

BABES IN THE WOOD

The kids were squabbling loudly in the back of the car – just for a change.

“Josh keeps touching my arm,” moaned Katy.

“I’m not. Katy keeps kicking my foot!”

We had been driving around for what seemed like hours trying to find our Paris hotel.

George had missed the turn off from the Boulevard Peripherique – the ring road – and we were lost.

Trouble is, being a man, he wouldn’t admit it. It’s so frustrating when he won’t ask for help. And to make matters worse, our sat nav didn’t seem to be working.

We were now in dense woodland. Pitch dark and no street lighting.

There was a loud scream from the back seat and what sounded like a sob. The natives were getting restless. And probably hungry too. I know I was.

Suddenly a figure, illuminated by fairy lights, stepped out from under the trees. The man – I could see it was a man – was stark naked. He was carrying what appeared to be an axe and looked like the Grim Reaper.

“George,” I screamed hysterically, “I want you to turn back now!” But George carried on.

Another figure leapt in front of the car, trying to wave us down. This time it was a woman wearing nothing except a head-dress that reminded me of pictures I’d seen of Queen Boudica!

The children at the back had gone very quiet.

George continued driving.

A few minutes later we came across a whole group of half-naked people, bizarrely dressed, rolling around on the ground coupling – for want of a better word – right in front of us.

“Katy! Josh!” I yelled, “Close your eyes!”

George’s eyes were popping out of his head.

“Where are we?” I nagged him.

“What is your location,” a familiar voice said.

“That’s Alexa! You’ve activated Alexa!” I shouted excitedly. For once I was glad to hear her voice.

“I must have activated the button on my steering wheel.”

“Alexa, we’re in a wood,” I said, “in Paris, France.”

“The wood in Paris, France is the Bois de Boulogne.”

I didn’t know whether to laugh or to cry.

“The Bois de Boulogne! George – we were told that whatever we did we had to avoid the Bois de Boulogne. Especially at night. It’s full of prostitutes – hundreds of them.”

“You mean sex workers mummy. No one says prostitutes now.” It was Josh at the back correcting me.

Alexa began, “prostitutes are

“Alexa stop!” yelled George.

“We just can’t continue driving,” I implored him. “Turn back now.”

For once, George listened. He turned the car round and we headed back the way we had come.

“They probably thought I was a punter,” he said and he was almost laughing.

“Alexa,” he asked, “where is the Novotel, Paris?”

Alexa gave us directions and to my relief he followed them.

But we’ll never forget the time we were lost in the Bois de Boulogne.

And I don’t expect the children ever will either!