

It was early Midsummer morning when the boy was first made safe here. Wrapped in the softness of cotton, snuggled in his nest-like moses basket, lodged amongst the strong limbs of the mightiest oak on Ikenham Common. Sleeping soundly, the gentlest of breezes rustling leaves into whispered lullabies.

The one who left him stood nearby for hours, reluctant to depart until her desperate, selfless act was safely complete. She scored a heart in the bark as a token of eternal love. Her rocked footprints sank deep into lush dewy grass, tracing anxious reversing steps across the park lawn.

Found, adopted, cherished.

As a child, he climbed and swung amongst those parental branches: instinctively, unknowingly, at home here.

He courted his love here, composing poetry, adding their initials to that curious heart-shape on the trunk. On warm days, they picnicked in its shade; on wet days, its canopy gave shelter; in autumns, they rolled upon a russet carpet.

Until, last fall, seeds of a new generation.

Yesterday was Midsummer's Eve again. An unseasonal tempest raged, merciless rain hammered, twigs torn into razors, slicing into a melancholy sky. A bolt of light reached down from above. The tree stood firm. Its boughs held strong, its roots prevailed. The love heart was unscathed.

Yet, my own heart chose that moment to depart.

Henceforth, though I no more stand here watching, I shall be the breeze and sunshine, the fresh buds every spring.

My son, some roots grow deeper than you will ever know.