



**in the picture:**  
"a state of being fully informed or noticed"  
The Concise Oxford Dictionary

Time to get equal

**scope**

About cerebral palsy.  
For disabled people achieving equality.

# Millie's Marvellous Magnificent Monster

It was Monday and Millie and her friends where all gathered in the school hall.

“I do have a monster and he is all mine” Millie said, leaving no doubt in her friends mind that she meant it.

“Where did you get him” asked Joe easing his wheelchair closer into the tight group around Millie.

“Well I found him last night under my bed. I was looking for a game I got for my birthday and there he was, eating a cardboard box.”

Billy was so excited he wanted to try eating cardboard but Millie took hold of his hand.

“Cardboard is not good to eat, not even my monster liked it. He said he wanted wood.”

“Oh I see.” Said Sue who Millie hadn’t noticed standing behind Billy. “Listen everyone” Sue shouted to the rest of the children in the hall. “Millie has a Marvellous monster that eats cardboard and lives under her bed.” Many of the children began to laugh and some shouted, “Show us your monster Millie.” Others took up the shout and Millie soon felt sorry she had told anybody.

“Wait I’ll show you.” She shouted but the others just kept on.

Suddenly the sound changed as the door opened and in came the head teacher Mrs. Burger and Alf the school bus driver followed by the other teachers and helpers.

“All right everyone” Said Mrs. Burger. The hall was quiet while Mrs. Burger read out the notices and then sent everyone off to their classes, everyone that is except for Millie and nine other pupils who were to go on a special trip to the Safari Park. “Has everyone got their lunch boxes?”

There was a chorus of “Yes Mrs Burger”

“And you must remember when you are out of school that you are representing Springfield and you must be on your best behaviour.” No one was listening they were watching

Alf drive the bus up to the doors ready to get everyone on board.

From the start the bus began to make some very unpleasant noises. Sam who knows about engines suggested that it might be its Spark Plugs, and because there was no sign he knew for “Spark Plugs” he took out his pad and drew a spark plug with a big spark coming from it and everyone knew what he wanted to say. His friend Tom who spoke in sign for him said that he thought he was probably right. Someone else suggested it was the drive shaft. Alf kept grunting each time the bus made a growling noise followed by a phutt sound.

Millie sat in the back of the bus on a seat while Joe and Ann sat in wheel chairs next to her. All too busy chatting about the shops and people they were passing to worry about the noises. And everyone had forgotten about Millie’s monster as they sent phone text messages to their friends and families telling them about their bus trip.

The bus eventually turned through a gate and drove along a road past towards a group of buildings which stood next to larger metal gates which led into the first of the animal enclosures. The children grew even more excited when they saw a giraffe just inside the gates watching the vehicles moving slowly through and into the enclosure.

Before they went in to see the animals close up they stopped for a break at one of the buildings. Inside there where lots of games and rides and some of the children played in a ball pond throwing balls at each other and avoiding balls being thrown at them by their friends in wheelchairs who sat at the side waiting for them to pop up as a target. Outside Alf and Mrs. Burger looked into the engine of the bus with puzzled looks on their faces.

Eventually Alf announced that the bus was fixed and with everyone back on board they set off to join the queue

waiting to drive through the gates and into the animal compounds. Just as the bus reached the gate a warden dressed in a uniform stepped out in front with his hand up. Alf stopped and opened the window.

“Just make sure all the children keep their windows closed the monkeys are near feeding time and they can be a little naughty if they think there is food about.”

Alf looked round and checked that all the windows were closed.

“We need to take all your phones because they interfere with the radio signals we use in the park to open and close the gates.” And he passed in a box with the school bus number written on it into which everyone had to put their phones.

“OK, just remember to get them back at the end.” he said.

“Oh and another thing we will be closing early today so you will be the last vehicle through, take your time though and I hope you enjoy your visit today.”

Alf thanked the warden and the bus moved off and through the great metal gates into the compound beyond.

“Look, look” shouted Ali excitedly from the front of the bus “it’s a Giraffe.” Sure enough there just ahead of them and walking beside another vehicle was a long legged long necked giraffe. The children gazed out of the window amazed at being so close. “Look at his legs” Sue shouted, “Look at his neck” Sam said “He’s wonderful.” Ann replied.

The bus clunked on, no one was noticing the funny noises it was making as it drove past elephants who were standing against a far off fence.

“I can’t see them.” Ann moaned, “They’re too far away.”

But just then a baby elephant waddled out from behind some bushes close to the bus and everyone cheered. The next gate led on into an enclosure full of kangaroos. One came close to the side of the bus and everyone got a good look but were very surprised when a small kangaroo

head popped out of the pouch on its mummy's tummy. "Did you see that?" Shrieked Tom, as the small kangaroo, surprised to see all the faces staring at it disappeared back into the pouch.

The bus past on through another gate and this was the one that everyone had been waiting for, because here was a big notice on the gates.

### **KEEP ALL WINDOWS CLOSED - CHIMPANZEES COMPOUND**

As soon as the bus started to climb up a small hill it began to slow down. Slower and slower it went until with a loud BANG it stopped completely and there was a huge plume of smoke behind.

"Don't worry children the driver and I will see what can be done and help will be with us very soon." Mrs. Burger said, "Everyone stay in the bus and we will get help."

Mrs. Berger and Alf opened the front door of the bus and stood outside checking the engine for a few minutes. Then without warning a group of apes that had been watching from a nearby tree jumped down to the ground and began to make funny faces and jumping up and down.

"They must be hungry." Charlie said "Oh dear they must think that Mrs Burger and Alf have some food." Before he had finished speaking it became clear that that was just what the chimps thought and they started to run towards Mrs. Burger and Alf. As soon as they saw the approaching chimps Alf and Mrs. Burger turned and ran with the chimps running close behind them. The children on the bus all thought it looked so funny, "They are hiding in the old hut." Charlie said. "Look," said Ann, "that big Chimp is climbing on top." A big grey chimp climbed on top of the rickety hut and sat scratching and looking round. Then he slapped the top of the hut with his hand. From inside there was a shriek. "That's Mrs. Burger." Sam said laughing.

**“It’s been ages.” Ann said “Do you think they will leave us here.”**

**“No someone will come and get us.” Said Millie**

**“How do you know? The man said we were the last through. Maybe they will think everyone is out now and go home.” Sam said**

**Just at that moment there was a scuttling from outside and the children saw that one of the chimps was tugging at the driver’s door. Before anyone could do anything the door opened and three chimps bounded inside. They were very playful and obviously looking for something as they pulled at bags and searched under seats. “Don’t worry,” said Ann, “they are probably just hungry. Aren’t they lovely?”**

**“Yes wonderful.” Said Sam, “But they don’t half pong.”**

**The children weren’t at all worried and the chimp’s playful antics brought shrieks from all of them. Though Sue looked a little concerned when one of chimps started to search through her hair everyone else on the bus thought it was hilarious.**

**Suddenly the chimps stopped and ran for the door, all the chimps were running off in the same direction, near to the hut where Mrs. Burger and Alf where hiding. “They must think they have food.” Ali shouted. “What shall we do now?”**

**“Look there’s Mrs. Burger.” said Millie. “And there’s Alf - they are heading for the gate.”**

**The door of the hut had been thrown open and out ran Mrs. Burger and Alf running as fast as they could towards the distant gate, all round them the chimps ran shrieking and shouting. The gate had a small door at the side which Mrs Burger and Alf squeezed through and the children cheered as they thought they would be able to get help. But instead Mrs. Burger and Alf appeared to be trying to get back.**

“What’s happening?” Millie asked

“It’s the kangaroos. They must have frightened them. I’ve never seen a kangaroo look angry. They seem to be punching at Alf and Mrs. Burger.”

“Are you sure it’s them” Millie asked

“Yes I can see them, over there in the tree.” Sam pointed excitedly

“I thought that was two monkeys” said Tom

“No it's definitely them.” said Sam

“Yes I can see them, that is Alf. He’s waving. So is Mrs. Burger”

“Yes” said Ali “Yes they are, she’s not waving, she’s signing. Sam, what is she saying.”

Sam squinted to make out the signs being made by the distant figure of Mrs. Burger.

“She’s saying, ‘get help’. Yes that’s it, get help.”

“So what do we do now? There is no way of getting in touch with anyone and we are supposed to stay on the bus. What are we to do? How are we going to get any help?” asked Tom.

“Well I for one don’t want to spend the night here and those gates Mrs. Burger went through led into the kangaroos and we can’t go that way so the next gates should be just over the hill. I say we all get off and make for the gates to attract attention.” said Millie

“What if just the other side of the gate is a lion’s den. What do we do then?”

“Get eaten” suggested Tom.

“No you are all being daft.” Sam said, “The lions are always kept in cages because they are dangerous. I agree with Millie we should try to get to the gates.”

Soon all the children were on the road and making their way along the path towards the gate. They moved quietly hoping not to attract the attention of the chimps, and the only sound was the whirring of the wheelchair motors.

After a few minutes Sue saw some chimps moving towards them. “Look the chimps are coming.” she yelled. “Shhhh,” Millie said, “Don’t frighten them.” Just then one of the largest chimps ran towards them.

“Tom, pass the lunchbox out of the back pocket of my chair.” Ali asked. Tom passed it to him. Ali opened the box and took out an apple. He threw the apple as far as he could and the chimps darted after it. “That’s it” shouted Millie “Everyone get your lunchboxes and see if you have fruit.” In a few moments there was a pile of fruit and Millie told everyone to keep it handy so that if the chimps came back they would be able to distract them by throwing the fruit long enough to reach the gate. With that they set off again.

“Millie.” Sam asked “Didn’t you have any fruit?” Millie smiled “No, in fact I don’t have a lunch box.” Sam shrugged, he didn’t see much point in bringing her shoulder bag all this way if it had nothing in it. But before he could ask anything, Tom yelled. “The gates just ahead.”

The gate was large and imposing and after a quick look it was obvious that there was no side door like Mrs. Burger and Alf found at the other gate and this one was firmly closed.

“Look there.” Tom said “That big red button on the post must be the switch that opens the gate.”

“Yes it must be, but how are we ever going to reach it?” Ann asked.

“Wait a minute, we may not have to.” said Sam. “There is a car over there. We can sign to them”

The children waved and waved, shouted and yelled, but the people in the car were too engaged looking at some deer.

“I get so mad some times.” Said Tom “People just don’t pay attention or try to think what a sign means.”

“They may think we are chimps.” Billy said, bouncing up and down and pretending to be one.

“Why don’t we get your monster to beat down the gate and get us out Millie”, Sue said with a sneer.

“That’s a great idea,” said Millie. “He’s not big enough to knock down the gate, but maybe he could go under it.”

With that Millie put her bag on the ground and opened it. Out of the top popped a small head with long ears and big round eyes and as they watched he broke into a huge smile. As he climbed out of the bag everyone saw that his head was on top of a very long neck and that he had a body that curved like a snake with lots of little legs. All the children especially Sue gasped as the monster shook himself and stretched up into the shape of a number two. Millie explained carefully what she wanted the monster to do. But the monster just raised its long neck and moved its head from side to side. “It’s no good, he doesn’t understand. I thought you said he spoke.” Said Sue. “Well I sort of drew pictures and he understood,” said Millie, then a thought occurred to her “That’s it, Sam - your pad! Draw him a picture of what we need him to do and be quick the chimps are coming back”

As Tom drew the pictures the monster looked on nodding his head as each picture was finished. Then he took the pencil out of Tom’s hand and drew the picture of a tree on the pad. Millie nodded to him and he set off squeezing through the bars of the gate. Before he could press the button the chimps arrived bounding and screeching and the children all threw the last of their fruit, except for Billy who thought it was better to eat his. Behind them the gates began to open.

As the chimps were distracted the children all got through the gate and Joe wheeled over to press the button which closed the gate behind them. “Look” he said “there’s a phone.”

And on a post beside the button was a box with a sign that read Emergency Phone.

While Sam phoned the park rangers for help, Millie turned to thank her monster who was gazing off towards a small wood at the back of the park. Millie understood. “Well thank you. I’ll miss you.” She said.

The monster took the pencil from Tom’s hand and while Tom held the notebook drew a picture of a heart shape and a little round face with tears coming from its eyes. Millie nodded. And while everyone shouted their thanks watched as the monster set off for the far off wood.

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