

Exploring Why

Cross



Extended Version

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Bear Lands Publishing

About Aled and Siân

Aled and Siân love exploring the places where they live and the places they go to visit. They enjoy playing 'I Spy' to help them get to know these places better. In the *Exploring Why* series Aled and Siân are curious to find out why some of the things around them are important to their Christian, Jewish and Muslim friends.

The series takes seriously the social significance of religion and is based on extensive research into how children learn about themselves, others and the world in which they live.

To support this storybook series, there is a large range of free downloadable resources for children and teachers available at hwb.wales.gov.uk/Resources and st-marys-centre.org.uk

The storybooks and activities are devised for 5- to 7-year-olds, but the downloadable resources make the series relevant for younger and older children too.

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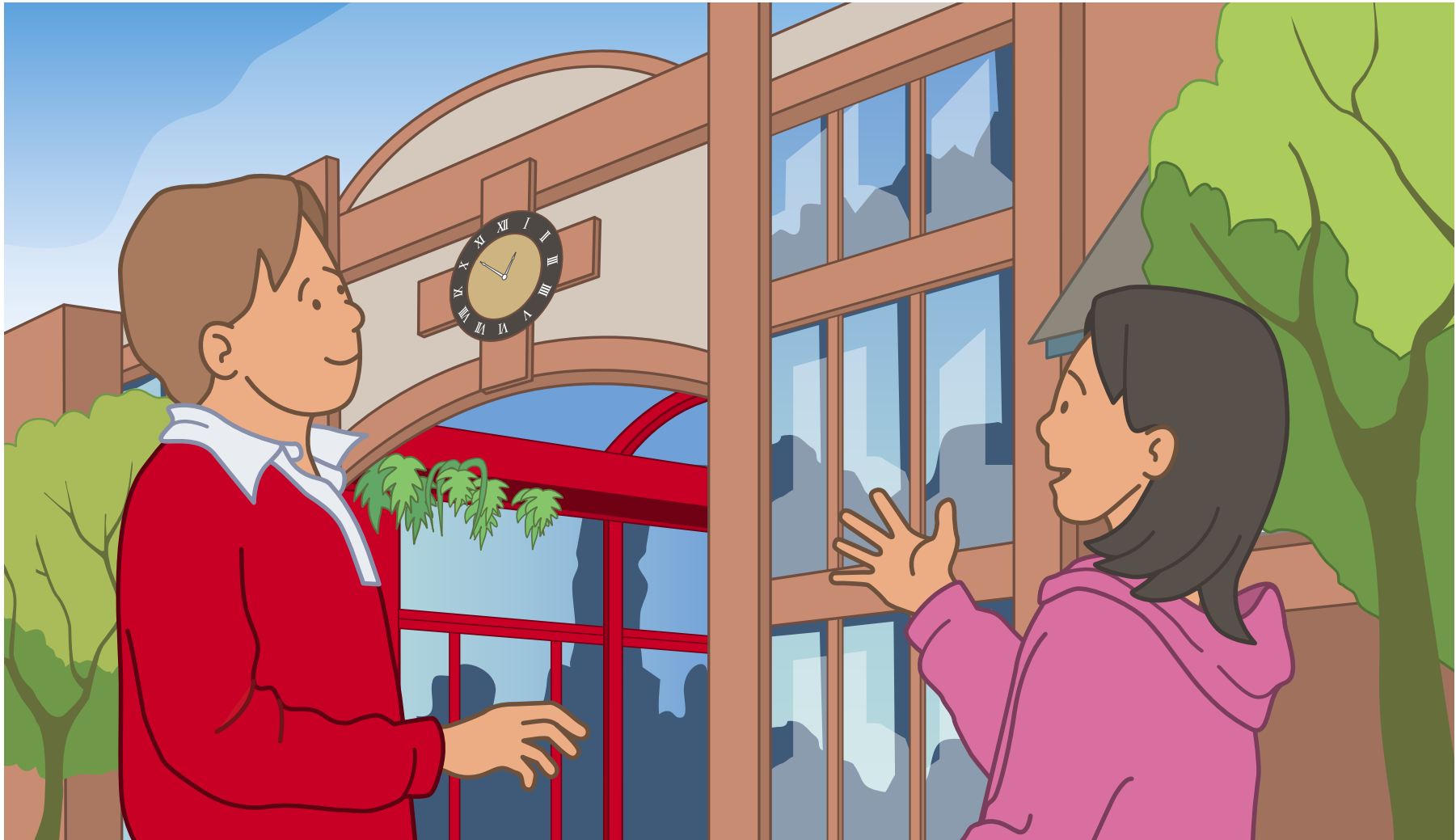
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Titles in the *Exploring Why* series are:

Bread
Cross
Light
Menorah
Veil
Water
Symbols of Faith





Aled and Siân love exploring the places where they live and the places that they go to visit. They enjoy playing 'I spy' to help them get to know these places better.

Today, they spotted a cross in the distance, and set out to discover how many other crosses they could find and where they could find them.



Aled and Siân set out to walk through the shopping arcade. They walked past a shop selling clothes and a shop selling bags. They walked past a shop selling newspapers and magazines, and cards.

Then they stopped at the Jewellers shop to peer in through the window. They gazed intently at the gold and silver objects sparkling in the light.



There in the window they saw gold and silver watches, gold and silver clocks, gold and silver rings, and gold and silver brooches. "I spy some crosses," shouted Siân. She pointed to a row of gold

crosses hanging from necklaces. Some were plain and some were very fancy. "I wonder why the cross is so important?" said Aled.



Aled and Siân continued their walk through the shopping arcade, until they came to the old market square. In the market square they saw old men sitting on the benches talking to each other. They

saw mothers pushing their very young children in buggies. They saw older children playing by the fountain and being splashed by the water.



Then among all the people, Aled and Siân looked up at the tall market cross. “I spy a cross,” said Aled. The cross was so tall it made Aled and Siân feel really small. They gazed at the swirling patterns

carved into the stone and stretched out their hands to feel the carving. “I wonder why the cross is so important?” said Siân.



Aled and Siân continued their walk through the old market square. They walked past the furniture shop with its tables and chairs. They walked past the chemists with its bottles and boxes in the window.

Then they stopped at the old town café. Here they spent their money on ice creams and sat down at the table.



They gazed at the old pictures hanging on the wall. There were posters from the 1950s advertising biscuits. There were photographs from the 1960s with people wearing old style clothes.

“I spy a cross,” said Siân. There among the posters and pictures, they found an old wooden cross. “I wonder why the cross is so important?” said Aled.



When they had finished their ice creams, Aled and Siân left the old town café and walked along the high street. They walked past the town park. There they saw children playing on the swings and people

walking dogs on their leads. Then they stopped to gaze at the ancient monuments in the town cemetery.



There in the cemetery they saw an angel with outstretched wings, carved in white stone. There in the cemetery, they saw a huge urn, carved in blue marble. "I spy a cross," said Aled. In the cemetery

there were simple crosses made of wood. In the cemetery there were big crosses carved in stone. "I wonder why the cross is so important?" said Siân.



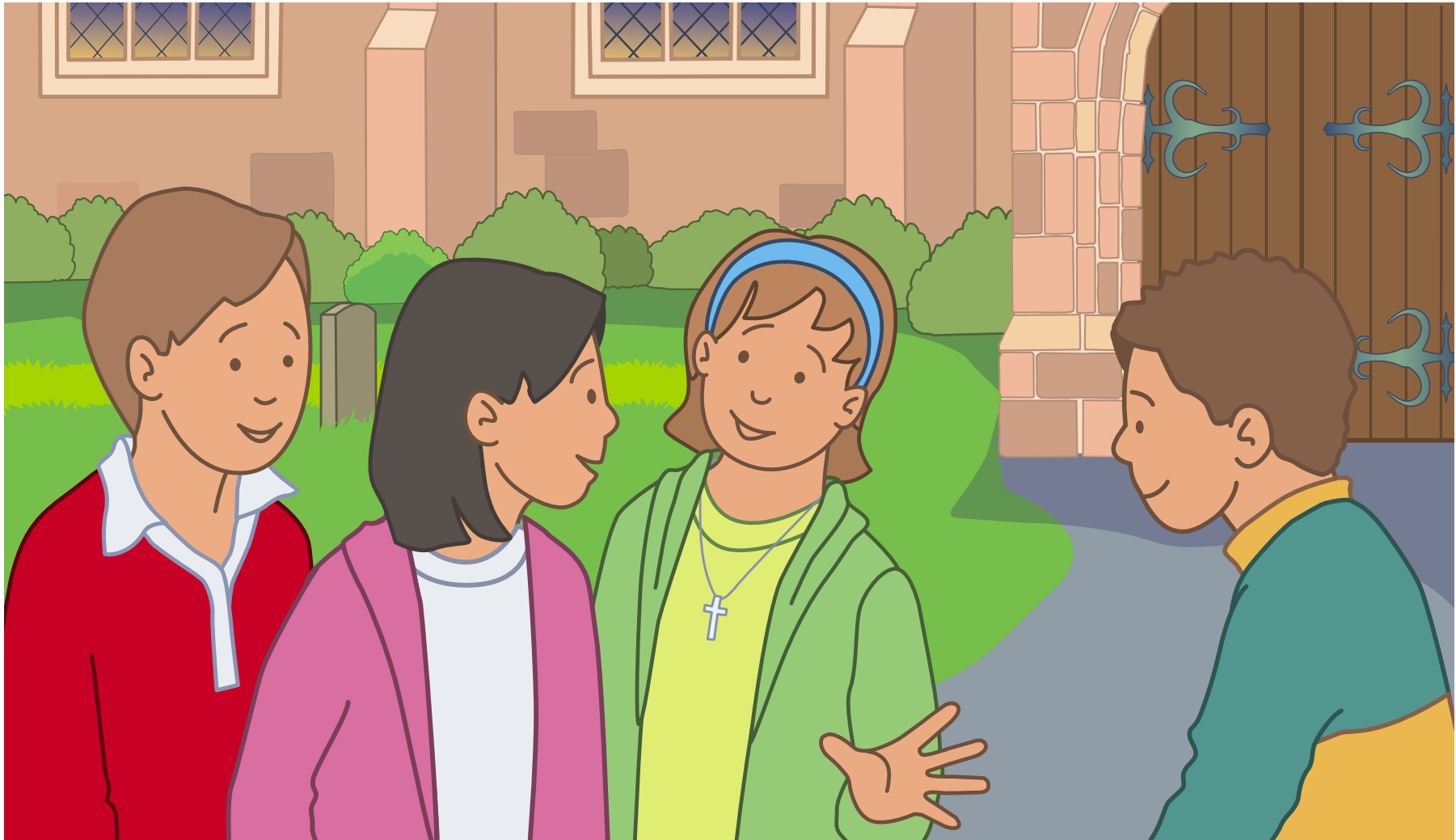
When they had finished looking at the town cemetery, Aled and Siân continued their walk past the old terraced houses, past the smart bungalows, and

past the new block of flats. Then they came to the house where their friends Peter and Mary lived, with Ginger the cat and Rusty the dog.



Peter and Mary lived in the vicarage next to St Giles' Church. Their mother was the vicar who looked after the church. Today their mother was wearing a smart dark suit, with a black shirt and a white collar.

"I spy a cross," said Siân. There on the vicar's jacket was a large cross. "I wonder why the cross is so important?" said Aled.



Peter and Mary took Aled and Siân into the big church next to their house. They saw the big stone font right by the door. They saw the Bibles in the pews.

They saw the beautiful stained-glass windows. They saw the huge organ and listened to the music that filled the building.



Peter and Mary led Aled and Siân to the front of the church. There they saw the altar with its colourful green cloth. "I spy a cross," said Aled. There in the centre of the altar was a bright brass cross,

between two brass candlesticks and two vases of flowers. "I wonder why the cross is so important?" said Siân.



When they had finished looking around the church, Peter and Mary took Aled and Siân back to their home. They pointed to the cross by their front door. They pointed to the cross just inside the entrance.

Then they began to explain why the cross is so important to their family, and to their mother, the vicar.



While Peter and Mary were showing Aled and Siân the crosses in their house, their mother made them something to drink. As it was the beginning of the Easter holidays, she also gave them hot cross buns

to eat. They had been warmed in the oven. “We have hot cross buns to remember how Jesus died on the cross,” she said.



When they had finished their drinks and eaten their hot cross buns, Peter and Mary took Aled and Siân into their mother's office. There they found their mother's Bible. They began to tell Aled and Siân

how Jesus had been arrested, put on trial, and sentenced to death on the cross. All that happened on Good Friday.



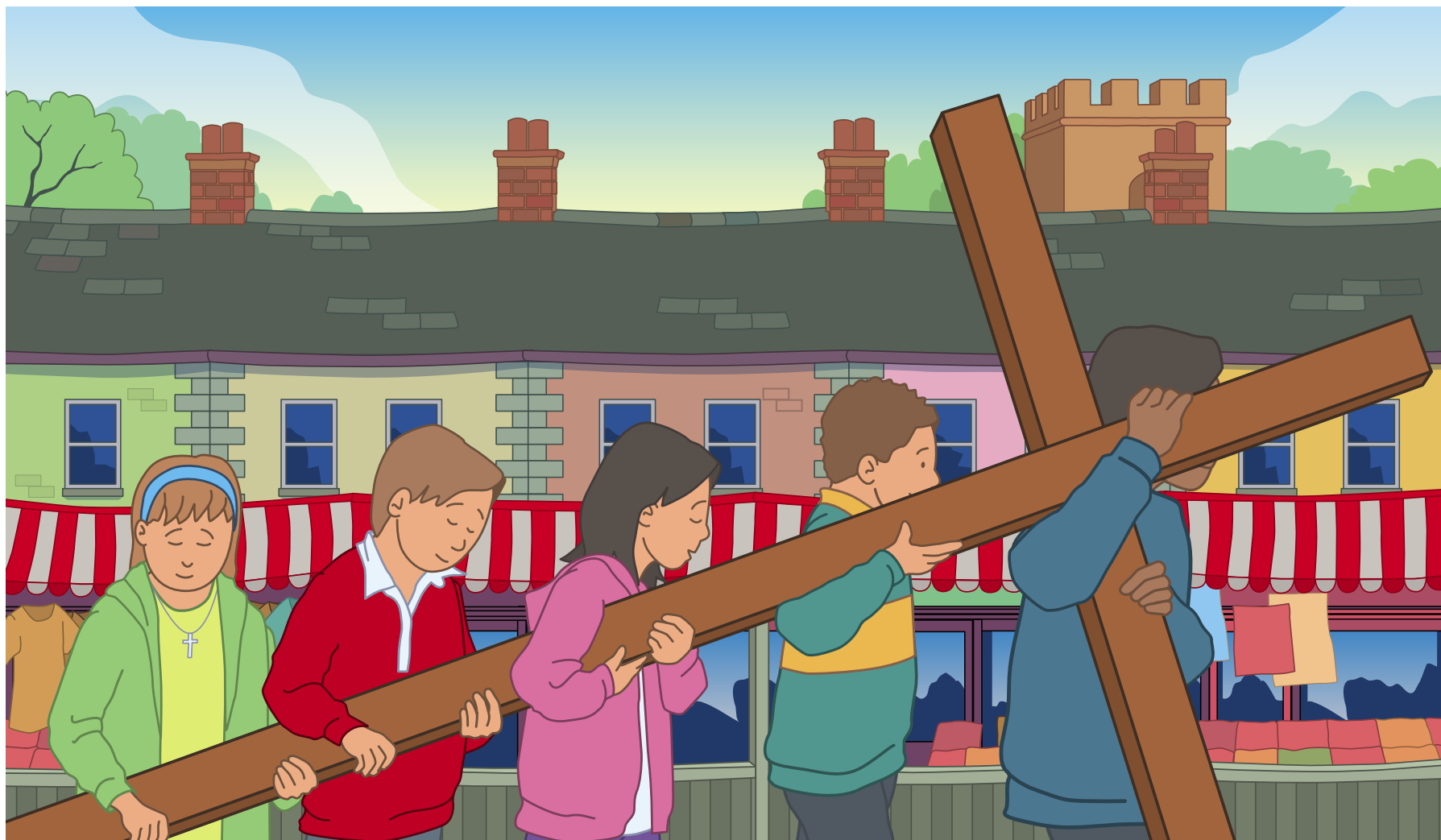
They found John's Gospel, chapter 19, and read aloud the text. "So they took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called

Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them."



Peter and Mary invited Aled and Siân to go with them on Good Friday to join the Pilgrimage of Witness through the town. The Pilgrimage of Witness began in St Giles' Church. The story of

Jesus' arrest and trial was read from the Bible. Then a large wooden cross was carried from St Giles' Church into the streets outside.



With all the other people, Aled and Siân walk slowly behind the cross. They walked past the cemetery and past the park. They walked past the old town café, the chemist and the furniture shop. They

walked through the market square and past the market cross. They kept on walking until they came to the chapel at the other end of town.



Aled and Siân learned so much about the importance of the cross on Good Friday. Then Peter and Mary invited them back to St Giles' Church on Easter Sunday to hear how the story ended. On Easter

Sunday, the cross they had followed through the town stood outside the church with the huge notice, 'Christ is risen!'



On Easter Sunday inside St Giles' Church, Aled and Siân found the Easter garden. Next to three empty crosses stood the empty tomb of Easter. Now the

Bible was open at John, chapter 20, proclaiming the good news of the Easter resurrection. 'Christ is risen. He is risen, indeed. Alleluia!'



On Easter Sunday Aled and Siân saw the empty tomb. They saw the stone rolled away from the tomb. They looked up at the empty cross. They repeated

the Easter shout of joy, "Christ is risen. He is risen, indeed. Alleluia!" "Now we know why the cross is so important!" said Aled and Siân together.

Aled and Siân are playing 'I Spy' and today they are looking for 'Crosses'. They find crosses in all kinds of places around where they live. When Aled and Siân visit their friends, Peter and Mary, they start asking an important question – "I wonder why the cross is so important?" With the help of Peter and Mary, Aled and Siân begin to find some answers.



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