

## The Goloknip Stories

by Roderick Ramage

### the illustrator

'Hello. What's your name and what are you drawing?'

'My name's Jessica and I'm drawing you and your goloknip. You must be Ben.'

'How do you know that?'

'Aha, that would be telling. Oh, where has it gone?'

'Yo, not it!'

The voice was there. Both Ben and Jessica heard it, but there was nothing to be seen. There has been a little pop, so Ben knew that the Goloknip had gone. He also know that yo did not like being seen by grown-ups, at least not unless yo had made yoself look like another boy, one time, like Rupert Bear. All the same Ben looked round just in case the Goloknip was only hiding. Yo was nowhere to be seen. Not even a shimmer. But Ben felt that yo was still listening.

'Why do you want to draw my goloknip? Are you an artist?'

'I'm at art school and it is to go in a book.'

'Will there be a book?'

'I think so, yes. I hope so.'

'You mean with me and the Goloknip in it? Like that mum said in the park. Um, you won't know what mum, but it was this park.'

'I know, but it was by the playground over there.'

Ben got even more amazed.

'How do you know that?'

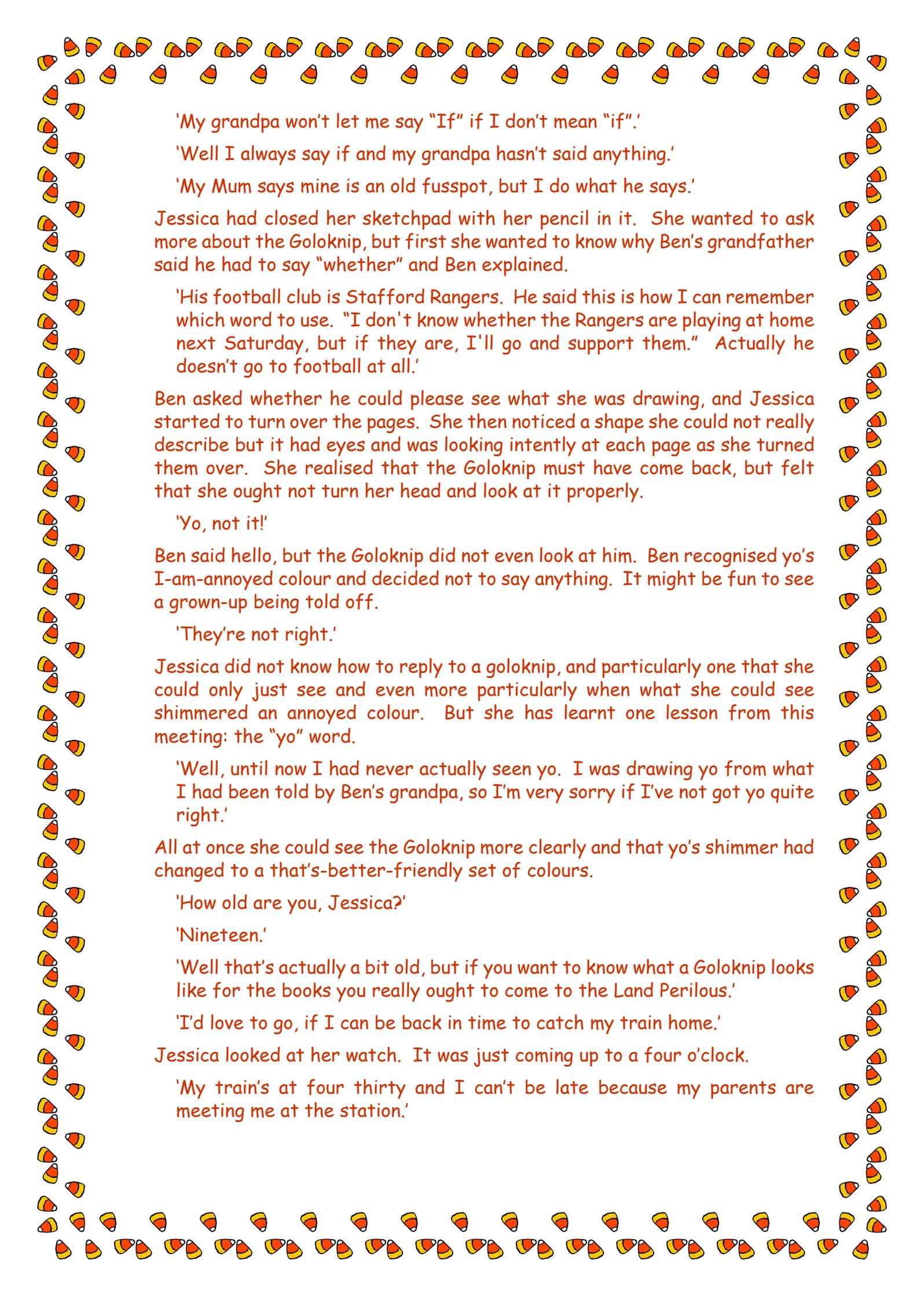
'Aha, that would be telling. But I can tell you. I read the story.'

'You read the story?'

'Yes. You must remember. In that story the Mum said: "Don't be silly. Goloknips aren't real. They are just in books. They are only make believe." Do you remember now.'

'Yes, but I didn't believe her. But if they really were in books why did you say you hoped so when I asked whether there will be a book.'

"Whether". That's a very grown up word.'



'My grandpa won't let me say "If" if I don't mean "if".'

'Well I always say if and my grandpa hasn't said anything.'

'My Mum says mine is an old fusspot, but I do what he says.'

Jessica had closed her sketchpad with her pencil in it. She wanted to ask more about the Goloknip, but first she wanted to know why Ben's grandfather said he had to say "whether" and Ben explained.

'His football club is Stafford Rangers. He said this is how I can remember which word to use. "I don't know whether the Rangers are playing at home next Saturday, but if they are, I'll go and support them." Actually he doesn't go to football at all.'

Ben asked whether he could please see what she was drawing, and Jessica started to turn over the pages. She then noticed a shape she could not really describe but it had eyes and was looking intently at each page as she turned them over. She realised that the Goloknip must have come back, but felt that she ought not turn her head and look at it properly.

'Yo, not it!'

Ben said hello, but the Goloknip did not even look at him. Ben recognised yo's I-am-annoyed colour and decided not to say anything. It might be fun to see a grown-up being told off.

'They're not right.'

Jessica did not know how to reply to a goloknip, and particularly one that she could only just see and even more particularly when what she could see shimmered an annoyed colour. But she has learnt one lesson from this meeting: the "yo" word.

'Well, until now I had never actually seen yo. I was drawing yo from what I had been told by Ben's grandpa, so I'm very sorry if I've not got yo quite right.'

All at once she could see the Goloknip more clearly and that yo's shimmer had changed to a that's-better-friendly set of colours.

'How old are you, Jessica?'

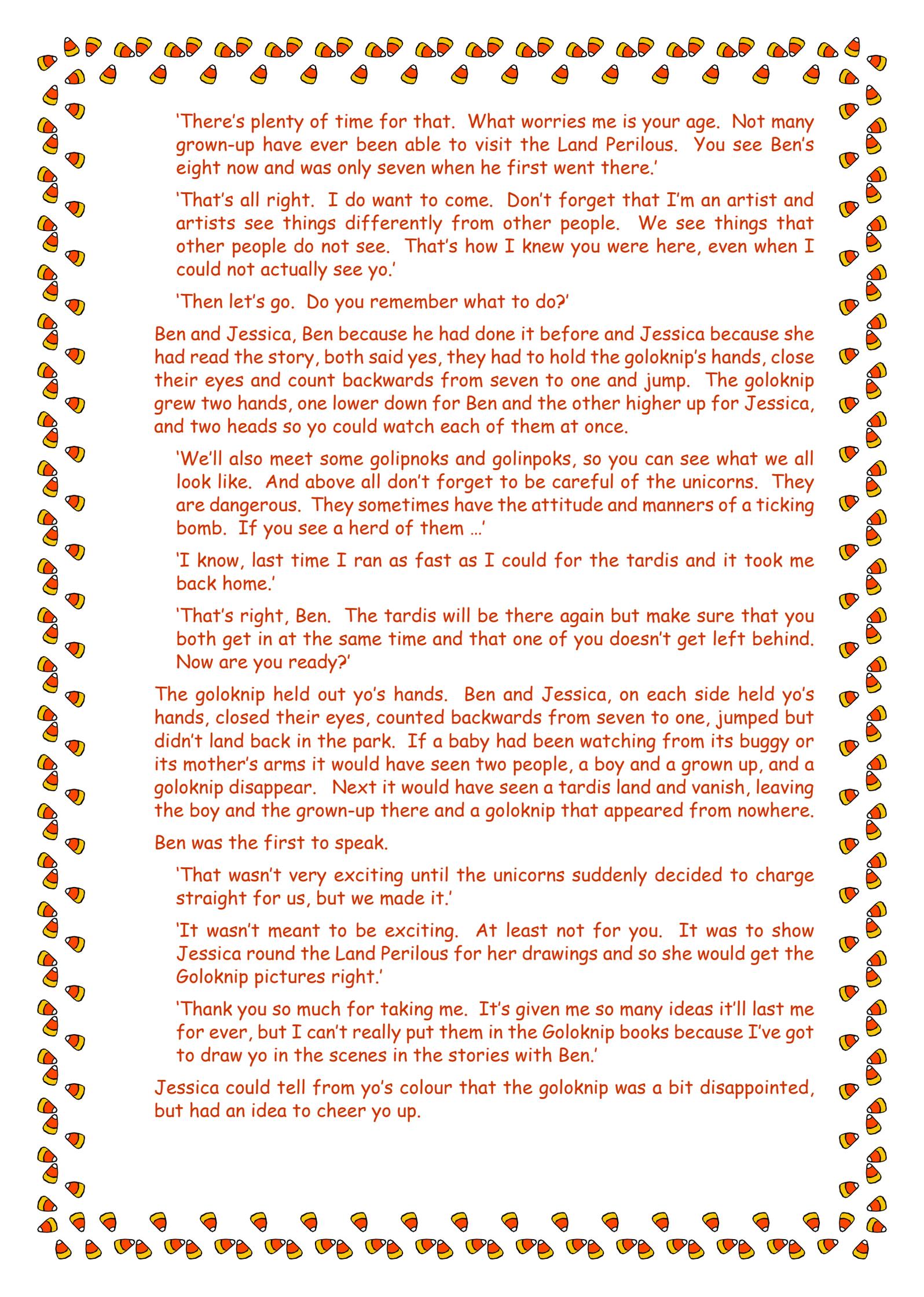
'Nineteen.'

'Well that's actually a bit old, but if you want to know what a Goloknip looks like for the books you really ought to come to the Land Perilous.'

'I'd love to go, if I can be back in time to catch my train home.'

Jessica looked at her watch. It was just coming up to a four o'clock.

'My train's at four thirty and I can't be late because my parents are meeting me at the station.'



'There's plenty of time for that. What worries me is your age. Not many grown-up have ever been able to visit the Land Perilous. You see Ben's eight now and was only seven when he first went there.'

'That's all right. I do want to come. Don't forget that I'm an artist and artists see things differently from other people. We see things that other people do not see. That's how I knew you were here, even when I could not actually see yo.'

'Then let's go. Do you remember what to do?'

Ben and Jessica, Ben because he had done it before and Jessica because she had read the story, both said yes, they had to hold the goloknip's hands, close their eyes and count backwards from seven to one and jump. The goloknip grew two hands, one lower down for Ben and the other higher up for Jessica, and two heads so yo could watch each of them at once.

'We'll also meet some golipnoks and golinpoks, so you can see what we all look like. And above all don't forget to be careful of the unicorns. They are dangerous. They sometimes have the attitude and manners of a ticking bomb. If you see a herd of them ...'

'I know, last time I ran as fast as I could for the tardis and it took me back home.'

'That's right, Ben. The tardis will be there again but make sure that you both get in at the same time and that one of you doesn't get left behind. Now are you ready?'

The goloknip held out yo's hands. Ben and Jessica, on each side held yo's hands, closed their eyes, counted backwards from seven to one, jumped but didn't land back in the park. If a baby had been watching from its buggy or its mother's arms it would have seen two people, a boy and a grown up, and a goloknip disappear. Next it would have seen a tardis land and vanish, leaving the boy and the grown-up there and a goloknip that appeared from nowhere.

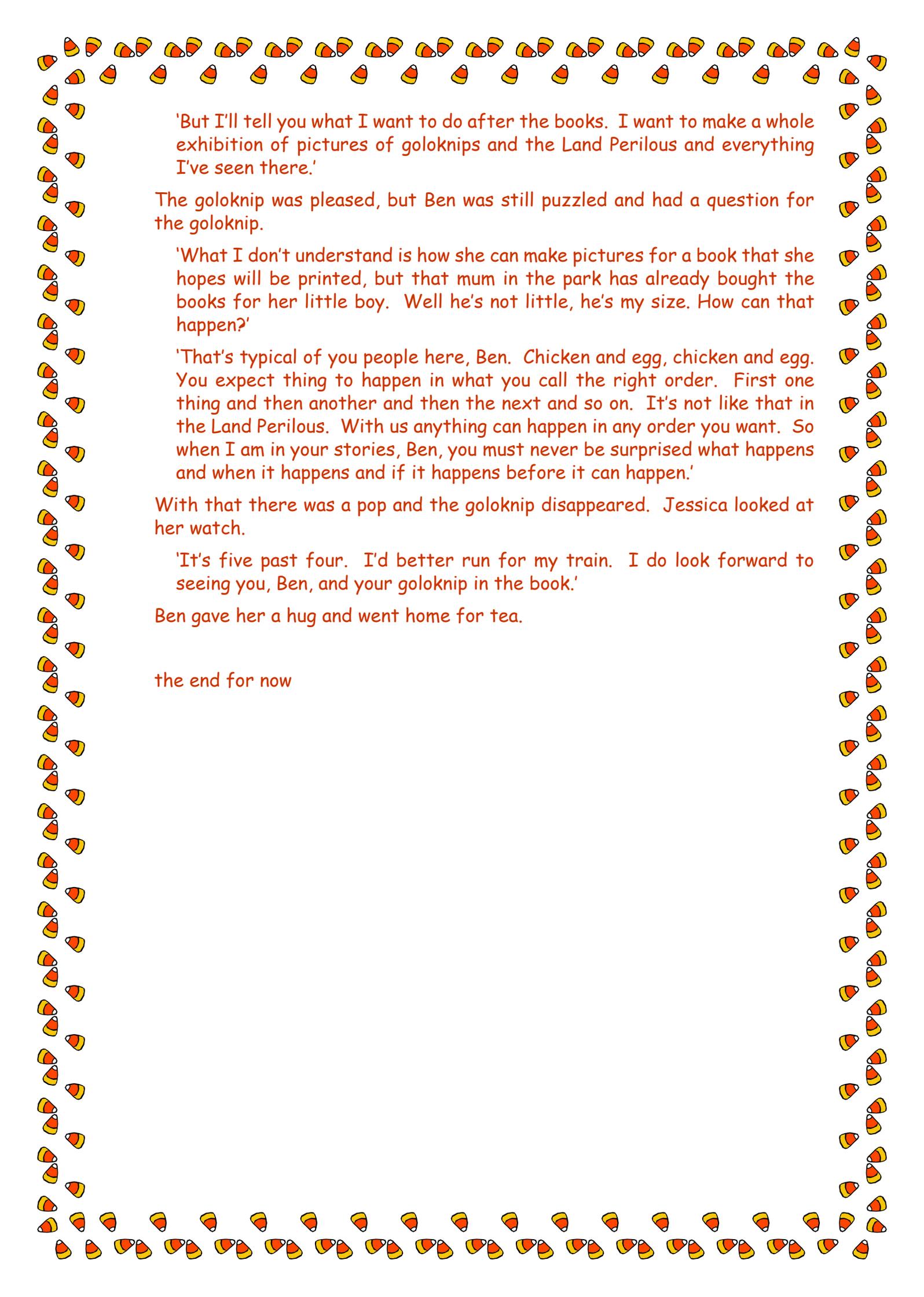
Ben was the first to speak.

'That wasn't very exciting until the unicorns suddenly decided to charge straight for us, but we made it.'

'It wasn't meant to be exciting. At least not for you. It was to show Jessica round the Land Perilous for her drawings and so she would get the Goloknip pictures right.'

'Thank you so much for taking me. It's given me so many ideas it'll last me for ever, but I can't really put them in the Goloknip books because I've got to draw yo in the scenes in the stories with Ben.'

Jessica could tell from yo's colour that the goloknip was a bit disappointed, but had an idea to cheer yo up.



'But I'll tell you what I want to do after the books. I want to make a whole exhibition of pictures of goloknips and the Land Perilous and everything I've seen there.'

The goloknip was pleased, but Ben was still puzzled and had a question for the goloknip.

'What I don't understand is how she can make pictures for a book that she hopes will be printed, but that mum in the park has already bought the books for her little boy. Well he's not little, he's my size. How can that happen?'

'That's typical of you people here, Ben. Chicken and egg, chicken and egg. You expect thing to happen in what you call the right order. First one thing and then another and then the next and so on. It's not like that in the Land Perilous. With us anything can happen in any order you want. So when I am in your stories, Ben, you must never be surprised what happens and when it happens and if it happens before it can happen.'

With that there was a pop and the goloknip disappeared. Jessica looked at her watch.

'It's five past four. I'd better run for my train. I do look forward to seeing you, Ben, and your goloknip in the book.'

Ben gave her a hug and went home for tea.

the end for now