

# CENTRAL PARK – AUDIO PLAY #4

## CENTRALLY PARKED - PART I

performed by Emma (Stella the Storyteller)

We are next to the Wooden Lizard.

One child tries to climb it, but is swept up in the arms of a parent.

STELLA has placed her hat on top of the Lizard's head.

**STELLA:** Hello, hello, hello!  
Quite the crowd for this one! Hmm - actually -  
If we could all take one or two big steps off the path,  
I'm sure the cyclists would thank us. Yes - amazing.  
So.  
You're all here to hear the story of Plymouth's Lizard,  
But I will warn you now, it's not a love story, or a comedy,  
Or a political thriller nor a high concept sci-fi epic.  
No.  
The Lizard's tale is a tragedy, so you should all get your handkerchiefs,  
Tissues and oversized sunglasses ready, cos this one's a weeper,  
But I promise it has a happy ending.  
Think back, millions of years ago, not too far back that we hit the dinosaurs,  
but before people started making fires and wheels.  
That sweet spot is where this story takes place.  
Before recorded history, before history was a thing that mattered.  
A time where the only way of letting future generations know what you saw  
and did was by painting on the inside of your cave.  
A time of fantasy, of magic and huge beasts, like our friend here.  
Because he wasn't always as wooden as you'd expect -  
For a time, he was King of this land.  
Not in the way that he would sit on a throne or enforce the feudal system,  
But a King elected through fear.  
Arrogant.  
The only thing he wanted was to live without limits.  
He flopped his wobbly legs around like he owned the place.  
Which he didn't, and not just because property hadn't been invented yet,  
But because this place belonged to the trees.  
You may not believe it, but these 16 acres of woodland we're in at the moment  
are a tiny proportion of what used to grow here.  
Not Oak and Yew trees like the ones we have now. Although - some of the  
ones near the top of that hill are pushing 500 years in age - which is pretty  
impressive!  
However, the trees back in the Lizard's time were much taller, more gnarled,  
The temperature would have been subtropical, so the leaves would have been  
thicker and larger.

These were trees that could live for thousands of years. Survive hurricanes, drought and lightning strikes. They were built to last and their roots ran deep. Deep enough to burrow into the bedrock, wide enough to walk through and all of them twisted and turned and entwined in one another.

Maybe as a way of securing themselves to the ground, or maybe, just maybe, A form of communication.

Back to the Lizard -

He's stomping and eating and ahem - urinating -

Wherever he pleases - without any resistance.

Until, a small mouse steps out in front of him.

And says - in a language spoken by both Rodents and Reptiles -

That the King's stomps completely wrecked the mouse's houses.

The Lizard sticks his tongue out and replies -

'Sssso what?'

And then chomps the mouse whole.

OM NOM NOM!

A little mouse family, who were watching from behind a fern, scream and scatter.

There are no consequences, and the Lizard moves on.

Later, while bathing in the hot spring - of which Plymouth used to have many -

The Lizard found himself bored. So he starts swimming down to the bottom of the geyser and using his webbed feet to fill in the holes.

When the hot spring is completely plugged, the Lizard swam out and lay on a rock to watch his plan unfold.

Underground, a huge amount of pressure was building - hot rising water with nowhere to go started spurting out of newly formed fissures and then -

KABOOM!

The hot spring explodes and the fish go flying!

Again, there are no consequences as the Lizard scuttles away, stepping over the panicking sealife.

That night, as the Lizard was sleeping - soundly I might add - devil that he was

The trees began their coniferous conference.

Those which once held the mouse's houses at the bottom of their trunks communicated the cruelty they had witnessed.

Those which currently had kippers in their leaves, let the others know about the cause of the hot spring explosion.

The roots beneath Plymouth pulsed, a decision had been reached,

The Lizard had to go.

So the next day, when the Lizard was on his daily stomp -

He found that grass grew beneath his feet. This only inflated his ego so he barely even noticed when the grass bore seeds small enough to seep between his scales.

And so, those seeds began to grow.

They were warm, and had enough sun and water from all of the Lizard's bathing and stomping, so sprouted promptly.

It didn't phase the Lizard at first, he barely slowed down.

He would chew at any vines that began to grow from his ankles,  
And use rocks to scrape away the green from his heels,  
But, eventually, he couldn't fight it anymore.  
He moved from fauna to flora - and within a year - was fully fossilised inside a  
Lizard-shaped trunk.  
And here he stands today. Stuck in his tracks for all eternity.  
The moral of this one is pretty self explanatory if I'm honest,  
Be nice to trees!  
And perhaps there were some side-morals along the way.  
Thank you all for listening - my hat, which normally I'd ask for tips with - is  
currently been worn by our Lizard King, but luckily for you all - I do take card  
payments too!