

Ed Wicke

(A little taste of...)

**Billy Jones,
King of the Goblins**

BlacknBlue Press UK

**For David Gustavo Eggington...
... and Goblins I have known**

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Chapter 1 Birthday Surprise

Thursday: We had a Maths test and I got the lowest mark in the Universe. I told Miss Allen it's my tenth birthday tomorrow, the first of June, but I don't think she heard me. She was gazing out of the window with that dreamy look she sometimes has.



Billy Jones chewed on the end of his pencil. He hated writing his diary. But tomorrow was Friday, and he had to hand it in to be marked. He thought hard, and added:

Only 36 days until the Country Dancing Display. Yuk!

He counted the words. He needed eighty more – eighty!! What could he fill all those blank lines with? Nothing ever happened to him.

Not ever.

Except of course –

But he couldn't write about *that*. They would think he was crazy! Still, he had all those words to waste...

Next we went out for morning break. And I saw THEM again, peering out from the bushes. More of them this time. Shaped like those crazy creatures you can make from modelling balloons. Long bodies and tiny heads. Or tiny bodies and stretched-out heads with weird, flapping ears like wings. I pointed them out to a dinner lady, but she couldn't

see them. No one sees them except for me. But I've seen them every day this last month.

He stopped and counted. Seventy-nine words. Just one more! He took up his pencil again and added:

Really.

Then he went to bed.

ΩΔ◇× BIRTHDAY SURPRISE ×◇ΔΩΩ

... He wasn't sure what had wakened him. He lay in bed with his eyes closed, wondering.

There were odd sounds in his room. As if a dozen rabbits were playing football, watched by a murmuring crowd of pigeons - or maybe penguins, shuffling from foot to webby foot, nodding their heads gravely and exclaiming "Auk!" whenever one of the bunnies scored a goal.

Then someone - or something - coughed. One of those coughs which mean: *We're ready to begin now and we'd like your attention, please....*

Billy opened his eyes and sat up, yawning. But he stopped with his mouth still wide open.

In a half circle about his bed stood a grotesque gathering of creatures. By the dim moonlight from his window he could see that they were of many colours and shades - lime green, royal purple, deep red, dusky bluish grey. And all of them with a soft, smooth, half-shiny look, as if they'd been made out of modelling clay.

Some of them were almost as high as the room; others could scarcely be seen over the end of his bed. Some of the shorter ones were as wide as they were tall, and some of the tall ones were thinner than Billy.



looked like small, bouncy puppies; others resembled lambs but with long, flapping ears.

But no! The green lamb's ears were changing, becoming wings, and its body was shrinking into its head, so that it was now just a fat flying head, rather like an owl that had eaten too many mice.

And now that he looked carefully, he could see that many of these animals were busily changing shape. One cat was turning into a spider, one bouncy puppy into something halfway between a snake and a corkscrew.



He also understood the scuffling noise now. The animals were playing a non-stop game, tussling, chasing, leaping over one another. The puppies bounced into the tall

cats and bowled them over, and the corkscrew snake spiralled around its fellow ex-puppies one by one and trapped them in its spirals. But then one puppy wriggled about and changed into something very like a pogo stick with a tiny head, and sprang free of the corkscrew.

All this Billy saw in the few seconds that the Goblins were bowing to him; then he realised they were waiting for him to return the bow, and he did so. But it was difficult to bow in a kingly manner when sitting

Chapter 2 Rules is Rules



The nearest creatures were staring at Sunny the teddy bear. One or two of them even bowed gravely to the scruffy toy before Billy pushed him out of sight under the covers and asked,

‘What’s Kingdust?’

‘It’s wot ya make kings outta,’ said the Spokesgoblin. ‘Powerful stuff, fulla royalness. Purple and a half, know wot I mean?’

Billy didn’t know, and was about to say so, when one of the taller lady Goblins – dark purple, and wearing a high cap covered with lavender plumes – clicked her fingers once and said something sharp in a gabbling, twisty language.

The Spokesgoblin went a darker blue, as if with embarrassment. He bowed to the lady and turned back to Billy. ‘I ‘pologises, yer Majesty,’ he said. ‘I has not done wot I ort to of done. Please pardon me.’

‘Of course,’ said Billy.

‘I must wivout delay perform der formal introducements. If yer Majesticness allows.’

‘I do,’ said Billy, with a regal nod of the head.

The creature whispered, ‘Gotta do it in Gob, y’know, an’ gotta do it in formal loudness. But I’ll transwordify it for you.’

He extended a long arm towards the tall, purple Goblin lady and shouted in such a loud voice that Billy had to quickly cover his ears: ‘Hreeenyaaa yabba-

ond purple Goblin – this one about Billy’s size and wearing a small pointed violet cap on his head and a very sulky expression across his face.

He whispered back to Billy, ‘Dis is his *Nearly Highness der Prince Nobble.*’ Then he drew a deep breath and shouted:

‘Hreeenyaaa yabbagga nur Bedangabassa Nobbbbbul deb-’

But there were footsteps in the hallway, and the Spokesgoblin broke off.

They all stood in silence, listening. Then one of the pets – half puppy, half stingray – nudged a spider beast, and a winged yellow snake poked a bright blue rabbit, and another scuffling fight broke out.

‘Shhh!’ warned the tall Queen, and the pets stopped their game. She whispered a question in Gob, and a couple of the thickset yellow Goblins hung their heads guiltily.

The Spokesgoblin whispered to Billy, ‘Dey forgot to do der sleepdustin’. Dat’s der problem wiv Yellas – no more brains than a Marg, an’ dat’s der solemn truthness. We’ll hafta make -’

But what it was that they had to make, Billy didn’t discover because just then the bedroom door was pushed open and someone with a lot of straggly white hair and a walking stick in one hand looked into the moonlit room.

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‘What’re you up to?’ his grandmother demanded.

‘Nothing,’ said Billy, looking about the room. *Nothing* was right: the creatures had vanished like steam from a kettle.

‘You were makin’ a lot of noise,’ his grandmother

said, peering at him through thick spectacles. ‘You’d better cut it out, d’you hear me? *Or else.*’ She banged the floor with her walking stick.

Billy nodded.

‘I *said*, do you hear me?’

‘Yes, Grandma.’

His grandmother shut the door and Billy heard the gentle thump-thump of her walking stick as she went back to her own room.

Grandma sounded fierce, but she wasn’t. She sometimes shouted, and had once swatted Billy with a newspaper when Billy spilled hot coffee on her, but she was actually kind and patient.

She was all the family Billy had. His mother had died when Billy was a year old, and his father had died when he was eight. Grandma had taken care of him ever since.

People said she was crazy. Well, maybe she *was* a little crazy. But Billy didn’t mind that. He liked her.

Billy turned on the light by his bed and studied the picture on the wall opposite. His dad hadn’t been perfect, but he’d been gentle and funny, and was always ready to kick a football around and...

Billy looked around the room carefully before turning the light off again. There was nothing to be seen or heard. Perhaps it had all been a dream. He was tired now, and quickly fell asleep.

*Billy Jones, King of the Goblins
gets crazier with every page.
Order it on Amazon now!*