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

Goblin Quest

Written by

Philip Reeve

Published by

Marion Lloyd Books an imprint of Scholastic

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

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

First published in the UK in 2014 by Marion Lloyd Books
An imprint of Scholastic Ltd
Euston House, 24 Eversholt Street
London, NW1 1DB, UK
Registered office: Westfield Road, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 0RA
SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or
registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

Text copyright © Philip Reeve, 2014
Illustrations copyright © Philip Reeve, 2014
The right of Philip Reeve to be identified as the author and
illustrator of this work has been asserted by him.

ISBN 978 1407 13832 9

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

All rights reserved
This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not,
by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, hired out or otherwise circulated
in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published.
No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,
or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical,
photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior written
permission of Scholastic Limited.

Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY
Papers used by Scholastic Children's Books are made from
wood grown in sustainable forests.

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places,
incidents and dialogues are products of the author's imagination or are
used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual people, living or dead,
events or locales is entirely coincidental.

www.scholastic.co.uk

A Visitor Drops In



"Aaaaaaaaaaaaargh!"

The sound that echoed across Clovenstone that morning was one which Skarper had often heard before. In fact, it was one that he had often *made* before, usually when he was being chased by something, or falling from a great height towards Certain Death. But nothing was chasing him today, and he was not falling from anywhere. He was just ambling about in the sunshine, looking for mushrooms.

Summer had come to Clovenstone at last, after a long, hard winter and a cold spring. The snow that had shrouded the ruins of the old fortress-city for so long had finally melted, although it still lingered on the lofty summits of the Bonehill Mountains which loomed beyond the eastern wall. Woken by sunbeams poking into his nest up in Blackspike Tower, Skarper

had remembered suddenly how much he liked fried mushrooms for his breakfast, and he had come scampering down from the Inner Wall to this flattish, grassy part of Clovenstone to see if any had pushed their heads up through the earth there.

He had found some, too. They were the fat, yellowish-white puffballs which the goblins of Clovenstone called urth grobbits. These were Skarper's favourites, and he had just stuffed his pockets with them and was turning for home when he heard that strange new noise.

"AAAAAAAAAAAA. . ."

It seemed to be growing louder.

Skarper looked around, but there was nothing to see. Only the grass moved, blowing in the spaces between the crumbling, ancient buildings.

". . .AAAAAAAAA. . ."

Skarper looked up. What was that, right in the very top of the sky? That black speck, hard to make out in the dazzling sunshine, especially to goblin eyes which preferred the dark. Was it an insect? Was it a bird? It seemed to have two flailing arms, and two frantically kicking legs. It seemed to be a man. . .

A falling man.

". . .AAAAAAAAAARGH!!!"

"Oh, bumcakes!" said Skarper.



He started to run one way, then changed his mind and ran the other. That was a bad decision. With a massive THWUMP the man landed on him.

The goblin name for human beings was "softlings", but it turned out they didn't feel very soft when they were being dropped on you. Skarper would have been squashed flat if the bit of Clovenstone he happened to be standing in had not been so soft and boggy. As it was, he was driven deep down into the oozy moss.

"Ow!" said the softling, after a while. "Ow, my head!" he added. "And my ribs. And my elbow."

"What about me?" asked Skarper in a squashed and bitter voice from somewhere underneath him. "What about my. . . What about *all* of me?"

The softling had not realized until then that the hard, lumpy thing he had landed on was a goblin. With a cry of, "Ow, my knee!" he sprang up and drew his sword.

"Unhand me, foul goblin!" he shouted.

Skarper climbed out of the Skarper-shaped crater he had made in the wet ground. "My hands are nowhere near you, and anyway, they're called paws," he said. He looked ruefully at his tail. It already had one kink in it where it had been broken and set badly; now it would have two more. "Who do you think you are, anyway?"



he asked. "Dropping on people like that. What's your game?"

"I am Prince Rhind of the Woolmark," said the softling, drawing himself up tall and proud and sticking out his chin as if he thought Skarper should have heard of him and ought to be impressed. He was a handsome sort of softling, Skarper supposed, though slightly on the chubby side. He had a pinkish face and sandy-coloured hair. Underneath all the mud he was very expensively dressed, in richly embroidered felt clothes and a shining coat of fish-scale mail.

"As for what brings me here," Prince Rhind went on, "that is a long and fascinating tale. . ." But before he could get any further a plump white cloud dropped out of the sky and started to whizz about at head height.

"Yoohoo!" said the cloud.

"I might have known!" groaned Skarper.

It was not really the cloud that had said "yoohoo" of course (that would be silly). It was the cloud maidens, the wispy, vaporous young sky-spirits who sat on top of it, looking worriedly at Prince Rhind.

"Are you all right, sweet prince?" they twittered. "When we said that you would see Clovenstone if you leaned over the edge, we did not mean for you to lean quite that far over!"

"Be of good cheer, sweet maidens of the skies," said the prince. "I am unharmed. Happily, this goblin broke my fall."

"It wasn't happy from where I was standing," said Skarper. "What did you bring him here for?" But the cloud maidens just sniffed and looked snootily the other way. They didn't like goblins.

"I have come seeking the fell fortress of Clovenstone," announced Prince Rhind, "where I have heard tell there resides a treasure which will be of aid to me in my perilous quest. These good maidens were kind enough to offer me a lift."

"Well, this is Clovenstone all right," said Skarper. "It isn't really a fell fortress any more though."

"No, indeed. . ." Prince Rhind looked about him at the ruins. His handsome young face was a little downcast. The cloud maidens drifted overhead giggling and showering him with tiny heart-shaped hailstones inscribed with messages like "BE MINE" and "DREAMBOAT".

"You do have treasure houses here, don't you?" he asked. "I was told there were treasure houses. . ."

"Oh, they're all inside the Inner Wall," Skarper told him. "We don't keep much treasure in them these days though."

"What do you keep in them then?'

"Cheese, mainly."

"Cheese?"

"Cheese. Haven't you heard of Clovenstone Blue? We make it here. It's very popular." Skarper wrung some bog water out of his shoes and looked at Prince Rhind of the Woolmark with his head on one side. He didn't seem a bad sort of softling. Probably he wasn't really dangerous except when he fell on people, and he probably didn't make a habit of that; it seemed to have been more in the way of an accident.

"You'd better come and meet Henwyn and everybody," he said, doubtfully.

Prince Rhind nodded, though he looked doubtful too. "Everybody? Yes. . ." He seemed wary of saying too much to Skarper. Perhaps, like most softlings, he mistrusted goblins. At last he said, "Take me to this Henwyn, goblin, that I may share with him the great matter of my quest. I only hope that the thing I seek still resides here, for it is clear to me that much has changed at Clovenstone."

