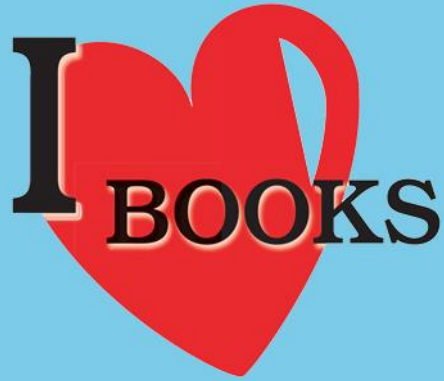




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Opening extract from
**The Goblin Princess The Grand
Goblin Ball**

Written by
Jenny O'Connor
Illustrated by
Kate Wills-Crowley

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2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

To Etta, my imaginative little
rabbit dropping.

Crystal
Isles

Port
Barnacle

Bagstock
Village

The Goblin Kingdom

Goblinstoke

Raven
Wood

Dragon
Lagoon

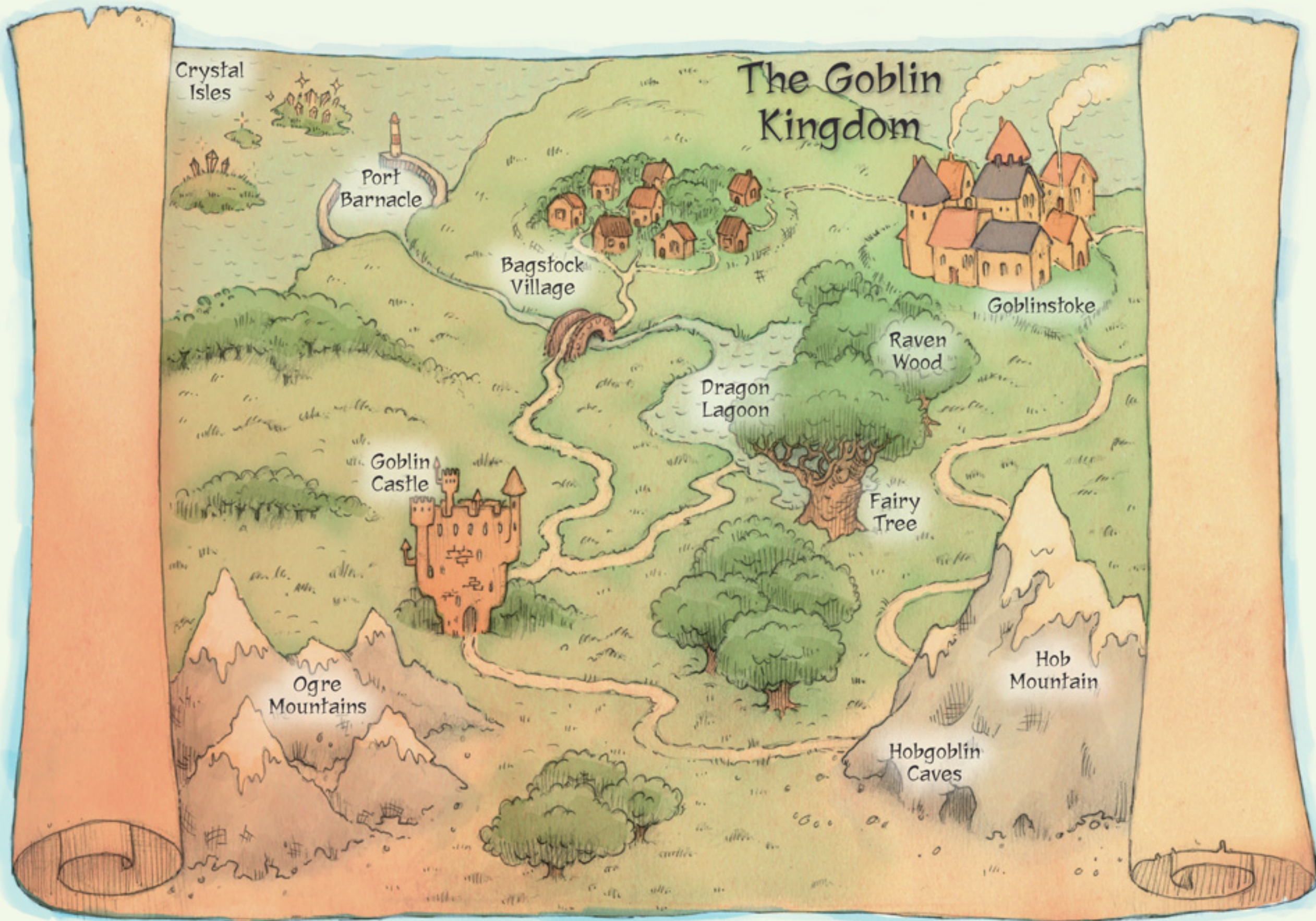
Fairy
Tree

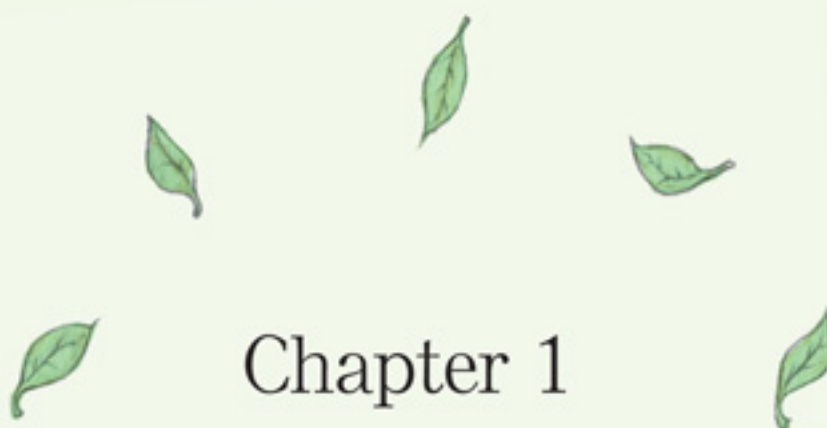
Goblin
Castle

Ogre
Mountains

Hob
Mountain

Hobgoblin
Caves





Chapter 1

Party Invitations

SPLAT! Mrs Dollop was giving the Goblin Castle its annual spring dirtying. Matty, the Goblin Princess, was running down the stone stairs with Smoky, her pet dragon, when they were suddenly enveloped in a huge cloud of dust.

‘Hello, my little rabbit dropping,’

said Mrs Dollop. 'I'm just getting the place ready for tonight's party.'

The Goblin Queen frowned. 'Mrs Dollop! Stop gossiping. There's still so much work to be done. Now, Matty, you'll have to entertain yourself today. Your father's just gone off to post all the invitations for the Grand Goblin Ball, and I have to help Mrs Dollop dress up the cake.'

'Can I invite my friends?' asked Prince Stinkwort, Matty's brother. He was managing to slide down the stair bannister, chew on a particularly slimy



slug, and talk all at the same time!

‘Of course you can, Stinkwort. Everyone in the Goblin Kingdom will get an invitation. Except, of course, the horrible hobgoblins. They certainly aren’t invited. Now, who will you invite, Matty?’ asked the Goblin Queen.

‘Matty hasn’t got any friends. **BURP!**’ Stinkwort belched loudly. Matty stared at her feet miserably. ‘**Burp! Plop!**’ Princess Plop copied her brother.

The Queen looked down fondly at her baby daughter and wiped a bit more

dirt on to her face. ‘Well done, Plop. Matty, my little horribleness, why can’t you burp like your brother and sister? I know you’re not like most goblins, but if only you behaved a bit more like a goblin should, you’d have lots of friends. Could you try at least to *like* eating slugs?’

‘I fwiend,’ said Smoky softly. ‘I know, Smoky.’ Matty stroked her pet dragon.





Smoky suddenly ran to the window, his little blue tail wagging wildly. ‘Look, Smatty!’

‘Your dragon looks like he wants to go out for a walk, my little puppy doo-doo,’ said Mrs Dollop kindly.

But looking up, Matty could see what she knew no other goblin in the kingdom could. There was a fairy at the window! Fern, her very own fairy friend from Raven Wood, had come to see her!

Matty whispered a warning to her pet dragon. ‘Shh, Smoky. Nobody

would believe that we can see fairies!’

Fern looked like a tiny ball of sparkling light as she flew through the open window. Matty could just make out her pretty face and delicate clothes. The fairy flew straight up to Smoky and gave him a kiss, her long hair and swirling skirt of miniature fern leaves flying out behind her.

‘Matty, close that window! You’re letting all the dust out,’ said the Goblin Queen, blissfully unaware that a little





fairy was now sitting
on her crown looking
curiously down at her.

‘Well, Mrs Dollop,
we must get on. The
castle has to look its
very worst. We need
to untidy every room
and bring in some more
dust. And where are the
cobwebs? What useless

spiders we seem to have! Go out into
the garden and catch some more, could
you, Stinkwort?’

‘Oooh, I’ll get out the dustblower,
Your Gobness. Nothing spreads the dirt
as fast,’ said Mrs Dollop, fetching her
favourite machine from the depths of a
messy cupboard.

When the goblins had left, Matty
opened the palm of her hand to let Fern
rest on it. ‘It’s so good to see you. Where
are Teasel and Tansy?’

‘That’s why I’ve come,’ Fern replied.
‘They’re missing, Matty. Have you seen
them?’

Matty shook her head. ‘I haven’t.
Have you, Smoky?’

‘Cwumbs, no!’

Fern was fretful. ‘They went out this morning very early after breakfast and didn’t come back for lunch. I’m really worried – they’ve never missed a meal before. I wondered if they had come to visit you at the Goblin Castle.’

Matty was dismayed. ‘No, they haven’t, Fern. How can I help?’

Fern sighed. ‘If the twins arrive at the castle, tell them to come home straightaway. I can’t stay, Matty. I’m sorry. I’ll have to carry on looking.’

So Matty waved goodbye to Fern,

watched her fly away across the messy castle grounds, then slowly closed the window. ‘Oh, Smoky. This is dreadful!’

‘Dweadful!’ agreed the dragon, his tail drooping sorrowfully.

