

The Maiden's Leap – a tale of two towers!

Did you know Huntingtower Castle, near Perth, used to be two separate towers with a space between that were joined together at a later date?



Each tower had its own spiral stair, bedrooms and battlements.



You may have read the story of Rapunzel, the princess who was trapped in a tower. But Huntingtower actually has its own story about a princess who ended up 'trapped' in one of its towers!

Discover the story of Dorothea and then try some tower-themed activities.

Find out more about Huntingtower Castle, including its amazing painted ceiling room, at www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place



The Story of Dorothea

Once upon a time there was a girl called Dorothea who lived at Huntingtower Castle. She was in love with a young man called John, a trader's son.

However, her parents, Lord and Lady Ruthven, didn't think John was good enough for Dorothea, and did not want her to marry him. But to keep their daughter happy they allowed him to visit her and stay at the castle, and he slept in the West Tower while Dorothea slept in the East Tower.

On one such night, Dorothea wanted to go and see John in the West Tower. When she thought everyone was asleep, she quietly went down the spiral stair of her tower, crossed over to the other tower and went up the spiral stair to John's room.

But as she got to John's room, she suddenly heard footsteps on the stairs below her – and her mother's voice, shouting "Dorothea – is that you?"

Dorothea panicked – she knew she would get in trouble! What could she do? She couldn't hide under the bed – or behind the curtain – or even in the garderobe!

The only option was to go further up the spiral stair to the top of the castle – to the battlements! So Dorothea found herself in the dead of night, standing on the tallest part of the tower. She looked at the gap between the two towers – the only way back to her tower and her own room was to jump!

She gathered her skirts together, took a deep breath, and took a mighty leap – and somehow made it all the way across from one tower to the other! By the time her mother had gone back down the stairs of the West Tower, and all the way back up to Dorothea's room in the East Tower, Dorothea was fast asleep in her own bed.

The next day, Dorothea ran away with John to get married – and they lived happily ever after. And do you know what the space between the two towers is called? The '*Maiden's Leap*'!

Listen to the story of Dorothea on YouTube:
<https://youtu.be/dtCTEnJNMpM> or try some tower activities below.

Tower activities!

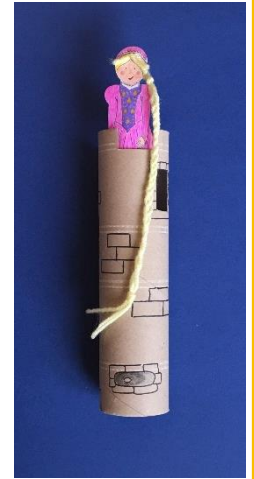
Dorothea in her Tower

Make your own Dorothea in her tower - you could even give her long hair like Rapunzel!

Find instructions on the Learn pages of the Historic Environment Scotland website or at this YouTube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s773i9Vilco>

You'll need: a cardboard tube, scissors, pencils, sticky tape and glue, wool or string, thread, and a piece of thin card 12 x 5cm.



Make the Maiden's Leap!

If the legend is true, Dorothea would have leapt 2.8 metres from one tower to the next! You would have to be very brave to make that leap in the dark.

How far can you jump? Grab a ruler or tape measure and find a safe space (on the ground!) Measure out 2.8 metres and mark the distance.

**make sure there are no obstacles nearby before you try your jump.

Escape the Tower!

Can you plan another way for Dorothea to have escaped? Make a rope ladder? Use a zip wire? A giant slide? Use your imagination to design and build a fantastic way for her to get out of the tower. What materials will you use? String? Paperclips? Straws?

Once you have a plan, gather your materials, build a model and test it out. Can you improve your design?

We'd love to see your creations - share them
with us at #LearningWithHES

