Helping your children choose books they will love

I reading

Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

The True Tale of the Monster Billy Dean

Written by

David Almond

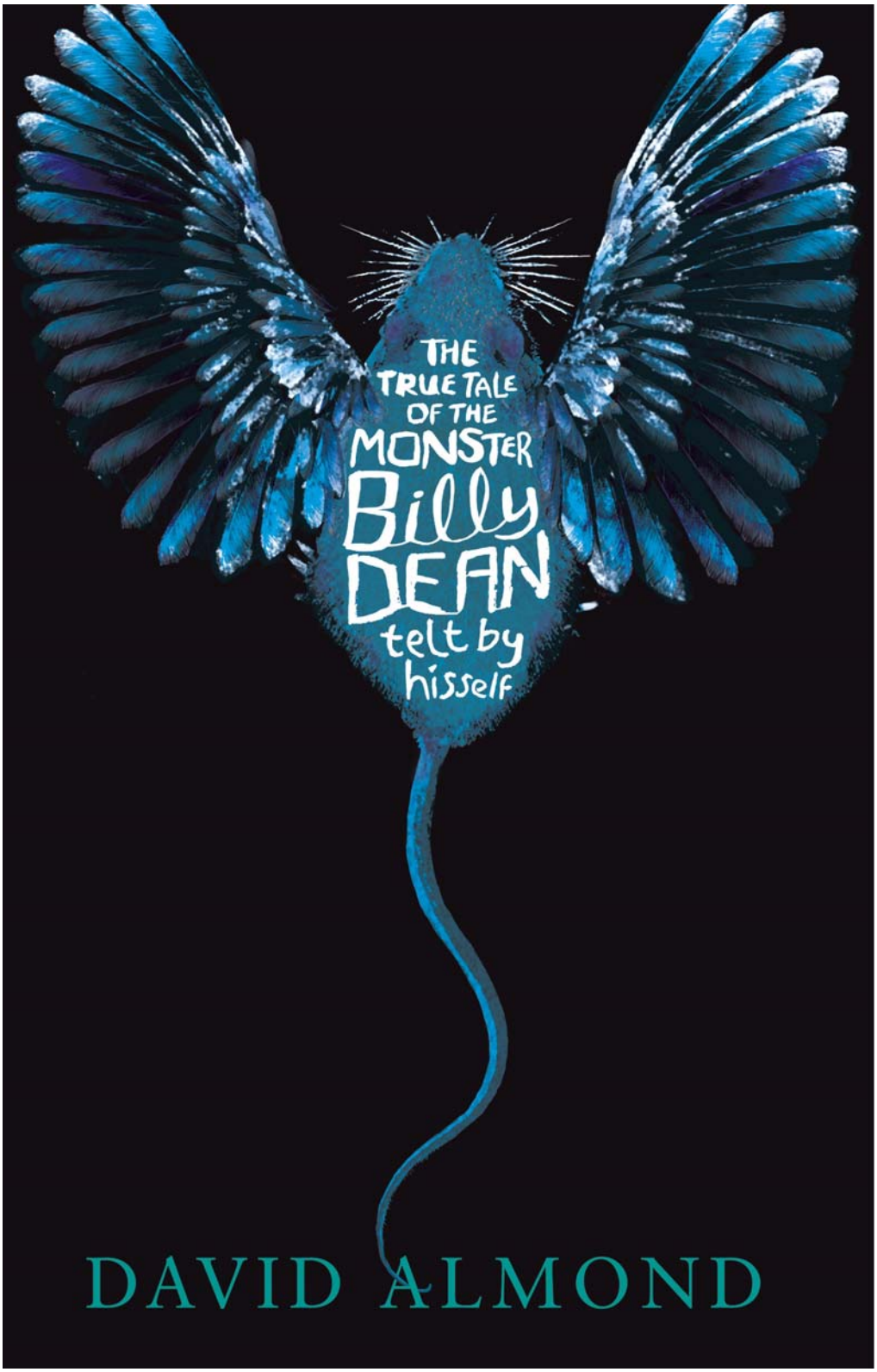
Published by

Puffin Books

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk



DAVID ALMOND

THE TRUE TALE OF THE MONSTER Billy DEAN telt by hisself

DAVID ALMOND



PUFFIN

PUFFIN BOOKS

Published by the Penguin Group
Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England
Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA
Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4P 2Y3
(a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.)
Penguin Ireland, 25 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland (a division of Penguin Books Ltd)
Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell, Victoria 3124, Australia
(a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd)
Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi – 110 017, India
Penguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, Auckland 0632, New Zealand
(a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd)
Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, 24 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank,
Johannesburg 2196, South Africa

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England

puffinbooks.com

First published by Puffin Books and Viking 2011
001 – 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Copyright © David Almond, 2011
Hand-lettering copyright © www.the-parish.com, 2011
All rights reserved

The moral right of the author has been asserted

Typeset by Palimpsest Book Production Limited, Falkirk, Stirlingshire
Printed in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc

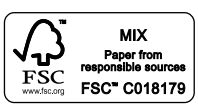
Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise), without the prior written permission of both the copyright owner and the above publisher of this book

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

HARDBACK
ISBN: 978–0–141–33204–8

TRADE PAPERBACK
ISBN: 978–0–670–92109–6

www.greenpenguin.co.uk



Penguin Books is committed to a sustainable future for our business, our readers and our planet. This book is made from paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council.

This tail is told by 1 that died at birth by 1 that came into the world in days of endles war & at the moment of disaster.

He grew in isolayshon wile the enjins of destrucshon flew & smoke rose over the sitys & wile wilderness & waste crept all acros the world.

He grew up with the birds & mise as frends.

He wos a secrit shy & thick & tungtied emptyheded thing.

He wos tort to read & rite & spel by his tenda littl muther & by Mr McCaufrey the butcha & by Missus Malone and her gosts.

So he is not cleva so plees forgiv his folts & his mistayks.

Mebbe you alredy no him. Mebbe you came to Blinkbonny & to Missus Malones door & into the parlor wer he told you of all the spirits that wer still arownd you and that stil lovd you even tho you thort they wer gon.

Mebbe he roamd the afterlyf for you & sang for you & dansd for you & became the thing you thort youd lost the thing you lovd so much.

Mebbe you came in serch of healing & he tuchd you jentl jentl & askd you wer the pane wos & drew that pane owt from you & you wer heald.

Mebbe you even stood ther & watchd wile he tryd to heal the ded.

Bak in those days he wos the Aynjel Childe.

He wos the worker of majic & miracls the speaker in tungs & the yellerowt of drivel & bollox & nonsens.

Those days ar long gone. The ded ar gone. God & his aynjels & sayntes are gone.

The Anjel Childes no mor.

The Aynjel Childe has dun the deeds of monsters.

Wether you no him or not he has been here always.

He cud be just a thing of dream & nitemare a thing that prowls within you at the ded of nite & glares into yor hart & prowls inside yor deepest dreams

Whatever he is it is tym to tell the tail.

Mebbe it is not for you. Mebbe you do not want these words to be ritten into you. Mebbe you do not want them to enter yor blud & boans & to infect yor dremes.

Turn away if you must.

Or read on if you wish. Try to desifer the words. Or lissen. Or do watever els you do to allow these words to enter you.

I am Billy Dean. This is the truth. This is my tail.

1

The Hart of Everything

The Start of It

I am told I wil lern how to rite the tale by riting it. 1 word then anotha 1 word then anotha. Just let the pensil wark. Let it move like footsteps throu the dust & leev its marks behind. Let it leev its marks just like birds & beests leav ther misteryous footprints in mud.

Just fill the pajes.

A word a mark a word a mark.

What do I hav to begin with?

Objects.

Things like this hand of Jesus.

Thees fethers from an aynjels wing.

This dryd out skin of long ded mowse.

This purpl scarf with blak frinjes on it.

I tuch them & sniff them & stare deep into them & O what stories start to rise. What memries feelins thorts & horras loves & dreams. They churn together like tormented water. How to get them into orda how to get them maykin sens?

I have these pajes. I hav this pensil.

I hav this nife that sharpens the pensil that tells the tale that leeds to the nife & to the act that had mebbe always been intended.

No. Dont think of that not yet.

Sharpen the pensil & go to the start & wate for the word.

Wot is the word that is at the start of it?

Dont pawse. Rite it.

Darkness.

Darkness with a boy in it.

A Littl Memry

Im very small. Im wyd awayk. Im staring up into the sqare of niyt. Thers dozens of stars even in that smarl spays. They glitta & they even seme to dans.

Thers a clik & a clak & a shaft of lite farls ova me. Thers the sownd of footsteps. A dark shado stands abuv me.

Hands reech under me & lift me qwikly up.

I see his eyes glitterin lyk 2 massiv nereby stars.

1 of his hands suports my bum. 1 hand raps arownd my bak & holds me cloas to him. I fele the cloth of his blak jaket the stubbl of his blak hare the smooth skin of his throte. Im held so cloas agenst him. And O the sents of him. O the feel of his breathin agenst my body & his breth agenst my skin.

My son, he siys. O my dere son.

And his body vibrayts & eckos with the words & so dos mine.

My son. My dere son.

And he sways with me in his arms almost lyk hes dansin with the stars.

A Littl Boy

This tym its her tuch that draws me back. I feel her fingers & thums holding my hed & tilting it. Fingers strokin my hare & liftin it to feel the lenth of it & then the cowm moving throu it & the teeth of the cowm agenst my scalp. The sownd of the sissors snipping snip snip. Her voys thats singin as she works. Her breth on my skin. The cuttas sweepin up from the bak of my nek towards my hed. The cuttas sweepin up ova my templs. Then the smooth rubbin throu of brilcreem & the smel of that & the last cowming & her littl laff & her saying how lucky she is to hav such a lad.

Now the vishon cums & I see the woman & the boy befor me in the littl room. Much tym has passd sins he wos the bayby on the bed. Hes a littl boy. Hes sittin by the tabl on a chare & shes behynd him & the sunlites shinin down on them from the sqare abuv. Shes taking a towel from his sholders now & tippin the snippdoff hare into the toylet & flushing it away.

And she laffs agen & he smiles & runs his fingers across the new sharp luvly stubbl on his templs & his nek.

Thatll do she says. Billys bak to bonnines agen.

She kisses his cheke. She smyls. But look cloasly. Her eyes ar tyrd. She sags a bit. Tyms alredy started takin its toll on her.

He sees a mows runnin along the bottom of the warl. Then anotha. He poynts he wayvs he sqweeks he laffs.

Mows! he crys. Mows! Eek eek! Eek eek!

She laffs as well. She says she wishes ther wos sumthin cud be dun abowt them. But wots to do? Blinkbonnys riddld with them. And it cud be wors. It cud be rats. Dont encuraj them Billy.

Eek eek! he gose. Eek eek!

She siys. Dont she says. She givs him a cup of lucozayd & she givs him a biscit. She says shes got to go owt to cut & styl & trim. She kisses him & leevs & loks the dore behynd her.

By by he wispers. By by.

I go closer. Its lyk seein a gost of myself. Its lyk bein in the afterlyf & tryin to contact a spirit & bring it bak agen.

Billy, I wisper. Billy.

He dusnt moov of cors. Dusnt flinch. Sqweeks lyk a mows then crowches by the warl & crumbls the biscit & baks away & watches the nervos mise cum cloaser to nibbl & ete.

Billy, I wisper. Billy.

He gose ded stil. He looks arownd him.

Dont be afrade I say.

Its just me, I say. Its just you.

He blinks & shayks his hed.

Eek eek! He crumbls the biscit. Eek eek!

I dont want to scair him so I speke no mor to him but I cant leev him. And the pensil keeps on movin. I move from thing to thing thees things of memry & of luv. The green carpet with the red & yello flowers on it. The fele of the walls with the grate craks & gowjes in them. The crumblin seelin with the fine roots growin down throu it. The littl windo to the sky. The lockd dore wich is the dore I must never go throu. Yes even that is a thing of luv. I stair into the grane of it & the cracks in its fraym & I see tiny worms & beetls that liv in it. The bed with the red cova on it. The littl bluw sofa.

The pitchers on the wall.

The pitchers sho the Holy Iland the plase that mam says is like a littl bit of Heven. She says its a plase were sayntes wons warkd & a plase that sumtyms flotes on the water & sumtyms rests on the land. Its the plase she says theyll go to 1 day wen they can fynd a way to go. I gaze at the sea the sand the cassel on its rok the bonny puffins flyin in a littl groop. I look for the beest calld a seal that pops its hed up in the warter. I look at the blakpaynted upsyd down botes. She says that pepl liv in thees botes & at nite the botes fly upsyd down across the stars. The boy Billy laffs at that & wunders at that

& wunders wot on erth shes on abowt. For thers no way for him to understand. He looks at the pitchers. They hav no meanin for him just as the words abowt them hav no meanin for him poor boy.

I turn and look at him agen. His eyes ar blank & emty lyk an emty paje.

Shes ryt, I wisper. The iland is byutiful & it is reely lyk a littl bit of Hevan. Just look.

He stares into the empty air as if hes lookin for the plays the voys cums from.

It is, I wisper soft as soft.

The mise scamper & the world terns & the day drifts by.

I cant leev.

Shel be bak soon. Shes neva gon mor than an hour or 2. Shell cook him a cupl of Mr McCaufreys best pork sosijjes or 1 of Mr McCaufreys piys.

I hear swete singin and I luk up to the windo to the sky & there are sparras there. Billy luks up too. He laffs & stretches his arms towards the birds. O how wonderful & nesesary they wer. They caym to the windo. They droppd from the sky. They fluterd ther wings & wistld & sang & they peckd with ther beaks on the glass lyk ther wer carlin me. I wistld bak & I stretchd my arms to them just as Billy the boy dos now.

Sumtyms Mam lifted me up & I wud reech towards them & shed say go on son. Carl the burds & sing at them.

Sumtyms in days of hete & lite she opend the glass with a pole & the windo hung down & the lite & the air pord down on me. And the songs of the burds pord down on me & the songs wer byutiful. Some of the burds caym tym & agen. Ther wos a blak blak skwawkin crow a bunch of cheepin spuggys a pare of pijons that cood & tilted there heds & eyes at me. Mam said they caym cos I wos a good boy. She said they wer my frends & that they caym with messajes and greetins to me.

Wot messajes I askd.

Messajes of hope & luv she anserd.

Look at how he stairs upwards at how I staird upwards. He stands

& spreds his arms & is entransd & O how I remember that entransment.

I no he dremes at nite of risin to the littl sqare windo & cliymin owt & bein with the burds & flyin up into the sky. I stil dreme that dreme. I stil imajin risin to the sky. Mebbe evrybody dremes that dreme. Mebbe non of us think that standin & warkin on the world is enuf for us. Evrybody wants to rise. Even a littl boy in a littl lockd room with waste & wilderness arl arownd.

The key is turnin in the lok agen. He turns his eyes down from the birds & the sky.

She cums in agen. She sits with him agen. They ete sossijes & darkness starts to farl & soon its nite.

He lissens. Thers crekes & craks & owls & a far off groanin & a jentl thuddin. Thers a littl suden clik & clak nereby & he catches his breth & stiffens & trembls a bit. He looks with wyd eyes at the lockd dore.

And so dus she for a littl instant.

But its not his daddy not tonite.

The nites of his daddy cumin ar gettin fewer & far betwene. Alredy his mammy sumtymns wispers that the daddys a b in b y b d sod. Alredy shes startin to say that 1 day therll just be Billy & her & no 1 else.

Billy dusnt want to hear that dusnt want to no that dusnt want to beleev it.