



## The Goloknip Stories

by Roderick Ramage

### unicorns and an elephant

At last it was Saturday and, chizz, Ben's mother made him do his homework before he could go out in the street to play.

'Do be careful.'

As if any boy would listen to that sort of stuff. All Ben was thinking about was the goloknip, but he remembered to stop on the kerb outside their front door, looked right, then left and right again to be sure that the road was clear and crossed to the other side of Old Mill Street. He looked everywhere, up and down and roundabout for the goloknip. Nowhere to be seen.

'Bother. All the cars are parked in the way. What can I do next?'

Last time the goloknip had been standing on one leg leaning against the wall so as not to fall over. Ben peered over the wall down to the River Bollin and thought that he saw something shimmer. It was probably the reflection of a rusty supermarket trolley in the shadows, but perhaps ... .

'He's there. He must be.'

Ben was wrong, but nearly right, because he heard a voice behind him.

'It's "yo", not "he". Got it?'

Ben turned round and there was the goloknip right beside him, with only one head this time, two arms, but not very even as one came out higher than the other and not quite on the other side. Ben reached his hand out to touch and this time was not frightened when the Goloknip's hand came round and covered his. It felt to Ben as though his hand was in a solid piece of nothing.

'Did you get it? "yo" not "he"?''

Ben was not sure that he understood.

'But if you are not a "he" you must be a "she". You can't be an "it". I know because you are not a thing like this, er, this car or a house.'

'"It"!'

The goloknip started to shimmer a rather dangerous colour.

'Goloknips are never "it" and nor are golipnoks and golinpoks.'

Ben stood still and looked contrite, and the goloknip's colour shimmered more friendly.

'I know you are not an "it", but you must be a "he" or a "she" - um, aren't you?'

'Goloknips are not like that, so you must say "yo". Do you like elephants better than unicorns?'

'I've seen an elephant, but I've never seen a unicorn, so I don't know which I like best.'

'Then hold my hand, close your eyes, count to seven and jump as high as you can.'

Ben did what he was told, closed his eyes really tight, counted to seven and jumped, but, instead of landing back on Old Mill Street with a bump, he and the goloknip floated away.

'Can I open my eyes yet.'

'Not quite yet. When I say so, count backwards from seven to one and open them. Wait, wait and ... "So".'

When Ben opened his eyes he thought he was in New York, because the building were so tall. Then he thought he was in the Amazon forest, because the trees were so tall and there was so much water. Then he thought he did not know where he was and looked questioningly at the goloknip.

'This is the Realm Perilous, and, if you hide behind this elephant's leg, I'll hide behind the other, and, if we stand very, very still and as quiet as an eger, we might see a Unicorn. Now shh.'

'What if the elephant moves?'

'It won't. Elephants don't like unicorns, especially their sharp horns, so they normally stand still and pretend not to be there. Oh, there's a unicorn. Don't let it see you. It might try and spike you with its horn.'

Ben peered round the elephant's leg and saw the most beautiful animal. It looked like a small silver horse with a long silver horn growing out of its head. Then he saw another, and another until there was a whole herd of them and some were circling round the elephant. He felt a bit frightened, and the goloknip had turned a worried colour.

'Sorry Ben. This looks dangerous. If you give the elephant's leg a kiss and say "Please help me", the elephant will save you. He'll move, and while the unicorns are too surprised to notice you, run to the tardis over there and shut the door behind you.'

Ben did what he was told and got into the tardis just before he was caught by the tip of a unicorn's horn and pulled the door shut. He had barely got his breath back when he felt a bump as his feet landed on Old Mill Street and heard a voice. It was his Mum standing on their doorstep.

'Ben, come on in now. It's lunch time.'

the end for now