

The Goloknip Stories

by Roderick Ramage

far from the maddening crow

'Caw, caw, caw.'

A man with jet black hair, a long shiny red nose and a black suit was at the front of the class talking.

'Caw, caw, caw.'

Ben looked out of the window and could just see a big black crow perched on the tree in the playground.

'Caw, caw, caw.'

He wondered what it would be like if the crow and the man swapped places, so the crow would put on a pair of black shoes and trousers and the man would grow wings and swoop round the classroom flapping everyone's pencils and paper off their desks with its wings. Miss Rikards would have kittens. Miss Rikards had persuaded the headmistress to invite Primary Philosophy for Primary Schools to take the last class on Friday afternoons.

'Ben, stop staring out of the window and concentrate.'

He turned round and tried to listen to the man at the front of the class who was still going on and on.

'Caw, caw, caw. Karl Popper. Caw, caw, caw. Black crow. Caw, caw, caw.'

A quiet voice whispered into Ben's head.

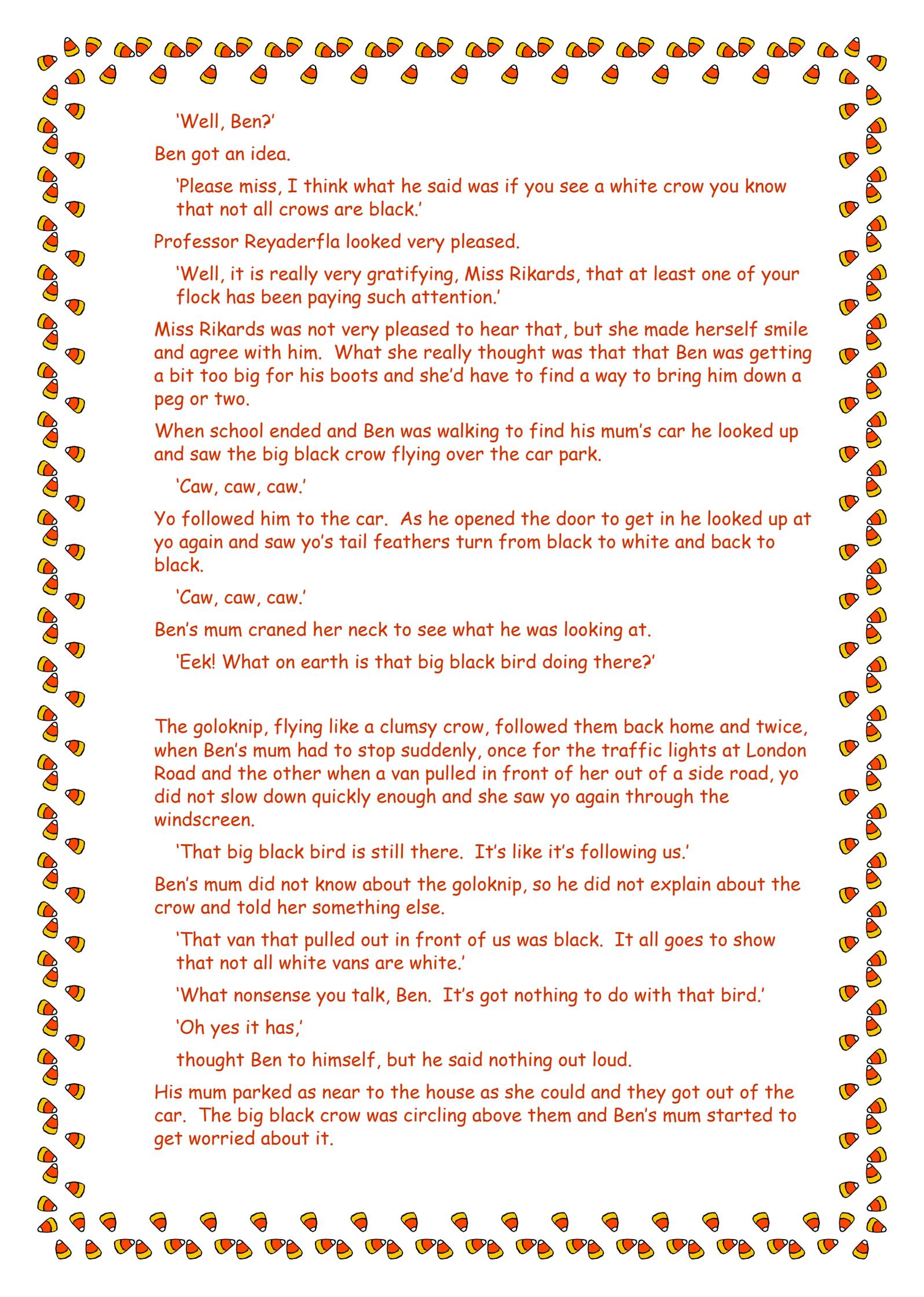
'Caw, caw, caw. Karl Popper came a cropper, came a cropper. Caw, caw, caw. Black crow as white as snow, white as snow. Caw, caw, caw.'

Ben looked out of the window again. The big black crow turned its head to look at him, and he nearly burst out laughing. It was his friend the goloknip. Yo had put on a pair of shiny black shoes and black trousers and its feathers shimmered a have-fun kind of black. Ben was glad that his was the only desk at the right place to see the tree.

Miss Rikards lost her temper with him.

'Ben! Stop staring out of the window and concentrate. I told you once. I won't warn you again. Now what has Professor Reyaderfla just told us? I want you to tell us or I'll give you a detention.'

Ben looked quickly out of the window. The goloknip was still looking like a crow in trousers and shoes, turned slowly white, except for his trousers and shoes, and winked at him.



'Well, Ben?'

Ben got an idea.

'Please miss, I think what he said was if you see a white crow you know that not all crows are black.'

Professor Reyaderfla looked very pleased.

'Well, it is really very gratifying, Miss Rikards, that at least one of your flock has been paying such attention.'

Miss Rikards was not very pleased to hear that, but she made herself smile and agree with him. What she really thought was that that Ben was getting a bit too big for his boots and she'd have to find a way to bring him down a peg or two.

When school ended and Ben was walking to find his mum's car he looked up and saw the big black crow flying over the car park.

'Caw, caw, caw.'

Yo followed him to the car. As he opened the door to get in he looked up at yo again and saw yo's tail feathers turn from black to white and back to black.

'Caw, caw, caw.'

Ben's mum craned her neck to see what he was looking at.

'Eek! What on earth is that big black bird doing there?'

The goloknip, flying like a clumsy crow, followed them back home and twice, when Ben's mum had to stop suddenly, once for the traffic lights at London Road and the other when a van pulled in front of her out of a side road, yo did not slow down quickly enough and she saw yo again through the windscreen.

'That big black bird is still there. It's like it's following us.'

Ben's mum did not know about the goloknip, so he did not explain about the crow and told her something else.

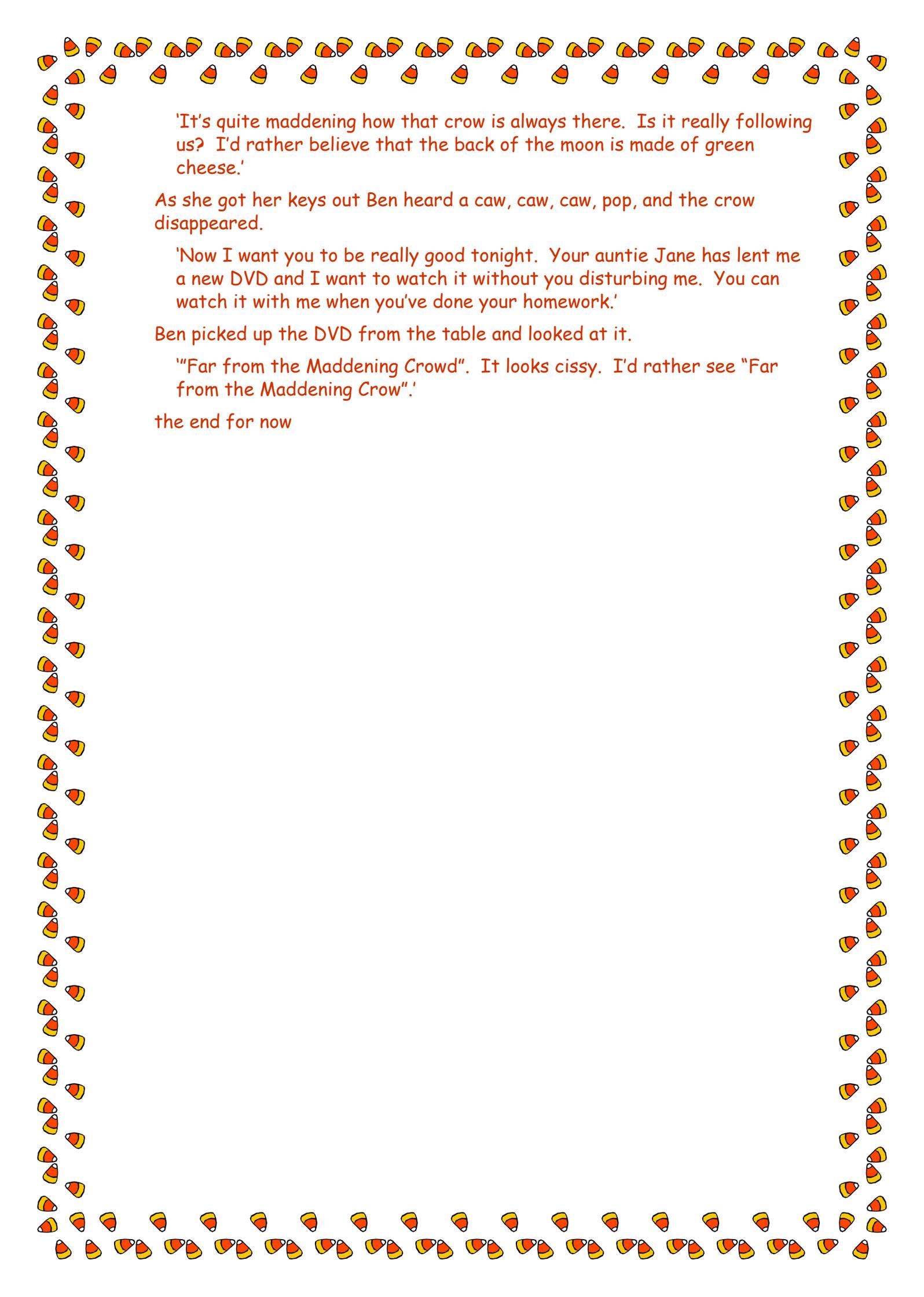
'That van that pulled out in front of us was black. It all goes to show that not all white vans are white.'

'What nonsense you talk, Ben. It's got nothing to do with that bird.'

'Oh yes it has,'

thought Ben to himself, but he said nothing out loud.

His mum parked as near to the house as she could and they got out of the car. The big black crow was circling above them and Ben's mum started to get worried about it.



'It's quite maddening how that crow is always there. Is it really following us? I'd rather believe that the back of the moon is made of green cheese.'

As she got her keys out Ben heard a caw, caw, caw, pop, and the crow disappeared.

'Now I want you to be really good tonight. Your auntie Jane has lent me a new DVD and I want to watch it without you disturbing me. You can watch it with me when you've done your homework.'

Ben picked up the DVD from the table and looked at it.

"Far from the Maddening Crowd". It looks cissy. I'd rather see "Far from the Maddening Crow".'

the end for now