



The Lost Journals of Benjamin Tooth

Books Reviewed:

[The Lost Journals of Benjamin Tooth](#) [1]

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Reviewer:

[Matthew Martin](#) [3]

Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Mackenzie Crook's debut novel for children, [The Windvale Sprites](#) [4], is a fairy tale for today's young readers, witty and often knowing but full of charm. It proved that its author, better known as an actor and a star of the **Pirates of the Caribbean** blockbuster films, could write, and illustrate too.

Crook has followed it up with a connected story, but one which feels quite different. It's set 200 years earlier for a start and it purports to be those very journals, the discovery of which sends the hero of **The Windvale Sprites** off to Windvale Moor on the hunt for fairies.

Tooth begins his diary aged 11 and already determined to be a great scientist. Crook captures the voice of young Benjamin perfectly, as he pompously describes the minutiae of his life, giving equal emphasis to his observations of local wildlife as to his lists of exactly what he has to eat each night. The descriptions of his meals, 'hot boiled green tongue with butter pond pudding and turnips', disgusting and absurd, provide regular opportunities for comedy as do his unsympathetic notes on the illnesses afflicting his mother, 'Mother abed with Teeth Cramps', 'Mother abed with Yellowing of the Elbow'. No wonder the poor woman expires after less than one hundred pages!

Orphaned, Benjamin is delighted to win a place as apprentice to the local taxidermist, Pansas Gadigun. The first two-thirds of the book, describing Benjamin's youth and full of eccentric characters such as Gadigun, are really fun and sparkle with originality. As Benjamin grows older, and his obsession with the dragonfly like creatures he's observed on the moor grows, the tone darkens rather and while the story is more action packed, some of the charm is lost. Nonetheless this is a very appealing read, quirky and funny, and, surprisingly, full of useful information on British wildlife too.

Readers keen on puzzles and challenges should note that Mackenzie Crook has created his own Treasure Hunt, a la Kit Wright's **Masquerade**. Find and solve the clues hidden in the story and you could win a real silver statuette of a Windvale Sprite. There's more information to be found on the website www.benjamintooth.co.uk [5]

Links:

- [1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/the-lost-journals-of-benjamin-tooth>
- [2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/204>
- [3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/matthew-martin>
- [4] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/the-windvale-sprites>
- [5] <http://www.benjamintooth.co.uk/>