

 **D**ear small Giant,

 You will soon be the keeper of a magical secret about Lismore. You've been chosen to learn this secret and to also take part in a very special adventure.

I discovered the secret that I'm about to share with you when I was walking to the Quad a few weeks ago on my way to meet a friend at the farmers' market.

It was a fairly ordinary rainy day. As I was walking, I was thinking about what I was going to make for dinner and what vegetables I would need. I was also noticing that I had a little hole in my sock on my left big toe, when all of a sudden my thoughts were interrupted by some very curious little squeaks and tiny laughs.

The sounds seemed to be coming through a crack in the footpath. As I moved a bit closer to the crack, I could also hear, faintly, some extremely enchanting music.

I stayed listening for a long time, trying to imagine what or who could be making those sounds from under the footpath. And that's when I noticed the tiniest pair of muddy footprints.

Things were starting to get very interesting. I totally forgot about my shopping list (and the hole in my sock) and just followed the footsteps. They went all the way around the Quad, all around the grass and then they seemed to just disappear - into a tree.

I searched all around the tree with my detective eye for a very long time and was almost about to give up and continue to the market when all of a sudden, a tiny sparkling doorway appeared in front of me. Like magic - out of nowhere.

The door opened a tiny crack... then after a very long pause... it opened a little more... and a little more ... and then a very small person stepped out to greet me.

The small person's name was Mirabelle.

It's taken a while for us to get to know each other; but we are now great friends.

 Mirabelle is part of an ancient community of tiny people who have lived underneath Lismore since the beginning of time. I have come to call them The Miniatures (as I haven't learnt their true name yet). They call us humans The Giants. Mirabelle and The Under-land are the secrets I wanted to tell you about (as you may have already guessed).

Mirabelle told me that, a long time ago, there had been a big beautiful forest where Lismore town is today. When the forest was there, the Miniatures would regularly visit the Up-top land (which is what they call Lismore) by following the roots of trees to the surface or following the mycelium threads up to a mushroom top.

She said that when The Giants arrived they chopped down all of the forest in the Up-top land and covered the ground with concrete and roads and buildings. Without the trees and mycelium the Miniatures couldn't get into the Up-top land.

The few who did find their way up often became confused and lost and sometimes couldn't find their way back; some also got into trouble with The Giants and all their strange fast moving contraptions and objects.

After a while, The Miniatures decided it was safer to stay in the Under-land, and as time passed, the Up-top land became a distant memory that only the elders sometimes talked about.

Most young Miniatures thought that the Up-top land was a made-up story and didn't really wonder about it too much, but Mirabelle could not stop dreaming about what could be above them. She became determined to find a way through.

Year after year, Mirabelle dug tunnels up to the concrete, searching for openings or cracks or tree roots to follow. Usually, the concrete was too dense for her to break through and she had to turn around. Many times she almost lost hope, but her imagination and curiosity drove her to continue. 

Then one day, just recently, a huge flood happened in Lismore. It was very hard for all the people in Lismore because everything got washed away and lots of things were destroyed; but one very good thing was that the waters opened up cracks everywhere, all over the city. So finally, Mirabelle could find a way up into to the Up-top land.

Mirabelle loves the Up-top land. It's everything she imagined in her dreams. There is so much colour and so many beautiful things that don't exist in the Under-land. Every day she finds something new that is wonderful and interesting.

Since Mirabelle found the first crack, she has been busy looking for more cracks and trees and tunnelling pathways from the Under-land to the Up-top land. She wants everyone from her village to be able to visit and has been placing doorways for her friends to come up through.

Mirabelle asks me a lot of questions about everything, but she is particularly curious about the small Giants (her name for human children). She thinks they might want to become friends with her and the other Miniatures.

She has asked me to write you to invite you on an adventure, a special game that she and her friends have set up for you. She wants you to find the new doorways she has built in the Quad and to enjoy the funny words and following the directions on each. It's a bit like a treasure hunt, a magical treasure hunt.

I look forward to meeting you on the adventure somewhere (Mirabelle will be here too; but she might be a bit shy to come out and meet you at first).

 Love Audrey 



Some things about the Miniatures:

- 1) If we were to write the name of the Miniature's village in our language it would read like this: shezimopothingabobutsombertomkingilliupsy.

- 2) Miniatures can speak any language that exists in the world. They can speak to humans, animals, plants, fungi, bacteria and have even been heard speaking rock language.

- 3) Miniatures live in tiny cave houses connected by a huge network of tunnels. They also have bigger gathering caves where they make music and dance and feast most days. Sometimes when it's really quiet in the town you can hear their festivities coming up through the drains, cracks in the pavement and vibrating through the plants in the planter boxes.

- 4) Miniature's eyes are specially adapted to the darkness. They can see what is in front of them and can also sometimes look through things.

- 5) Miniatures have magical powers. They can make themselves and other things invisible and they can change into other things.
