

A STRANGER IN SERENA'S GARDEN

Seven-year-old Serena put on her yellow straw hat, a red skirt and a striped jersey and thought she was very well dressed for a visit to the duck that swam among the lily pads in the garden pond.

As she hopped along on the flat stones of the walkway to the pond she looked at the nearby forest. That day Serena spent a long time talking to the duck.

“What’s up, Duck?”

“Quack quack”, he replied and they began a conversation.

“Do you want something to eat?”

“Yes, quack, quack, quack.”

So off she ran to get breadcrumbs for the duck.

On her way back she saw a short, little person in a big hat, wearing a blue dress. Its body faced her but its feet were backwards and it began calling her name,

“Sereeeena.... Sereeeena...”

Serena blinked and rubbed her eyes; she couldn’t believe it. It was a douen! She had heard about douens on the news when a hunter caught one in the forest.

The douen made a noise, “oooou!.... oooou!..... oooou!” and six more douens appeared from the forest and climbed over the garden fence. They surrounded her. She dropped the crumbs and started to run. She got to a tree and a douen popped out at her! She got to the pond and another douen popped out at her.

She was so startled that she fell into the pond, which had goldfish and lily pads in it. Mr Duck began to shout “Quaaaack! Quaaaack! Quaaaack!” All of a sudden, one of the lily pads popped out at her. It was a douen! Serena had mistaken his straw hat for a lily pad. She scrambled out of the pond, soaking wet, and another douen was waiting for her. It had sharp, bushy teeth, pointy ears and red eyes. It ran behind her and she fled.

As she ran past the flowerbeds another douen popped out from the flowers. He was muddy and had on a ‘buss up’ jersey and pants. He grabbed onto her leg. She screamed, shook him off and continued running towards her house, and got inside. She flicked on all the lights. The douens chased behind her, but as they got into the bright lights they began to scream. The lights were too bright and burnt their skin. They started shrinking and turned into dust!

Serena woke up with a start and realized it was a dream about douens in a folk story she had heard.

