

The Goloknip Stories

by Roderick Ramage

dog's dangerous end

'Of course you can't walk to school.'

'Why not? Everyone else does, so why can't I?'

'No they don't. Look at all the cars dropping children off.'

'Johnnie Smith does.'

'Don't believe a word that Johnnie Smith says and besides it's too far.'

'It's not too far. Look how far I walked with Uncle Bill on Sunday.'

'And it's too dangerous. All the traffic and road to cross.'

'But I've got my safety certificate.'

Ben balled his fists with frustration.

'Then I'll take my bicycle.'

'No you won't.'

And with that Ben was sent to bed.

'Don't forget to brush your teeth. I'll come up and read you a story.'

The next morning Ben's mum was not very well but she was very determined and gave him his breakfast, reminded him to brush his teeth and drove him to school. When they got there she told him that she felt so poorly that she would back to bed and might have to get someone to bring him home. Ben gave her a kiss and ran into school thinking that if she was still poorly he would be able to walk home and talk to the goloknip.

He was early enough to hide behind the first tree in the playground and had hardly thought "yo" when the goloknip appeared.

'I thought you were going to walk to school today.'

'My mum wouldn't let me, but she's feeling poorly so I'll walk home unless she gets better.'

'I'll walk home with you.'

The goloknip already had a head this time, smiled and disappeared with a loud pop. Some children in the playground looked round at the pop, but Ben just grinned and went into his class.

At half past three the car park and Barracks Lane were full of cars but not his mum's. So far so good. A crowd of boys and girls were hurrying to the



main road, some with their mums or dads and some of the bigger one on their own just with their friends. Ben got in the middle of the crowd and hoped that no one would see him. Perhaps his mum had asked Aunty Jane to come for him and he didn't want her to see him.

Ben got safely to the main road and waited with the others at the traffic lights. There was a lollipop lady too so it was safe, but once Ben got into Back Road on the other side and here were not so many children it felt very scary and a long way to go and he wasn't sure that he could remember all the way home.

He was nearly half way to the canal when he heard a pop and there was the goloknip next to him.

'Hello.'

'Hello.'

They walked all the way along Back Road to the end. Ben stopped being worried about finding his way home. 'This is Windmill Street. I know my way now. We turn right and at the end turn left.'

'No, we'll go straight on, because I know a short cut.'

Ben was not old enough to know that short cuts usually do not work, so he agreed and they walked on and went right and right and left, so Ben felt quite lost. They were in a grim looking warehouse factory kind of place with no houses and a dusty open space. At the other side was a tall footbridge going over the railway line. Ben knew that his home was not far from the other side of the bridge, but he was not allowed to go on it.

He and the goloknip were half way to the bridge when he heard a deep growling and a bark and looked round. There was a big dog with all its teeth showing coming towards him. It wore a collar with big metal spikes on it. A man with long black hair and a beard and tattoos on his arms was coming towards them. Ben went to hid the other side of the Goloknip, but there was no need. The man clipped a lead on his dog.

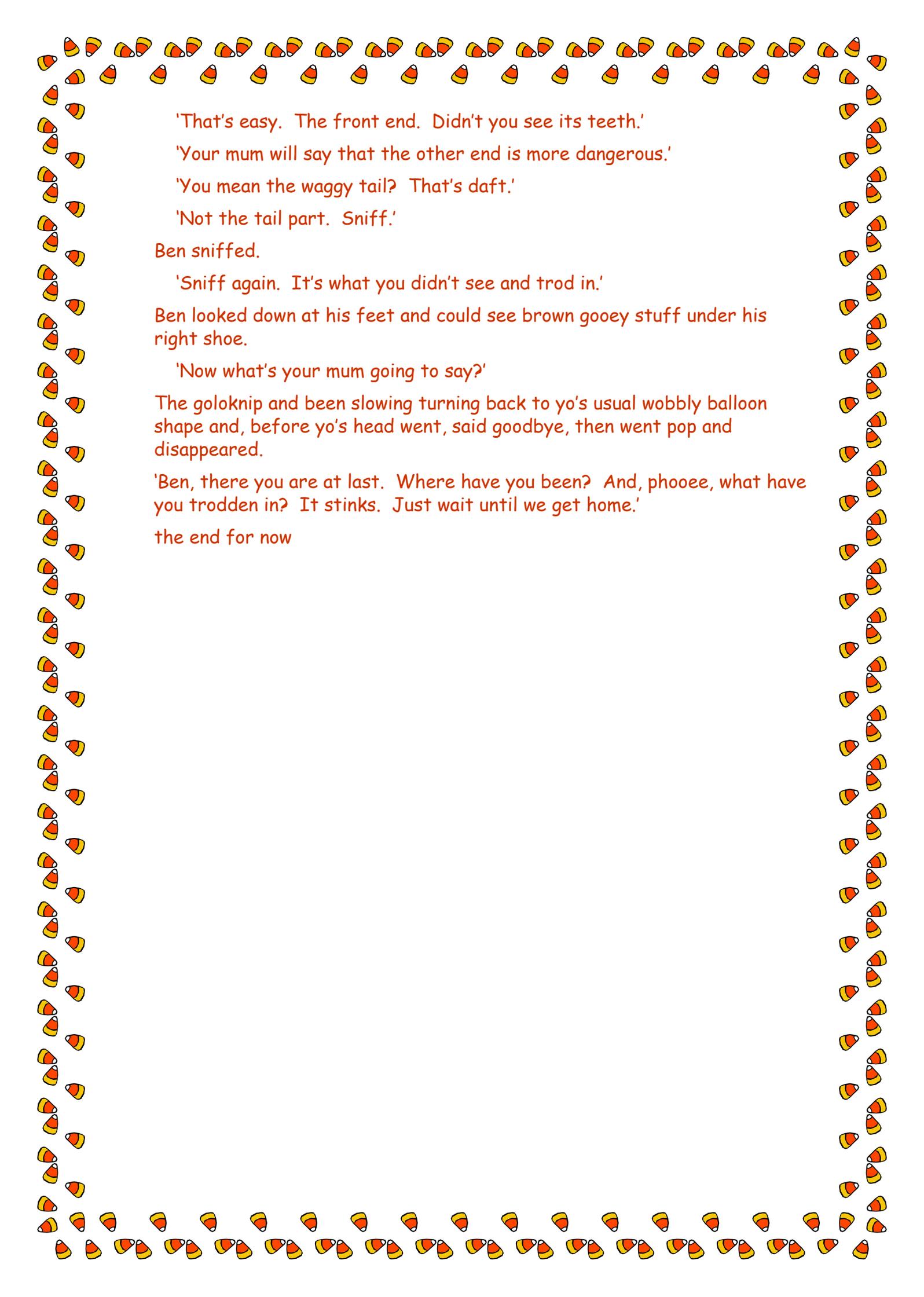
'Don't be frightened. You can stroke him now. The dog wagged its tail and licked Ben's hand, but it seems frightened of the goloknip and lay itself down on the ground. The man looked oddly at where his dog was looking but could not see the goloknip, then turned quickly away.

'Come on Buster.'

Ben and the goloknip hurried to the bridge. When they were right in the middle of it a Pendolino express train rushed under hem making the bridge shake. Ben held the goloknip's hand until it had gone, and then at last they were on the ground in Snow Hill on the other side and almost back in Old Mill Lane. Ben felt safe now.

'That was a close thing.'

'Tell me what is the dangerous end of a dog.'



'That's easy. The front end. Didn't you see its teeth.'

'Your mum will say that the other end is more dangerous.'

'You mean the waggy tail? That's daft.'

'Not the tail part. Sniff.'

Ben sniffed.

'Sniff again. It's what you didn't see and trod in.'

Ben looked down at his feet and could see brown gooey stuff under his right shoe.

'Now what's your mum going to say?'

The goloknip and been slowing turning back to yo's usual wobbly balloon shape and, before yo's head went, said goodbye, then went pop and disappeared.

'Ben, there you are at last. Where have you been? And, phooee, what have you trodden in? It stinks. Just wait until we get home.'

the end for now