for the trip. Steve turned his head to look and Gorden decided to

take advantage of his distraction. Unfortunately they had all forgotten Bert who was down but not completely out for the count. Gorden lunged at Steve just as Bert lunged his last lunge at Gorden. Steve jumped clear of Gorden's amateur swing, and Bert's claws raked at Gorden and caught his tail. Gorden gave a high squeal of pain and rounded on Bert and reflexively struck down with the staff. The staff swung with a high whistle and seemed to land in slow motion on Bert's head, the iron-shod end glowed blue and it passed clear through Bert's skull and buried itself in the ground.

Gorden was knocked off balance by the pain in his rump, the shock of killing for the first time and the abruptness of the ground halting the staff's path.

Gorden rolled slowly to his feet and took three deep breaths before he realised that he wasn't being attacked by the other weasel. He turned to see Bamber half-way across the river and would have been able to breathe if it wasn't for the dart-shaped wave of water striking out from the bank.

Gorden took one huge breath and raised his staff before him and ran towards the river's edge. He reached the bank as Steve was just reaching the swimming stag. Gorden wasn't sure what to do, but the staff took over. Gorden raised the end of the staff high in the air then, as he reached the river's edge, he swung the end down to the ground. The end stuck hard in a tree-root and Gorden pole-vaulted high into the air - helped by a flash of magic from the staff. He was in mid-air when he realised that he still held the staff, although it felt light as a feather in his grasp.

Cola's mouth dropped in surprise and Gorden seemed to fly through the air and Bamber grunted as the rabbit landed on his back. Steve clawed once at the ferret from the river then ducked down as Gorden swung the staff at him!

Where had that rabbit come from?

Steve felt a blinding flash as the staff hit his head a glancing blow... He went under and then clawed his way back to the surface only to find the staff swinging down again to crash against his skull.

He didn't surface.

Gorden stared over the side of the swimming stag at the water, his staff held at the ready. Cola fussed over the ferret. Bamber's long legs were pumping: Three, four strokes further and they reached the other bank. Bamber clambered out and knelt down so that the party could climb off. Gorden and Cola carried the stretcher gingerly. The last attack by Steve had drawn more than blood, some of the ferret's insides were hanging from deep clawmarks in his belly. They laid the stretcher down and the ferret beckoned weakly.

Gorden knelt to him, more than one tear in his eye.

"thank you" The ferret managed to squeak.

Then he was silent; his rough breaths stopped and he was out of pain.

Gorden collapsed to his knees, his head in his front paws. Then he raised his head, he'd forgotten something.

"Ouch!" He finally said, reaching back to feel for his torn tail. Cola slipped her arms

around him and they held each other.

---*---

You can picture the camera panning back and spiralling gently around them, slowly taking in the scene. Twice around the two rabbits it spins then back a little so that you can see the emaciated and bloody ferret.

Back further to show a weary snail and a young stag with a four blood-red lines along his side.

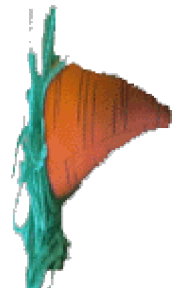
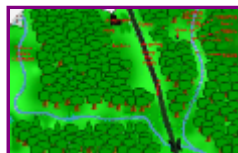
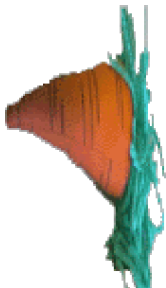
Further still to show, a few yards down stream, the washed-up and limp body of one dead weasel.

Further back and spiralling gently round and out, we can see the majesty of the river as it runs by, ignoring the death and carnage.

Further back still to show another weasel, his head caved through.

The camera swirls once more, barely pausing over a small darker-than-dark shape in the shadows of the forest, just slightly upstream of our friends, that was anything but a spring-clean for the May-Queen.

---*---



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Gorden's Teddy

---*---

Gorden was walking through the wood,
Cola following as fast as she could.

There's Plessey floating high and fast,
They've nearly made it home, at last.

"I'm tired" said gorden shaking his head,,
"I want to be home in my rabbity bed."

Then something made him stop and stare
What's that? A vicious grizzly bear!

Eating a human, what a surprise!
How could he stomach a boy that size?

"He was too small to griddle and fry," it began.
"And I knew he'd get lost in my giant saucepan."

Licking his lips wetter and wetter,
The bear said to himself "better and better"

Soon the whole wood could hear the bear drool
"Maybe my dinner won't be so small!"

"You're all too small to griddle and fry" he said
"But I could still eat you quite raw, instead."

The gigantic bear downed his tiddley human,
Then jumped towards Cola and Plessey and Gorden.

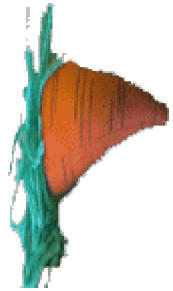
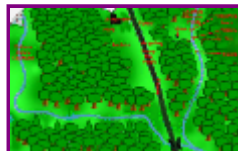
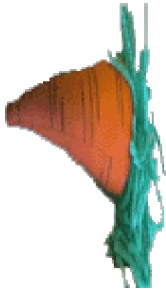
"Come Here!" Said the bear!
"Eat staff!" Said our hero
"My nose!" Cried the bear!
"Push off!" Shouted Cola

And he ran and he ran, through the dark wood
Back to his home as fast as he could

All the way back to his bear-sized fridge
Where he pulled out some ice cream
and ate that instead.

---*---

With fond regards to "Where's My Teddy" by Jez Alborough-



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Remember When You Were Young You Shone Like The Sun

---*---

"I remember..", Plessey began in his 'story' voice. Gorden butted in.
"I remember when I was a young buck." Cola's eyes widened, Gorden was usurping Plessey's story telling rights! Plessey smiled and let Gorden talk.

---*---

"You're doing it wrong!" A voice from below me piped up.
"Doing what wrong?" I said, indignantly looking down at a gerbil who'd just appeared from out of nowhere.
The gerbil ignored the question and started telling me what was wrong.
"You're hunched over, as if you're doing something you shouldn't. You keep looking from side to side as if you expect to be found out at any moment. Your every movement has 'guilty' written all over it."
"What makes you think I'm guilty of something?" I asked, hurt and annoyed that it was so obvious.
"You're bunking off school." The gerbil said smiling. "I can tell."
"Bu-bu-bu..." I began, but couldn't get any words out.
"It's okay," Said the gerbil. "So am I." I was shocked by his admission. He grinned a Cheshire grin and asked "Well, then, are you coming to the river to skim stones with me?"

---*---

I got into trouble that night. One of my friends had gone to my mother and asked whether I'd be back in school tomorrow. My ear hurt mightily from the pulling she gave it.
I went to school the next day. And the next.
Then that farmer caught Mum. I thought I'd never cry so much.
So there was no one to pull my ear. And they thought I'd have some time off school anyway.
I did go back, a couple of times after that. But not immediately.
Basically, every day I met up with David and we skimmed stones again. I remember that we tried to make a raft and failed.
No change there then.
Playing with David was always more fun than lessons. It seemed more like life than childhood.
He knew some of the weirder characters in the woods. There was this strange, one-winged raven we used to visit. We'd take him offerings of food and he'd tell us stories or chase us away. David would always run so fast when the raven did that half-fly-half-run of his. I'd never seen someone so scared of anything before.

"Why are you so scared of him?" I asked, "He's just a harmless old bird."
 "Why aren't you afraid of him?" David reposted.
 "I'm just not afraid." I said.
 "Ah?" I could see that David was confused by this, "Why not?"
 "So I don't stutter."
 "'Scuse me?" The bemused gerbil required clarification.
 "My mother told me.." I replied.
 "Your mother told you?"
 "Um," I nodded, then I stood straight and quoted my mother's words:
 "Fear leads to anger.
 "Anger leads to hate,
 "Hate leads to stuttering."
 "That's st-st-st-st-st-st-daft!" David rolled his eyes.
 I shrugged my shoulders and smiled one of my best Hero-smiles; all teeth and sincerity,
 "S'what mum said."
 "I'm consorting with a madman." The gerbil said quietly to himself, but I heard him. I think he used to do that sort of thing, speaking low to himself, just so as I could hear his thoughts without coming out loud and bearing his soul. He didn't really think I was mad, but he needed to tell me that he thought I was different to his other friends.
 "I don't have a mother," David said in a melancholy tone, then he amended, "Well, not anymore. I had one to start with. You know. I had to have. Everyone had a Mum, right?"
 I nodded. I felt a wisdom in him that I couldn't match, even if it was a cynical wisdom.

----*----

We found a slice of human bread. Horrid white, thick stuff. We decided to take it to the Raven. He'd think it was luxury. We carried it like a sheet we were about to fold.
 "He'll never notice the mould." David said. "Adds a little colour 'though. Doncha think?" I shifted my grip to keep my paws away from the green dots.

"Squark!" We heard as we reached the raven's nest.
 "We've brought you a present!" I shouted - I liked to give him notice of our arrival. David liked sneaking up on him, making it a game to see how close we could get before we were discovered. The closer we would get the more likely the raven was to fly off the handle and attack us rather than to talk and tell stories.
 So, as I was saying, I liked to give him notice of our arrival.
 "Squark! Is it my furry little friends again?"
 The raven leaned over the side of his nest and looked in our direction. He didn't have to raise himself up far - his nest was a rather higgledy-piggledy affair with walls that resembled mad crenellations on an insane castle - high then low then lower again then higher.
 "Squark!" He said as he focussed on the bread, then we could hear him clack his beak. I think that meant he was happy.
 We reached his nest and, edging round to a lower-than-low spot we heaved the bread in. Before we could climb in after it we could hear him starting to eat.
 "Umm! Tasty!" We heard. "Ah, look at the mould." My left paw was in mid-air as I lifter it over the low wall. The corners of my mouth turned down as I expected him get annoyed and I froze. David jumped underneath my leg and hopped into the nest. I expected to see him shoot out with the raven in pursuit. But no, the raven sounded happy.
 I peered in, the raven was picking at the mould spots and eating them first! David sat on a rough seat of twigs (it was a nest after all) as far from the raven as possible. I hopped over and joined him.
 "Tasty bits eh?" The raven said. "Not as tasty as gerbil eyeballs. But tasty-enough." He was

smiling and so was David. I thoroughly expected the comment on eyeballs to worry David. He was laughing!

Sometimes he was brave.

No, more like there were times when he wasn't frightened and I couldn't understand why. Pretty soon the bread looked like a flat cheese-grater and the Raven sat back, satiated.

"Want to know how I lost the wing?" He asked us head askew. We didn't respond but he assumed we did. I wasn't so sure, myself.

"I used to be an important bird you know. I was the eyes and ears of a blind human. He lived in a hut in the forest and was the only human I'd ever seen who was happy to live away from the herd.

"He lived with the forest, unlike most humans. He'd only set snares when we was hungry and never so many snare that he caught too much food. He had a small garden where he grew some vegetables. Every so often I'd catch a small rodent that was chewing on his cabbage and take it in to him. I'd wave it under his face and he'd smile. 'You have that one.' He'd say. I think he could smell the size of it.

"One winter everyone was scarce. The rodents were going around in pairs and would try to fight me off when I flew down. I started to get really hungry. The human did too and I could see him get visibly thinner. I wondered why the fool didn't just go back to his herd and live with them. I wondered why I didn't fly south for the winter with some of the other birds. They say there's good pickings in the middle of the human towns. They also have little boys with slings. And bigger boys with stones.

"My human was lying there one day. He didn't get up just groaned and rolled on the bed even though the sun was high over head. I looked down at him. And I realised he didn't need his eyeballs. Tasty things, eyeballs. He didn't need his eyeballs!

"I flew over to the head of his bed. He heard me and started chattering to me. I smiled and jerked my beak down at his face and pierced his righthand eyeball. Oh what a scream he made! I grabbed and yanked at the eyeball. It squished in my beak and I felt the juices dribble over his face. I swallowed and jabbed at the gooey substance and was having my first meal for over a week. Silly me. I forgot how big he was. He was flailing around and he grabbed at me as I pecked at him in my hunger. His hand slid from my body but he got a grip on my wing and swung me off. He kept a tight grip on my wing as he threw me from side to side. I managed to protect myself with my free wing, but he was far stronger than me and I felt a sharp hurt and I was suddenly flying through the air. If his door had have been shut I'd have hit it with enough force to kill me. As it was I flew outside and landed in the undergrowth. Pain kept my eyes and beak shut, but I attempted to fly away nonetheless.

"I could fly with my eyes shut, but I couldn't fly with only one wing. When I realised what had happened I screamed the loudest scream you would ever hear. Animals all over the forest panicked when they heard my scream. All except a hedgehog and a bat. The two stupid animals came and picked my up and bandaged me up and took me away from the human

"I was ill for weeks, but those two looked after me. The human died, so I was told. The foxes got to him first and he 'helped' them through the winter.

"When I was able to walk I hobbled to the hut and, with the help of the hedgehog, I set the place alight. I stood there and watched it burn down."

The raven noticed some mould he'd missed and attacked them with new vigor.

Unsettled by the story I nudged David. "Let's go." I whispered at him. David just stared at the bird as I stood up and backed out of the nest.

The bird looked up and fixed David with an evil stare. "Good mould, but eyeballs are much much better!"

At that David jerked to life and twisted and raced out of the nest. My nerve broke and I raced after him.

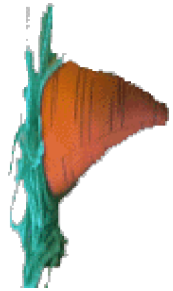
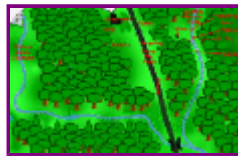
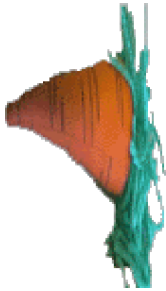
David just kept on repeating "Eyeballs. He wants my eyeballs."

That night, the raven's nest burnt down. I remember them talking about it - they said he'd panicked in the flames and knocked himself out. I think it was some hand of the gods, once he'd unburdened his soul, even just to scare a couple of kids like me and David, he'd sealed his fate.

---*---

Gorden laughed a little. Then tears came to his eyes. "Poor raven. Poor David."

---*---



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



I Can See Clearly Now

---*---

Plessey rushed up to Gorden with a smile on his face.

"Shall we visit the Swan-Seers again? They aren't far."

"Swan-Seers?" Cola asked, "Who are they?"

"Oh, we met them back in episode four or five." Gorden said, swinging his staff. "They prophesised *you* you know!"

"This way!" Plessey said zipping off towards the river side.

Gorden and Cola plunged through the reeds after him.

Gorden ran slap-bang into Plessey. The snail was stock-still outside of a cave of reeds.

The snail was shaking. "Something's wrong!" His voice quivered. "I'm..."

Gorden cracked his knuckles, gripped his staff tight and stepped in front of the snail. He didn't say "I'll go first." But you could feel it by looking at his back.

Gorden padded gently into the shadows, his footsteps squelching in the mud.

The cave was dark and there was no sign of movement. Gorden nearly trod upon the swans before he saw them.

Bile rose in his throat.

"I should be used to this by now." He said to himself as he looked at their bloody corpses.

"Aaaarrrrgghh!" He cried and swung his staff at the reeds over his head. He screamed and swung again, and again. He battered at the fibrous covering until he'd bashed a hole big enough to let some light in and the ripening air out.

The light didn't make the sight any easier to bear. The swans had a rather bohemianly plucked style when alive. Now their featherless, emaciated bodies were only just recognisable as birds. Their necks had been broken a number of times and virtually tied around each other. Small stab (or claw) wounds covered their bodies.

Plessey floated up beside Gorden.

"They knew this was going to happen." He said, "There's no sign of wasted food and, besides the bodies, the place is clean and tidy."

Gorden rubbed his hand over his face.

"Should we bury them, do you think?" He asked.

"No." Plessey said with feeling. "I'll deal with this. I can't bear to think of their bodies decaying underground." He shrugged his shell. "Stand Back!" He exclaimed.

"Shouldn't we look for clues?" Gorden began to say. He got as far as the "Sh.." when a fierce bright spot appeared between Plessey's eye-stalks. Gorden stood transfixed as the spot grew larger. It didn't look like it was getting bigger, per se, rather that it was coming towards Gorden from a great distance. The bright spot became a small flame then erupted as a brilliant ball of fire which sprung from Plessey and engulfed the dead swans. The conflagration touched the swan's bodies and the swan's bodies only. The light was blinding but Gorden didn't feel any heat.

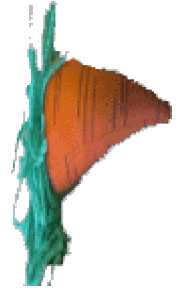
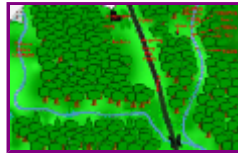
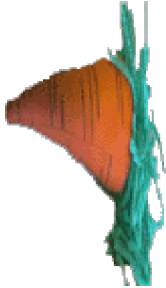
In a matter of moments the dead bodies were consumed and the flames flickered and disappeared.

"I won't look for clues then." Gorden said, matter-of-factly.

"Are you feeling as nervous as I am about getting home?" Plessey asked. Gorden nodded, grimacing.

"Let's get Cola and make tracks."

---*---



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot



Season  Part 

Requiem

"I remember long ago, when the sun was shining.
"And the stars were bright, all through the night..."

"I first met the swans, well let's just say I'd just got out of school.
I'd taken a summer job, not a proper one, not a career. This was before I was apprenticed to Parbold, so I had none of the wizardly skills I have today.
I was running errands for a businessman, basically acting as his go between to the parts of society that a businessman can't be seen to be in contact with. But where the money was. Like with drugs, there are ways of multiplying your money tenfold, but the man on the street doesn't have the capital nor the guts for *that* kind of business deal.
If I could recall all the names and faces I'd passed clandestine messages and parcels to I'd be either the richest man alive or the most hunted.
Anyway, as I was saying, my boss, I'll call him Dick, for anonymity's sake, was worried about his future.
"Marvin," He said to me, and I swore that one day I'd be important enough for him to remember my name, "Melvin, Have you ever worried about the future?"
"Well, boss," I said, "Not really. I haven't had enough *past* yet, so I've no care about the rest of my life."
"Well, that's where we differ, Billy my lad, and I envy you." He slapped me on the back, "I've got enough past to fill a score of coffins and then some." He chuckled at himself, "And I've decided to do something about it!"
"I wasn't there, Boss!" I said in a panic. "I don't even know *who* I'm talking to!"
"Don't worry, Gilbert me laddie," I don't mean like that! No, I think it's about time I got myself my own private fortune teller!"
I was a little sceptical.
"I'm a little sceptical, Boss." I said.
"Ach!" He spat, "That's exactly why I decided this was your task. I need someone who will look sideways at these upside-down talkers!"
"And you're my man, Smith!"
"You know me, sir." I weaselled, "I will do anything you ask of me." I paused, "Well, except *that*."
"Luckily for you, Albert, you're not my type.
"But I've drawn up a list of people whom I'd like you to meet on my behalf, to talk about these see-ers, on my behalf, to maybe organise 'lunch'.
"On my behalf."
"Well, as long as it's for you, boss." I said.
"Unfortunately I can't trust you with the list, so you're going to have to make it up as you go along."
"I've learnt from the master, boss."
"Just don't let me catch you with him."
So there I was, thrown out into the world with a simple mission: Find the best fortune teller

in the business.

I started off with the fairground sideshows.

'Mr Miracle The Amazing' Was truly unamazing.

'Miss Ticmeg' Was full of tic but was a real miss.

'Gypsy Rosie Lee' Made a good cuppa but couldn't tell me what the leaves said. (To me they said, quite clearly: "The tea bag's burst.")

I left the fairgrounds behind and made my way around the head-shops, keeping one ear open to see what hippies had the Gift.

I met a girl who sing the blues. I asked her for tomorrow's news. She just smiled and turned away.

I wooed the Fire-Witch and travelled with her to the Crimson King's court. I passed through his followers like a bad case of diahorrea and found nothing but whispers and echoes and the true meaning of Soft and Strong (and Very Very Long).

I rode a wild tarkus on a quest to see the Evil Karn. He told me tales of pirates and manticores but nothing of the future.

I was disgraced, a failure. Luckily at this juncture I met a seasoned witch who called me up from the depths. She taught me my first magic and we became one under the sun.

I realised I'd been searching for two years and hadn't heard from my patron. I checked; my credit card bill was still being paid. So he was still expecting me to return with his future.

Rejuvenated I started out again with hope in my heart.

I was hit by a bus.

"Sorry," The driver said, "I was aiming for that IT project head who'd just crossed the road, dammit!"

I was recuperating in hospital when I heard whispers about the swans.

There were two swans. "They" said. Two swans who knew everything. Two swans, sisters from birth, who could see into your soul and determine what you needed.

Great, I thought, one for the boss and one for me.

I followed the whispers and found these woods.

The Head Buck was a Young Buck in those days and it was he who met me at the edge of the forest and took me to see them.

It was if he'd been expecting me.

"I've been expecting you." He said.

He stood outside the reed cavern and ushered me in.

"Hello, brother."

"Brother." They said. "We are glad."

"Are glad to finally meet."

"Meet you. We."

"We must tell."

"tell you what you need."

"need. You must find a different patron."

"Patron. He is at the."

"Bottom."

"Bottom."

And that was it. The last word they spoke to me for a year.

I eventually apprenticed myself to a carp called Parbold. He lived at the bottom of a marina in a sunken barge.

It was a difficult apprenticeship. I can't swim and he can't breath air.

But he was proud of my progress and one year after meeting him he sent me to see the swans.

"You must absolve yourself of your other mission. They will help." He gurgled.

I went to see the swans, taking a pad and paper as my master had suggested.

"Twenty-one"

"Thirty-two"
"Thirty-five"
"Ten"
"Thirty-four"
"Six"
"Forty-two"

It took me five days to track down my former boss. He was a shadow of his former self.

"I'm a shadow of my former self." He said, once he'd recognised me. "My fortunes have turned.

"Well, Bigby, what have you got for me?"

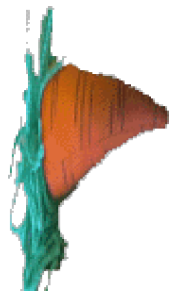
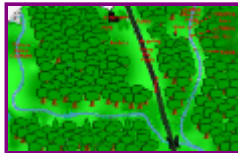
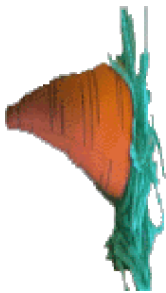
I reeled off the list of numbers.

"And, so?" Said Dick, "What do yesterday's lottery numbers have to do with anything?"

I was stunned.

"I've a good mind to cut your card off." He said.

---*---



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For
The Golden Carrot



Season



Part



Dead Foxy.

Like

The weight of a billion burrows pushed on Gorden's shoulders as he trudged through the forest. They were finally in sight of the warren - they'd even passed a couple of rabbits working between the trees.

The events of the past couple of weeks kept flashing in front of Gorden's eyes. He could see so many deaths and so much pain.

He was steeling himself, preparing to meet the Head Buck. There would be some sort of accounting. He'd found another warren and then collapsed it! He'd met monks and hawks and bats and ferrets.

He huffed to himself - At least the Monks had survived. A shiver ran down his spine as a dark thought bubbled up from his hind-brain - Maybe the monks hadn't survived. Maybe just his passing through was enough to bring pain.

"Gorden!" Cola slapped him on the back. "Look up!" He'd been staring at his feet in despondency. "Look! I can see the South Warren Entrance!"

"There's blood on the floor." Plessey said in a low voice. Gorden blinked.

Gorden realised that he'd been staring at patches of red on the floor for the past minute, but had been so locked up inside himself he'd not realised what he was looking at.

"Hellfire." Gorden said quietly, closing his eyes. "How many more?" He whispered to himself.

Cola knelt down and inspected the patches of someone's lifeblood. Her hand reached out and tentatively touched the nearest patch of blood - the careful nature of her touch made her gesture look like she was stroking the blooded earth with the hint of a motherly "There, There".

"It's wet," She said, turning her paw over and looking at her wet finger pads. She wiped her paw clean on the nearest patch of grass and stood up purposefully.

"It trails off to the left and to the right.."

Gorden stretched his neck. "You and Plessey follow the left trail, "Cola was about to disagree but he cut her off, "I'll take the right. If you find anything, scream and I'll come running."

"And," Cola said, "If you find anything, you call and we'll come running."

Gorden grunted an affirmation and padded off.

---*---

"Come on doe." Plessey said floating off along the trail of blood drops, "Quicker we go, quicker we get back." Cola nodded and followed the floating snail along the blood trail.

The trail led into the forest and it became more obvious that they weren't just following a trail of blood. There were crushed bushes and snapped twigs in abundance to satisfy the most trail blind boy-scout. Something, well, someone, had staggered through the woods, bleeding. Cola was glad she wasn't alone when she realised that it would need a larger animal than a rabbit to make this trail.

They came out into a clearing and Plessey stopped.

"Something happened here.." He said floating towards the centre. "Look," he pointed, "Rope."

"I'm not a tracking animal." Cola complained, "I can't read the scuffle-marks or smell what animals slept her last night or just passed through."

"Neither am I," Plessey said. "But we can make some guesses."

Cola picked up one length of blood-stained rope that lay on the floor. And held it up, shrugging.

"Look at the rope." Plessey said encouragingly. "Look at the ends. Look at that knot in the middle."

Cola's paws threaded the rope through and she stared at the knot, about a third of the way along the length. Then she grabbed both ends and frowned at them, imploring them to tell her their story.

"The ends are not cleanly cut.." She said hesitantly. "Broken?" She suggested.

"Snapped, maybe." Plessey said.

"Was an animal tied up, then the animal broke herself out of the ropes?"

"Or himself.." Plessey said quietly, nodding. Then "Strong animal, to break a rope like that."

Suddenly Cola realised, "If this is where the attack took place, then Gorden is going in the direction of the animal." She turned and started off back the way they came then broke into a sprint.

"Animals?" Plessey said. Then he realised he was talking to himself and zipped after the retreating rabbit tail.

--- * ---

Gorden used his staff to push a broken tree branch out of his way. Whoever had come this way had been staggering forcefully from one side to another.

As he followed the trail deeper and deeper into the woods he noticed that the blood spots were getting closer and closer together and larger and larger. There was a good chance that the animal was doing themselves harm by attempting to travel whilst this hurt.

He realised that he was the one travelling in the same direction as the injured animal and felt a feeling of satisfaction that Cola was, therefore, ostensibly safe.

The trail led into a thicket. A rough tunnel through the brambles had been broken by the bleeding creature. It was more than large enough for Gorden to use.

"Means it's not a rabbit." He said to himself. He took a deep breath and pushed on, into the darkness of the tunnel. It didn't seem as inviting as the Swan's reed-cavern had ever appeared.

Even though the path had been broken by a larger - and more powerful, Gorden thought -, animal than himself, there were still thorns enough to make Gorden's travel slow and deliberate. As he reached the end of the thicket, he snagged his arm on a thistle and didn't notice quickly enough. He was spun round by the restraint and actually backed out into the light at the end of the tunnel.

He pulled the thistle off and tutted to himself.

He was startled by a ragged cough behind him and he turned. He turned to realise that he was perched at the top of a hollow, right on the edge. He lost his balance and stood on one foot, twirling his arms for, what seemed like an infinity before gravity reeled him in and he rolled down to the base of the hollow.

He stopped rolling when he bumped into a prone animal.

The creature made a noise which might have been a sarcastic "thank you" or might have been ruder. It was difficult to tell but scared the life out of Gorden who jumped up to his feet.

At the bottom of this hollow, bloody and limp was Sly, the fox.

The fox strained his head round to look at Gorden. It wasn't a good look - one of his eyes had been taken out and a slash on his forehead was dripping blood into the good eye. Not a pretty sight.

The fox crawled half a step towards him then stopped.

"You've come," beat "to finish," beat "me off, eh?" He managed, "Well," beat, "You're too," beat beat, "Late. The little" beat beat "bugger did," beat beat beat, "a good," beat beat beat beat, "job."

He made one last low moan, and was silent.

Gorden began to shake from the shoulders down. Sobs came, fitfully at first, then he was crying.

---*---

Cola and Plessey found him there. Standing next to the bloody, dead fox. Crying the same way he had for David. The same was he had all those years ago for his mother.

--- * ---

They helped Gorden up and out of the hollow and out of the thicket. Cola hugged him tightly and they walked arm-in-arm along the path towards the warren.

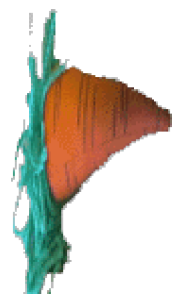
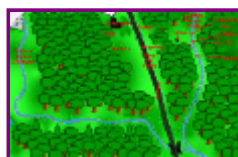
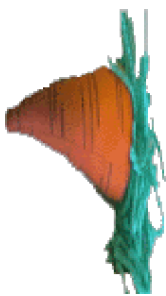
A young doe bounced towards them.

"Is that Gorden The Nobel Hero Of Our Warren?" What a strange way of talking she had, Gorden thought. He nodded at her. "Don't you recognise me, it's Mable!"

The reporter, Gorden realised.

"I. Want. To go. To. Bed."

---*---



Insults and Critique to : gorden@nobby.co.uk



Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



THE DAILY LEAF

The first with the forest news!

Gorden's Alive!

Golden Carrot Found!

By Mabel Leaf.



Our intrepid reporter was first on the scene when Gorden The Rabbit returned from his fabulous Quest For The Golden Carrot. When asked how he was Gorden was strangely quiet and actually made a request to this reporter

When asked how he had managed to be so quick on the scene of the murder he just shook his head. Cola, the schoolteacher who left her post continuing absence of Mystic to aid Gorden on the Quest Nora and her daily then spoke to our reporter. Horoscopes. In an endeavour to fill her shoes we have some "We have all had a long few predictions from our newest weeks journeying. We have mental power Phump! seen many marvellous things and many things we'd rather not repeat. "Many animals have suffered for this quest. Don't let yourself be the next one." Our reporter then managed to get a few words with the illustrious Plessey a wizard of great renown and import.

"I am pleased to say that, yes, we have located the Golden Carrot. I myself was deeply involved in the discovery and retrieval of this most famous of objects of Rabbit Lore. You will not believe the majesty of the spells I cast to enable us to track the artefact and to break

Mystic Nora

We must still apologise for the continuing absence of Mystic to aid Gorden on the Quest Nora and her daily then spoke to our reporter. Horoscopes. In an endeavour to fill her shoes we have some

"We have all had a long few predictions from our newest weeks journeying. We have mental power Phump!

Fifth Anniversary of the Great Quaver Famine.

Five years ago to this day we can say that the Great Quaver Famine started. An entire crop of the favourite snack of many a coney was wiped out with

that she would have great difficulty in achieving without double-jointed limbs! After a little coaxing Gorden felt able to relay some details of his quest. Yes, he does have the Carrot, but he wasn't interested in showing it to anyone. He was quoted as saying

down the defences that protected it at the Chiltern Coney Commune.

"We also met an ancient dog-god. We met the failed ferret and some maniacal weasels. We've seen Holy Monks and scheming Hawks.

disastrous consequences. We spoke to many of the people who were there for this in-depth retrospective.

"If it had happened five years earlier," A survivor was heard to say, "Then this would be the tenth anniversary."

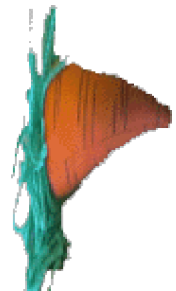
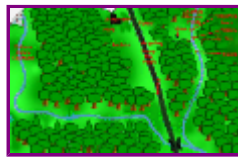
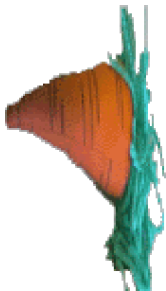
"It's going to the Head Buck first. After that..." And he laughed at our reporter. Gorden returned with blood on his hands - when questioned he admitted that Sly, the Fox, was now dead, and No he didn't know who had done it.

"It's been some trip, that I can tell you!" We begged the returning heroes for a peek at the Carrot but were rebuffed.



(*) Send out war-rocket Ajax to bring back his body

A Carrot, Yesterday



Insults and Critique to : gorden@nobby.co.uk



Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



There's No Place Like Home,

There's No Place Like Home

---*---

Nothing but a rabbit,
With a rabbit's courage.
(He's) Nothing but a rabbit,
Who can never fail.
No one but the pure of heart can find the Golden Carrot.
(Oooh yeah)

From the canticle of Flash, attributed to "Queen"

--*--

Gorden burst into the head bucks office.
With a snarl quite unlike a rabbit he threw the broken carrot at the table.
"Bertram!" He shouted banging his fist on the table, "The hedgehog!" Bang! "David."
Bang! "A ferret." Bang! "Two weasels." Bang! "The swans!" Bang! "Sly!"
Gorden threw both paws at the desk and stared the Head Buck in the eyes.
"Why?" He spat the question, then "When does it stop?"
"Nora." The Head Buck said quietly.
"What?" Gorden said. Then he looked up and saw the other occupant of the room. It was
Larry the monk! He was holding a satchel. Gorden recognised it as Nora's. His eyes
widened.
"Larry just arrived. He was telling me how they found her body a short way from their
monastery. They buried her but decided to return her belongings here." He took a deep
breath. "They were worried that you had befallen the same fate."
Gorden looked at the floor and shook his head. "How many more? When does it stop?" He
looked up again, this time at Larry. "Were there any clues? Do you know who, what did
this?"
The mole shook his head. "Her body was devastated. Slashed badly. If we had not met her
before-hand we wouldn't have recognised her species."
"But she'd travelled with *us* for the first few hours."
Larry nodded, "Yes, she must have been attacked shortly after leaving you."
"Gorden," The Head Buck said gently, "Did you say you'd lost David?" Gorden nodded.
The Head Buck looked down. "I'm very sorry, Gorden," he said with feeling, "I feel for
your pain."
"It's cost a lot of lives, this broken carrot." Gorden said, a tear in his eye - Talking about
David had brought it all back. "It all started then. When the hedgehog laid the geas on me."

Gorden collapsed in one of the chairs.

"Why me?" He asked.

The monk gave a snort of a laugh.

"Why you? Why you? Why have *you* been left alive when all around you die?"

"No, I didn't mean it like that."

"We are taught, in our Order, that the universe is mean and capricious, but, thankfully, not personal. The things that happen to us, or not as the case may be, are not our fault. There are no malicious entities rolling dice on our lives. Just 'Us' and the 'Universe'."

The Head Buck picked up the pieces of the carrot.

"Doesn't look much good now?" Gorden said, "But it was necessary to break it. It was Evil, not Good."

The monk shook his head, "Things are not evil nor good, just the use they are put to."

"I don't see how this could have been used for good purposes." Gorden said.

"Tell us about it, Gorden. I'd like to hear it from you rather than what that reporter got out of you."

---*---

An hour or so later the Head Buck pulled a bottle and three short glasses out of his bottom drawer. The monk shook his head and so he poured a shot for himself and another shot for Gorden.

"There's just one last thing." He said. "I'm afraid I've had to let your room out. I thought you may be able to find somewhere else to stay."

"You haven't let Cola's rooms out too have you?"

"No," The Head Buck said smiling, "I'm devious, not cruel. Go and find Cola and have dinner. You'll have a lot of organising to do."

"I need to start off back home," Larry said. "It's a few day's journey and I'd rather start sooner than later." He shook hands with the Head Buck and left with Gorden.

"It's good to see you again," Gorden said, "Your monastery was one of the high spots of the trip."

"Thank you." He said smiling. "Let's find Cola so I can say Hello-Goodbye."

---*---

Cola shook her head at the mess in her burrow. Gorden had a lot of things. None of them seemed to have any use, but there were a lot of them. It had taken them most of the evening to move his things in and she was exhausted.

"Gorden," She called, "I'm shattered and I need to go to bed."

Gorden popped out from behind a pile of boxes.

"I was just looking for my playstation." He said. Cola tutted.

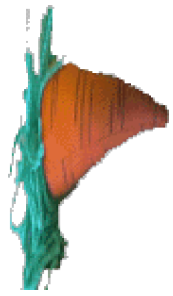
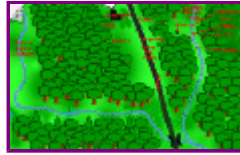
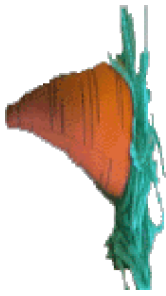
"Bed, Gorden." Gorden's face broke out in a huge grin. Cola slumped her shoulders. She stepped over to Gorden and put her paws on his shoulders. "No, Gorden," She put her school teacher tone of voice to use, "Not tonight. We need rest."

She padded over to her bed and Gorden followed.

"Just hug me." She said, "Help me sleep and forget all the bad things." Gorden's arms enfolded her and they slid down to the bed.

And slept.

---*---



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season 🥕🥕 Part 🥕🥕🥕



Just Like That

(Head. Buck. Buck. Head. Head-Head. Buck-Buck.)

Gorden and Cola were dragged from the deepest sleep they'd had for weeks by a banging on the door.

Pulling a dressing jacket on, (one of his five different ones - this one had a cartoon human woman with long red hair embroidered on the chest pocket) Gorden stepped carefully over his things towards the door.

"All right, all right." He muttered as he reached the door.

He pulled the door open and Phump nearly fell into the room.

"Head!" He said, "Buck!" His eyes were wide, "Head Buck!" He panted, "Buck! Head!" Phump obviously decide that this was as much as he could manage, and Gorden **must** have got the message by now, so he turned to go.

"What does he want now?" Gorden said to himself. Phump heard him and turned back, eyes wide and staring.

"He doesn't **want** anything. He's dead!" He hissed at Gorden. "Come on!"

---*---

Outside the Head Bucks office, Lotte, his secretary, sat crying. She nodded Gorden to the door.

"S'open." She said between sobs.

Gorden took a deep breath, clenched his paws into fists and stepped into the office.

---*---

He came out, whiter than he'd entered, understanding Phump's incoherence earlier.

He tapped a paw onto Lotte's shoulder.

"Go home for the day, doe. Have a stiff drink. Doctor's orders." Then to himself, "Hell, I need one."

Gorden looked at Phump. The message-rabbit was rocking back and forth on the pads of his back paws, itching to do something, anything.

"Who did he nominate to succeed him?" Gorden asked. Phump shook his head.

"No one." He brightened up, realising he had a decent task coming up which would get him busy. "We'll have to gather the Elders!"

"Elders. Reporters." Gorden slumped into Lotte's vacant chair and then looked up at his friend. "I've seen far too much death these past few weeks, Phump. I've seen more than one good friend or colleague dead in front of me.

"Acquaintances have died. Prophets have died. Bats and foxes and ferrets and swans.

"I'm sick of all this." He sighed and closed his eyes. "Phump," he said without raising his head, "Notify the Elders. Wake those doddering fools up and we'll listen to them mumble to themselves for a week.

"I'm going to find who did this.

"And stop it happening again."

"The Elders!" Phump trumpeted and raced off.

---*---

Master Phearson arrived first, he was one of the youngest of the Elders and was probably the only one awake when Phump went round, or so Gorden thought.

"They'll have to be an inquest, Gorden me lad." He said after he'd viewed the body. "We can't.." He began to say something then stopped, two more of the Elders had arrived with Phump and, behind all of them, trying to ask questions and jumping up so as to see over the Elders, Gorden could see Mable Leaf - the reporter he'd nearly bedded before the quest. She still owed him a favour or two and he started to think of cashing them in.

"Master Cadam, Master Tavish," She was shouting at the two recently arrived Elders, "Can I have your comment please? Is it true that the head buck died without a fight?" Then she said something that chilled Gorden to the bone. "Is it true that Gorden is the prime suspect?" Her tone changed, "Everyone knows he coveted the title..."

Gorden was dumbstruck. His jaw popped open and then closed. His mouth opened then closed again.

"MISS LEAF!" Master Cadam turned on the bouncing doe, commanding, "Go away! We will talk to you in due course." He stood as straight as his ageing back would let him and held his fists to his waist.

"This is censorship of the press!" Mable started, "The people have a right to know!"

"Yes, Miss Leaf," Master Cadam said in a totally reasonable voice, "They have a right to know the truth. I trust you wouldn't dare print unsubstantiated claims? We *will* talk to you." His brow furrowed and he stared a Paddington stare. "But we will at least view the

body and the scene first." He prodded her with his index finger as he said this. "Now, go away, scedaddle! We'll send for you when we have something for you to print."

Throughout the whole of this Gorden's mouth worked up and down; once Cadam had finished his tirade at the reporter he turned to Gorden. The first words that popped out of Gorden's mouth were "Nice castle."

"Gorden," Cadam said, "It was very good of you to send for us immediately, however it would have been best if this messenger-rabbit had come for us before asking you to visit. You do realise that you are the prime candidate if anything suspicious has happened to the Head Buck?"

Gorden's brain finally connected to his mouth for long enough to him to speak a coherent sentence. "Suspicious? He's dead for Bugs Sake! His head has been chopped from his body and, and, and.."

"It was nothing resembling natural causes," Phearson added, "Unless having a metal carrot rammed so far through the throat so as to decapitate the skull is a natural occurrence that I was hitherto unaware of."

"Can I quote you on that?" Came a voice from the back. Tavish, aware that he hadn't joined in the conversation yet rounded on the young lady, "Miss Leaf you were told to scedaddle, if that was not clear to you before I suggest that you go and find a dictionary and look the word up. NOW!"

A mumbling noise came from the young doe as she backed off. Gorden laid odds that she'd just stop as soon as she got to the first corner and wait there.

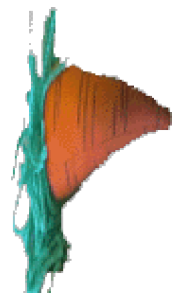
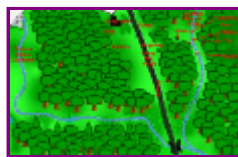
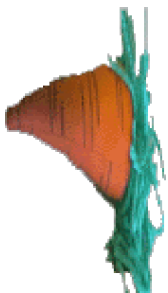
He was a suspect! A shiver passed down his body from the back of his neck to this fluffy tail and back up to his ears.

Cadam patted Gorden on the shoulder.

"Look, young buck," he started, "I suggest you get back to your hole and let us take it from here. You're a suspect; any pretender to the Head Buck's position would be a suspect at a time like this and I think it's best if you leave the investigation to us.

---*---

And before you ask. "Scedaddle" isn't in my dictionary either.



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Gorden The Rabbit And The Quest For The Golden Carrot

Season  Part 



Some People Call Me The Space Cowboy

Some Call Me The Gangsta Of Love

"Its strange." Cola said to Gorden as she wrapped her arm around his waist. "I've never met someone who didn't believe me when I told them that I slept at home last night."

"I've never had anyone spend three hours questioning me about a murder before." Gorden whispered, hoping that it would all go away. "How many times do I have to tell them what I did last night?"

Gorden and Cola were walking around the outside of the warren - the shortest route from the inquiry office to Cola's burrow.

"At least it looks like a clear night." Cola said looking up at the sky. The last few wisps of cloud were disappearing in the gentle wind and the blue of the sky was beginning to darken into twilight.

"I never knew talking could wear you out so much." Gorden said.

"I hope you're not **too** tired." Cola said enticingly, "I wasn't thinking of going to sleep straight away." Gorden smiled a happy, contented smile. He may be the prime suspect in the gruesome murder of the head buck, but Cola was beside him and... Well lets just say he wasn't feeling that tired either.

They nodded to Phump, who was taking up guard duty at the east warren entrance and then padded silently along the winding burridor to Cola's hole.

"Glass of wine?" Cola said as they closed the door firmly behind them.

---*---

We won't intrude on them for a while, we can let them have their moment of happiness. Tell you what, we'll sit outside and watch night fall for the next hour or so. It's a beautiful sight, a deep burgundy sunset and then a clear sky with a million stars to point at and name the constellations.

The rabbit don't see the same constellations that we do. Our constellations are named after the creatures and deities and demigods from hundreds of generations of man.

So we see Orion the Hunter and the rabbits see "The Rabbit With No Name", we see the Great Bear, Big Dipper and Little Dipper and they see "The Farmer With His Shotgun"

Oh, that's long enough. We'll rejoin the lovers as Gorden is just snoring his first snore but Cola is still wide awake and fair glowing to herself.

---*---

She stared at the ceiling for a long time, examining the cracks and shape of it and exulting in the complex shapes in the plasterwork.

She took a deep breath and then wriggled out from underneath Gorden's arm and slid off the bed.

She put Gorden's arm carefully on the bed. He wriggled a little and pulled Cola's pillow to himself and cuddled it in his sleep. She smiled at the sight. She felt so good that, after tonight, everything will make her smile.

She lovingly tucked the duvet in so that Gorden would not fall out in her absence and she tiptoed towards the door. She looked back at Gorden and slowly and quietly turned the handle and slipped out of the door.

She left the door ajar - Why make it tricky for her return? She thought to herself as she padded off towards the burrow entrance.

Unseen, a small, dark, shape split from the corridor behind her and passed silently through the open door into her rooms, behind it trailed a rope, or maybe a tail, it's difficult to tell in this light.

Cola padded quietly off.

"Hullo, Miss." Phump said, metaphorically tugging his forelock, as she reached the entrance.

"Hello, " She said in return, "I'm just off to the Drops, won't be a minute." He nodded as she disappeared into the night.

---*---

Gorden rolled over and squeaked; in his dreams a thousand snakes are wrapping themselves around his wrists and ankles.

---*---

Cola padded back to the entrance.

"Beautiful night." She said to Phump.

"Oooh, lovely, ma'am." He replied, "I really like it when it's this clear. I sit and just count the stars or see how many of the constellations I can name."

Cola sat down beside him. Gorden could wait a while. She wished that he'd been awake and could have come outside with her to see it, It was such a clear sky.

Phump pointed at the sky and, like us, began naming constellations.

---*---

Gorden was just dreaming about eating an apple, taking big, big bites from a hard-skinned Granny Smith.

A slap to the face pulled him from his slumbers.

He was groggy and couldn't seem to shake his dream off, eating apples whilst being entwined in snakes. The dreams seemed so real.

Another slap to the face.

"You are so **fucking** special," A voice said. Were the snakes talking to him?

SLAP!

"Look at me when I talk to you!"

A thousand thoughts raced through his mind. The rank outsider of these memes chased to the fore and the voice's owner came to him in a photo finish with the thought that whatever it was in his mouth, it wasn't really apple flavoured.

---*---

"And there's the Carrot Crop" Phump was still naming constellations, "And there's the Cheeky Gerbil."

"Poor David," Cola sighed, thinking of Gorden's best friend. His loss had shocked Gorden and he hadn't really recovered from it.

"Poor David?" Phump said, "Why 'poor'?" Cola was about to explain **why** when Phump said one small sentence that chilled her to the bone. "He didn't look 'poor' today, a bit thinner than when you left on the quest, but basically fine."

Cola choked on her tongue. "We lost David over a week ago. He's dead."

"Nahh," Phump said, "Nahh, he looked pretty fine for a dead gerbil to me, and that wasn't half an hour ago."

---*---

"You're so fucking special." David said to Gorden, the words dripping so much malice you'd need more than a tissue to mop it up.

"David, but you're dead!" Gorden would have said, if he could. However the stone that was lodged in his mouth meant that it came out as "Dadid dud door ded!" Gorden tried to push

the stone out, but a belt appeared to be wrapped around his head and the stone.

Gorden realised that they were probably not snakes bound around his wrists and ankles, although he hadn't yet counted this out as a possibility. The world suddenly seemed a lot more complicated than it had only an hour ago.

"You're so fucking special, Gorden." David said. The gerbil was squatting on his chest and Gorden couldn't really see what he was up to.

"All I am is the little creepy friend of the Great Gorden.

"Oh, they all think you're special, don't they? Well, Bertram didn't think you were special, but he didn't think much of me either. You should have heard him begging to live when I wrapped that whip around his neck. But he had to die, You see that don't you? He had to. He took our livelihoods away.

"And that Hedgehog. He'd have claimed his staff back. If I hadn't sorted him out." His voice changed, and his eyes unfocussed as he looked at a viewpoint a million miles away. "He made such a stupid, squeal as he died. I had to laugh. I did."

Things didn't seem clear to Gorden, had David killed Bertram or the Hedgehog because they had hurt Gorden or because they had hurt David?

"I though I was special, you see. I though we were a team. I thought we were special. But it became clear to me - you thought *you* were the special one. And so did they. The swans told you that you were special. Nora even agreed.

"I think the Head Buck was the final straw. We'd taken this long trek, we'd endured hardships and kidnapping and brainwashing and you returned with only a broken carrot.

"And he still THOUGHT YOU WERE SPECIAL!"

David twitched all over and covered his eyes with his hands. His head shaking. Gorden could hear his breathing was ragged and raw.

"I'm just the creep, the weirdo. Gorden's little friend. The one people 'put up with'.

"I want to have control, Gorden. I want a perfect body, like yours. I want a perfect soul, like yours. I will.." He stopped. His breaths came in small packets now, like tuppences of breath where most people breathed pounds. Gorden's eyes were wide, he'd never realised that his friend felt like this. Never.

---*---

"David's alive?" Cola said, wide-eyed and amazed.

"Either that or he had a twin brother called David."

"He's an only-child." Cola said reflexively. This seemed a strange thing to say about a gerbil. Didn't they normally have large families? But David had said that he didn't have any family.

Not alive family, anyway. He'd always qualified it.

"When did you see him?" Two and Two were adding themselves up in the back of her mind and she didn't like the number they were coming up with.

"Well, it was about half an hour ago. We swapped pleasantries then he went into the warren. He was carrying a reel of rope. He said it was for Gorden."

Cola stood up with a start. 'Four' was the least of it.

"Get help, now!" She said to Phump and rushed back into the warren.

---*---

"It was tricky getting this carrot back, you know." David said, holding the broken golden carrot up so that Gorden could see it. "But the guard was easily fooled." His voice had seemed so calm for a minute then it screeched.

"DIDN'T YOU TELL ANYONE I WAS LOST?"

Gorden's eye's watered. He hadn't. It hurt so much to talk about it he'd not even told Mable when she interviewed him. Only the Head Buck knew.

Gorden wanted to say so much to David. He'd run over and over again what he'd say to his friend when he returned, dripping wet of course, from his watery grave. Even if he hadn't have had the stone in his mouth Gorden didn't think he had the words anymore.

"No," David said quietly, in control again, "You didn't tell anyone. Your little friend wasn't worth talking about."

Gorden wanted to cry out that, of course, David was not dead, but the words couldn't get past the obstruction in his mouth. He just made more "dadadidid" noises.

"Is Gorden lost for words?" David asked. "Does Gorden want to apologise to his friend? Does Gorden want to say 'I'm sorry' to his sidekick?" Suddenly David's nose was an eighth of an inch from Gorden's "WELL I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT!" He screamed.

Gorden started hoping that someone would hear the raised voices and come and investigate. Then he realised that no one had come to investigate the noises of his and Cola's passion earlier so what chance did he stand now?

Gorden suddenly panicked. Where was Cola? Had David 'made her pay' already? David could see emotions running through Gorden's face but couldn't interpret them.

"Scared now?" He whispered, "Worried that I might torture you all night?" He patted Gorden on the head. "Don't worry. I'll be nice and quick, just for you. My friend."

Gorden felt a cold, sharp point rest on his lower chin.

The carrot, golden and broken, of this Gorden was sure, pricked his skin. He gulped and tried to speak. Tried to stop David from this act. Tried to save himself.

Some antisocial coney in the neighbouring burrow decided that he'd heard enough for the night and turned his stereo up. That young couple! At it again!

Music began to permeate through the walls. David began to sing along. Gorden took a while to recognise it, then he realised it was the play-out to Hey Jude.

"Na na na. Na-na-na-na." David hummed as he readied himself.

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Cola came skidding to a halt outside her door. Her next door neighbour was playing Beatles rather louder than she'd have wanted. She grabbed at the handle and it turned. It didn't open. The door was wedged shut.

A noise came from inside her burrow and, next door, Hey Jude went up in volume to counteract the scream.

Cola shoulder-barged the door. It wobbled, but whatever it was that was holding it - held.

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"Is that the cavalry?" David said pleasantly, "Pity really we're having so much fun." He leaned back and aimed a kick towards the carrot that had already pricked Gorden's lower mouth.

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Cola barged the door, it held. A strangely muffled scream came from inside.

She stepped back again and raced one last time at the door. Her shoulder hit the door. The wood splintered and the door pulled off its hinges and she fell into the room, tripping over the detritus and landing flat on her face.

She looked up and took the scene in.

Gorden was tied spread-eagled on the bed, some sort of gag was stopping him speaking. David was sat on top of Gorden his leg raised backwards as if to kick a football. David looked at her and smiled, blinking as if to catch her attention.

The gerbil's foot swung forwards and hit something golden. Cola recollected what had happened to the Head Buck and she took a sharp intake of breath as the carrot was kicked deep into Gorden's skull.

Cola growled. Her eyes pulled wide open and she looked first left and then right. She lunged for the corner of the room and pulled Gorden's staff out from the umbrella stand. Holding it like a rounders bat she jumped towards the bed and swung it back.

Let's follow the end of the staff in slow motion as it swings round from behind Cola's head in a near-entire circle. The metal-shod end connects with David's head, which is, curiously, smiling. The end of the staff pushes David's head towards the wall beside the bed. The gerbil's head connects with the hardened soil and is pushed into the wall, the staff follows and continues, crushing the small skull as if it was a polystyrene cup full of blood.

Try it if you want. The polystyrene cup full of blood, that is, not the Gerbil— you get locked up for that. Hit it with a pole as long as you are high and as thick as your wrist, the ends of

which are shod in iron. Blood will fly everywhere, the cup will be mashed beyond use and you'll spend the rest of the day clearing up splattered blood.

Cola swept the dead gerbil out of the way and looked down at Gorden.

David had driven the carrot deep into the head of her beloved Gorden, throwing the stone gag free. She'd never called him Beloved before now, not even earlier in bed. But he was her beloved, and always would be,

There was no spark of life in her beloved's eyes. No wiggle in his ears. No furrowed brow. No wriggling whiskers.

She bent down and kissed him, his lips were still warm, if not as perfectly shaped as they had been earlier, her arms wrapped around him and she squeezed him and laid her head on his chest.

Standing up she untied his bonds and laid him in a peaceful pose. Behind her she heard movement.

"Cola? Gorden?" Came Phump's enquiring tones.

"Come in, Phump." She said. She was tired, so tired.

She turned round to face the messenger rabbit and the help he'd brought. She suddenly felt the weight of the world pushing down on her. She tightened her grip on the staff and pulled herself up straight. "You're too late. I was too late. We were all too late."

She walked out, past the gathering crowd, she'd have collapsed but she walked with her staff. Her staff.

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An ageing rabbit rocked back and forwards in her rocking chair, some knitting half finished in her lap.

A small rabbit, barely older than a baby rushed into the room and jumped on her lap, narrowly missing an unfortunate accident with the knitting needles.

The little rabbit bounced up and down on the lap of the older rabbit.

"Tell me again! Tell me again about Gorden! Please Granny Cola, Please!"

She smiled.

"He was the best of us. He was." Her eyes misted over.

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The camera jumps back to see her silhouetted in front of an open fire. Jumps back again to see the warren, the shape of the tunnels forming a shape a little like a rabbit in a rocking chair (if you squint).

Jumping out again there is a forest, surrounded by a network of roads. Again, if you look carefully, you can see the roads follow the shape of a rabbit in a rocking chair.

Jumping out again there is just the British Isles.

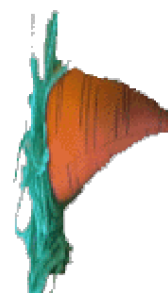
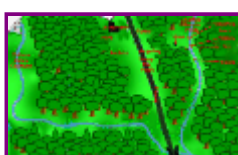
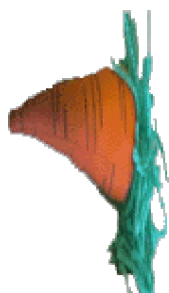
Funny thing, now you look at it in this light, it looks a little like a rabbit in a rocking chair.

The camera jumps back again, there are no more islands around, there is no globe, just the British Isles surrounded by a hundred miles of empty sea, perched on top of an enormous upside-down mountain in the blackness of space. This is one of a long trail of mountains, each with an island or two surrounded by water, falling off into space.

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<Play out to Perpetual Change by Yes>

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Insults and Critique to : gorden@nobby.co.uk