

The Goloknip Stories

by Roderick Ramage

gryphon and a golinpok

Ben traced his finger round the shape of a strange creature in a book Mum had read to him last night. The writing was too old fashioned for him to read easily, but he but he loved the pictures. The front part looked like a giant eagle, clutching a big animal in his claws, and its back half looked like a lion. He had hardly thought that it must live where the unicorns are in the Realm Perilous, when he was there, looking at skyscrapers that looked like trees and at trees that looked like skyscrapers; and there was the elephant who had saved him from the unicorns.

'Welcome back, Ben.'

'How do you know my name?'

'Elephants never forget. And I'll never forget that you said "please" when you asked me to help you.'

'Sorry I forgot to say "thank you" but I had to run ...'

'For your life. That's all right, but you have said it now. Where is your goloknip friend?'

'I don't knew. I thought yo would take me here again, but when I thought of the Realm Perilous, I just came here on my own.'

'I expect yo will be around somewhere or a golipnok or a golinpok. There are lots of them around here.'

Neither of them noticed the proud gryphon strutting proudly up to them.

'Another human already, and so soon. I was only little griffling, when that last one was here, what's his name? Do you know how old a griffling is before he becomes a gryphon?'

'Eighteen?'

'Did you say a hundred and eighteen?'

Ben knew that he would be wrong, whatever he said, so he turned to the elephant.

'You say. You remember everything.'

'"You say" what?'

'Err. "You remember everything".'

'You've forgotten a little word.'



'You say, please.'

'That's better. One hundred and nineteen. Griffins are no good with numbers. They can hardly count. They like to be called "gryphons", it sounds posh, but they are really just "griffins".'

'If you excuse me. You are interrupting.'

'No I didn't. You asked.'

'As I was saying. William de Brailes. That's his name. Only seven hundred and seventy four years and one hundred and 22 days since his visit.'

'Who is William de Brailes?'

'Stop interrupting. So what's the hurry to come back and how is he?'

'Who?'

'William de Brailes, silly.'

'Who's he?'

'The last one of you to come here. Seven hundred and seventy five years and two hundred and 21 days ago.'

The elephant had been watching out for unicorns and had only one ear on this conversation.

'Six hundred and thirty nine years and 23 days. I told you that griffins cannot count. The proud gryffon paid no attention.'

'So how is he?'

'Who is "he"?''

'Don't you listen? William de Brailes. The last one of you to come here.'

Even the proud griffin realised that Ben was puzzled, so it tried to explain.

'Ah, while he was here he painted a picture of me ripping a centaur to pieces with beak and my claws.'

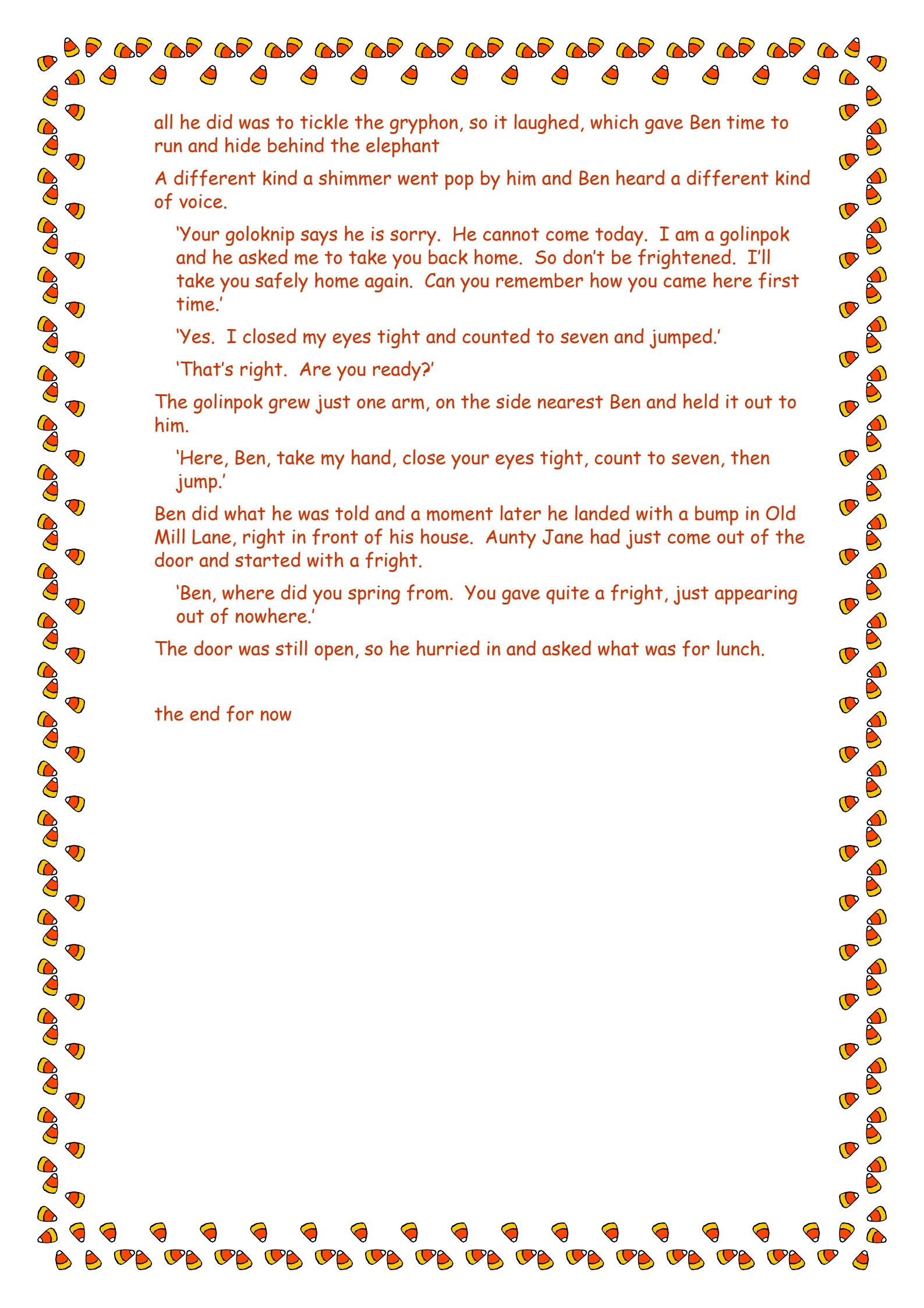
'But that's not very nice.'

'Oh yes it was. He painted it ever so small. As small as your hand. He said he was going to put it in a book. Have you seen it?'

'Um, yes. I was looking at it just before I came.'

'You what?'

For the second time Ben felt frightened in the Realm Perilous. One of these days he might realise what the place had its name. The griffin was rearing up like a proud gryphon, snapping its beak and twitching its claws and looking at him hungrily. Ben thought that there must be a zip where the eagle part joins the lion part. He might save himself by undoing it, but



all he did was to tickle the gryphon, so it laughed, which gave Ben time to run and hide behind the elephant

A different kind a shimmer went pop by him and Ben heard a different kind of voice.

'Your goloknip says he is sorry. He cannot come today. I am a golinpok and he asked me to take you back home. So don't be frightened. I'll take you safely home again. Can you remember how you came here first time.'

'Yes. I closed my eyes tight and counted to seven and jumped.'

'That's right. Are you ready?'

The golinpok grew just one arm, on the side nearest Ben and held it out to him.

'Here, Ben, take my hand, close your eyes tight, count to seven, then jump.'

Ben did what he was told and a moment later he landed with a bump in Old Mill Lane, right in front of his house. Aunty Jane had just come out of the door and started with a fright.

'Ben, where did you spring from. You gave quite a fright, just appearing out of nowhere.'

The door was still open, so he hurried in and asked what was for lunch.

the end for now