



Hetty the Heron's Riverside Adventure

Hetty stood tall in the water, gazing at the winding River Holme, which had been her home for all of the life. Her tummy rumbled as she waited motionless for a passing fish to move near her. Once again, she hadn't managed to catch anything as she was too busy daydreaming.

It was Spring and the ground along the sides of the river were starting to turn an amazing shade of indigo blue and delicate blue bells started to bloom. Hetty loved the smell of the tress and flowers as she waded through the river.

As she passed Bottoms Dam, she could hear the thunderous noise of the waterfall further up stream and thought about how the water had danced from Digley reservoir. As the water became higher up her long strong legs, Hetty began to wonder how her old relatives felt during the great flood which occurred in Holmfirth in 1852. All of the animals often gossiped about it still and if the river became wide, many of the river creatures could still be seen building extra damns around their nests and keeping family close. The stories say that the river banks burst and water flooded, ruining animal homes and upsetting the humans from nearby homes and mills.

The thought of a mill led Hetty to start dreaming about the olden days even more. She had been told of how Bottom's Mill had once been a busy place where humans went to work. Stories past down from generations talked about a girl called Clara from 200 years ago. Clara used to sit and cry on the river bank, feeling sad about working at the nearby factory. She would tell the river animals about her life and Great Grandpa Herbert Heron told of relatives peeping through the factory windows to see if the things she said were true. He told tales of them listening to the humans ordering the child workers to clean wool by using a Carding Machine; spin sheep's wool on a Spinning Machine and some children, who he heard being called 'Doffers' had to climb high on the machines to change the bobbins (which held the yarn). Hetty had told her Great Grandad Herbert that if she had been a human, she would have wanted to be a Doffer. He had replied that it sounded fun but many children hurt themselves as it wasn't safe.



A log suddenly knocked Hetty off her feet and brought her back to the present. She opened her elegant wings, pushed her legs and soared high into a tree. She felt lucky to be watching the river swishing towards the River Colne in Huddersfield. Hetty watched as children happily walked along the banks looking for tadpoles and wondered if they knew how lucky they were that they didn't have the same life as Clara. Hetty felt content and told herself that tomorrow she would not daydream and would work hard to catch a meal which wasn't vegetarian!



Karen