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George and the Goblin

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George had eaten rather too many chocolates and was feeling terrible — not just his stomach, but the whole situation. He hadn't told his mother because he didn't want medicine, so he'd gone to bed without saying a word and lay there in the dark.

He'd been lying there for what felt like hours when a small figure appeared on his window sill, peered around the curtain, and said:

"Good evening. May I come in?"

"Who are you?" asked George.

"I'm the Goblin who looks after children when they've made themselves ill," said the creature, stepping inside. "Though I can never visit as many as I'd like — I can only come at night, and there's never enough time."

George stared. "I always imagined goblins were frightening."



"Ha!" said the Goblin. "Everyone does. But I'm quite nice, actually."

"Are you a doctor, then?"

"Not at all. Doctors are for when you're genuinely, seriously ill. Not for when you've eaten an entire layer of chocolates from a box hidden in the pantry."

George went very still.

"You seem to know quite a lot about that," he said.

"I know a good deal about a good many things," said the Goblin pleasantly. "The question is, are you going to be more careful about yourself from now on?"

"Yes," said George. "I really am. I felt dreadfully sick — and I don't want to feel like this again."

"Good," said the Goblin. "Sweets aren't enemies, you know — they just can't be the whole story. A boy who runs and plays and eats his proper meals can enjoy chocolates without ending up here talking to me at midnight."

He tilted his head.

"Now then — before I go, how would you like a ride in my airboat? Just to prove that goblins are, as I said, actually rather pleasant."

George, who felt somewhat better already, said yes.

A few weeks later, he was so quick and energetic at games that his friends made him captain of their baseball team.

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