



# How to Create a Legend of Place

by Davide Panzeri

**1-Select a suitable place to set your story.** For best results choose a famous or well-known place in your town or community, so that everyone will know the place you are talking about and can visualise it in their mind. Else it could be a place that you know well or that is important to you, like your favourite hiding spot, you friend's house or your Granma's living room.

**2-What is the connection between the story and the place?** It could be a story about why the place looks the way it does now. What peculiar feature does this place have? Or else, what was/is the place used for?

**3-What happened there?** What could have made the place look the way it does now? It could be something realistic, like a lightning striking a tree, or it could be entirely fictional, like an extra-terrestrial spaceship landing on top of a building. Or it could be something that happened to you once? Think of what kind of stories could be set in your chosen location. If there is a river or a lake maybe someone fell in and risked drowning? Or maybe some monster lurks in the waters?

**4-Who is the protagonist?** You, your friend, a creature from the forest, a historic character, a famous person (local or non-local), an unknown traveller.

Perfect, now that you have all the ingredients you need to create a local legend, let's get stuck in!

**First** create a bare-bones model of the story. Start with a five-step sequence, each step shouldn't be longer than a sentence.

For example:

*Context:* A long time ago there was no loch next to Linlithgow Palace

1-Young Mary Queen of the Scots found a Brownie\* weeping on a rock

2-Other Brownies made fun of it because it didn't have a house.

3-Mary takes the Brownie inside Linlithgow Palace

4-The Brownie is so happy it asks Mary to express a wish

5-With the help of other Brownies they dig the loch and fill it with water so that Mary can swim in it.

Then you can start adding to the story. What was Mary doing when she met the Brownie? Playing? Try to visualize the scene in your mind. Where is the rock the Brownie is sitting on? Is it in the forest? Is it a large or a small rock? Then you can start telling the story. Add only a few details to begin with.

*'A long time ago there was no loch next to Linlithgow Palace. One day young Mary Queen of the Scots, who lived in the Palace, was playing in the woods when she saw a Brownie weeping on a large rock.'*

Once you feel confident with this, you can add even more:

*'A long time ago there was no loch next to Linlithgow Palace. One day young Mary Queen of the Scots, who lived in the Palace, was playing when her ball flew high and ended up in a nearby wood. As she was looking for the ball amongst the bushes, she heard someone crying. And there, on a large rock covered with moss, she saw a small creature sobbing uncontrollably. It was a Brownny!'*

Can you continue the story yourself using the bare bones above? Or you can change the story to have another ending. Or why not create a local legend from where you live?

Once you have written down the story, email it to [davide@scottishtorytellingcentre.com](mailto:davide@scottishtorytellingcentre.com) for publication on the Storytelling Centre's website. Even better, learn it and tell it to your friends!

IMPORTANT: do not learn the story word by word, memorise the plot and tell it in your own words. It is easier, more fun and the story will be slightly different every time you tell it!

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\*A Brownie is a fairy creature of small stature, wrinkled visage, covered with short curly brown hair, and wearing a brown mantle and hood. Brownies are attached to particular families, with whom they reside.