

## 15 The birthday present

It was nearly Billy's birthday and he was getting more and more excited.

"What have you got me for my birthday?" he kept asking his Mum, over and over again.

"You wait and see," Mum kept saying. "It's a surprise! But it is something that you have asked for during the year."

Billy's imagination worked overtime. What could his present be? He tried hard to think of all the things that he had said he might like for his birthday over the past year. The list was very long: a puppy dog, a bicycle, a television in his bedroom, a stereo system, a horse and a suit of armour, his very own instant ice-cream machine, a computer hooked up to the Internet, a swimming pool in the garden, and a chocolate factory... The list went on and on and on.

"What could my present be!!" he squealed excitedly to himself.

"What you getting for your birthday Billy?" asked his friend Mickey that morning at school.

"Ooh... a new bike!" said Billy in a sort of throwaway way.

"You lucky thing!" said Mickey. "Can I come and have a go on it?"

"Yeah, 'course you can," said Billy in his 'what's the big deal' sort of way.

It was Billy's birthday on Saturday. On Friday afternoon Miss Roberts, Billy's teacher, said to the class, "Listen everyone, it's Billy's birthday tomorrow, so we'll wish him a happy birthday now because we won't be here tomorrow."

The whole class sang "Happy birthday to you," and Billy began to get even more excited.

"What do you think you will get for your birthday Billy?" asked Miss Roberts.

"Oooo.... A horse and a suit of armour," he said, "Oh yes, and a TV in my bedroom."

"Cor.!" said Lisa, "you lucky thing, can I come and have a ride on your horse, Billy?"

"Yeah, 'course," he said in his very 'what's the big deal' sort of way.

On his way home from school Billy met his friend James from Cubs.

"What's yer Mam getting yer for yer birthday?" asked James.

"Oooo..." a puppy dog, and," he added in his very matter of fact sort of way, "a swimming pool in the garden."

"Yer lucky thing," said James, "I've always wanted a puppy. Can I come and take it for a walk with yer? And then we could 'ave a swim afterwuds!"

"Yea, 'course," he said in his 'what's the big deal' sort of way again.

Billy spent all of Friday evening trying his hardest to guess what his birthday present would be. He drove his Mum mad!

"Oh go away or you won't have a birthday!" she shouted at him in the end.

When Billy went to bed his head was full of dreams. He dreamed that Mum had bought him a new bike, a horse, a suit of armour, and a puppy dog, and a swimming pool, and a TV! He dreamed that Mum had bought him a present that was so big that it wouldn't even fit in the house. In his dream he had to go out into the garden to unwrap it! When he woke up that morning he was very excited indeed.

He threw open his curtains and looked out into the garden. He couldn't see a swimming pool full of cool clear water, or a horse chewing the grass, or a puppy dog madly running around.

"Maybe they're out the front?" said Billy excitedly to himself.

He tore into his mum's bedroom and threw open the curtains.

"What on earth are you doing Billy?" asked Mum sleepily.

"Looking for my presents!" Billy almost screamed. "Where have you hidden them all Mum?"

"All?" exclaimed Mum.

Just then Billy heard the postman drop the post through the letterbox. So, without waiting for an answer, he shot down stairs. But as he dashed along the hall he caught sight of something bright and colourful on the dining room table, bright and colourful, but...small! No, try that again, bright and colourful, but VERY small, very small indeed! Billy stopped in his tracks and stared at the parcel on the table. He looked around a bit just to make sure that there wasn't a bigger one somewhere else.

"Its a bit small for a puppy dog," he thought, "and its quite small for a bicycle or a TV, and its very small for a horse and a suit of armour, and its extremely small for a swimming pool."

Billy began to feel a bit strange. It was as if all his excitement had drained out through his plughole!

"Its very small," he whimpered to himself, "its very small!"

Just then there was a knock at the door. Billy opened it, and there stood Mickey and Lisa and James.

"Can I see your new bike?" asked Mickey excitedly.

"Can I see your horse?" panted Lisa, who had run all the way from her house.

"Can I take yer puppy dog for a walk and then go in yer swimming pool?" asked James.

Billy's Mum came down stairs in her dressing gown.

"Oh it's nice of your friends to come on your birthday," she said, "even if they are a bit early! Aren't you going to ask them in Billy? They can watch you unwrap your present.

Billy went a very bright red as Mickey and Lisa and James walked past him and straight into the dining room. They stared at the small present that was sitting on the table.

"Happy birthday, Billy," said his Mum, as she handed him the brightly wrapped present from the dining room table.

His friends watched in silence as Billy unwrapped it and took out a watch. He hardly dare look at his friends, he just wished that the plug-hole that had sucked away all his excitement could suck him away as well, then he could just disappear completely.

"You're never on time for anything, Billy," said his Mum. "So I thought a watch would be a good present. It's the one you picked out of my catalogue."

Billy's heart nearly stopped. He felt very disappointed, very disappointed and very silly as well! He was waiting for his friends to start to tease him, or to just walk out in disgust after all that he had told them. But to his surprise they didn't. Instead of pointing fingers at him as he expected, they all crowded round the watch and said:

"Wow Billy, what a cool watch! I wish I had one like that!"

Mickey read the box: "Water proof to 1000 feet; tells the time in thirty countries; stop watch to one thousandth of a second; built in alarm; built in radio: built in remote control for televisions; 6 popular video games as well," he said.

"Wow!" said James.

"Wow! Wow!" said Lisa.

And they all agreed that it was the best birthday present they could think of.

Billy started to feel a bit happier. Maybe it would be a good birthday after all. It certainly started well, as Mum cooked them all a big birthday breakfast!

Copyright © John Beauchamp/Kingdomstory.net 2010 All rights reserved.

Please refer to [www.kingdomstory.net](http://www.kingdomstory.net) for copyright restrictions and permissions.