

## GRICKLES IN THE SNOW

written and illustrated by András Dániel  
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(Help! Another Grickle book!)

They're not grubs, and they're not pickles. They're not beans and they're not pebbles. They're Grickles! A Grickle looks like all kinds of things and it looks like nothing you've ever seen before. It can bounce like a rubber ball but it's not one. It's as colourful as a lollypop, but you can't eat it. There are big Grickles and little Grickles. Some Grickles are fat, other Grickles are thin. They're forever coming and going but you can never tell where from or where to...

(Aeroplane, Jump, Bouncy Body, Arm, Head, Grickle Flip, Some have got ears like this, butterfly)

(I don't like the kind of books that have invented characters behaving like they really exist...)

(This is the beginning of a book called GRICKLES IN THE SNOW)

There's a meadow somewhere in the world where seven Grickles live...

András Dániel

Grickles in the Snow

or

Where Very Berries Grow

with illustrations by the author

In the next few pages, we can expect to experience a meadow-wide cold front. An increase in cloud may result in scattered snow showers. And the north wind will be here, there and everywhere!

It was a super sunny day in early summer. The flowers...

(Oh, I'm hot!)

Start again... Sorry! It was a chilly winter's morning. Fat flakes of snow fell onto the meadow from chubby, grey clouds that hung heavy in the sky. The meadow looked emptier than ever.

English translation © Ralph Berkin

(Ooh, I'm cold!)

"Nothing exciting ever happens in the winter," Titus sighed.

"If you're bored, you can come and help me look for very berries!" Lilwed told her Grickle pal.

"Have we run out again?" Titus asked.

"It's not my fault if it's everybody's favourite winter snack!" Lilwed said with a shrug of her skinny shoulders.

"Okay! Wait here while I go and get my sledge!"

"Which way should we go?" Titus asked when he got back.

"That way!" Lilwed said pointing into the snowy distance. And she hopped up onto the sledge.

"I could find my way there with my eyes closed," the little Grickle added.

And off they went.

The snow crunched and crumbled underfoot as Titus pulled the sledge and bounced along. It wasn't long before they came to a green traffic light.

"See? We're here already!" Lilwed said.

"How did this traffic light end up here?" Titus asked his tiny companion.

"How does anything end up here?" Lilwed said with her arms thrown wide.

"You haven't come looking for very berries, have you?" said someone standing at the foot of the traffic light. Titus had never seen this person before.

"It's green," Lilwed said, pointing to the light. "That means we can pick them, doesn't it?"

"I forgot to switch it over to amber," the five-eyed figure explained. "I was just about to go and eat my lunch. But it's Riddle Day today, anyway!"

"What does that mean?" Titus asked.

"You can only pick very berries if you can solve this riddle," the peculiar creature replied. Today's riddle goes like this: *Lady lambs dance in a line, if you've got none, how many are mine?*

"Lady lambs wear ribbons, so the answer's two," said Titus.

"Bother!" the five-eyed figure exclaimed. "Pick as many very berries as you like!"

And with that, he vanished like a fluffy rabbit into a conjurer's top hat.

"How did you know the answer?" Lilwed said staring at Titus.

"It's one of the famous *Nonsensical Riddles*," Titus shrugged. "I could have given any answer!"

"Lucky that you came with me!" Lilwed said. "I would have spent hours trying to solve it."

(I'd prefer to hibernate!)

"Where are the very berries?" Titus said as he scanned the snow.

"We're standing right next a whole load of them!" Lilwed said and shook the snow off a nearby bush.

The bush bears berries once a month and that's when the berry guard sets the light to green.

"For saying that we're in the middle of nowhere, plenty of peculiar things go on in this meadow!" said Titus.

"You see?!" Lilwed said, and produced her special berry bag decorated with pink butterflies.

The two friends soon filled the bag with berries and a small crowd collected at the base of the bush.

"It's Riddle Day today, did you know?" Titus asked them.

"I know. The answer's two lady lambs!" squeaked an elderly shrew.

"Maybe we should be getting back," Lilwed said. She piled her berry bag onto the back of the sledge and they soon set off. But by now the wind had blown the snow into thousands of mounds. It must have grown tired because it was hardly blowing at all now.

"Oh dear!" Titus exclaimed as he glanced around. "Which one is our mound?"

"I think it's that one!" said Lilwed and pointed to one of the mini mountains.

When they reached the mound in question, Titus threw the bag of berries over his shoulder and started to scale the icy mound.

"Hey, what are you doing?" shouted a toad wearing a knitted pompom hat. "You'll ruin our snow tortoise!"

"I'm so sorry, we thought it was a Grickle mound!" Titus explained with an apologetic smile.

(I'm the world's first talking snowflake!)

"How could anyone mix a mound up with a snow tortoise?" asked a second toad.

"Maybe because they're both exactly the same shape," Lilwed said with a little shrug.

"I can see that you've got no appreciation for art!" the toad said and shook its green head.

(Mound=Mound)

Titus and Lilwed carried on their way. And as they walked, the snow began to slowly fall from the sky above.

"I've got it! That has to be the one!" Titus said hurrying to another mound nearby.

"Stop!" shouted a chubby hamster. "Don't you dare lay a finger on my snowball collection!"

"What's all the fuss about? It's only white mound!" Titus told him.

"It's much more than a mound, it's actually five thousand three hundred and seventy-one snowballs!" the hamster huffed. "And I made every single one of them myself..."

"It still looks a lot like a mound to me," Lilwed shrugged.

"That's because I disguised them!" the hamster said with a nasty look. "But you can't have a single one! Understand? Don't even think about it!"

(I'm the world's first talking snowflake!  
You've already said that!  
I've just made a snow palm tree!  
So what?!

No climbing!  
Now flying from here!  
Don't touch the snow!  
You break it, you buy it!  
Hands off!  
No throwing snowballs!

"We can make our own collection anytime we like!" Titus shrugged, grabbed the sledge string and stomped off.

"No need to get so upset!" Lilwed told him. "Hamsters are always like that..."

Then they came to another but much smaller snow mound.

"I'll climb to the top to see if I can see our mound," Lilwed said as she slipped off the sledge.

(I'm leaving!)

And so she did exactly that.

"I can't see a thing, the snow's falling too fast!" she shouted down to Titus after she'd tried to look around.

Just then the mound began to move!

"Help!" Lilwed yelled.

"How can I help you?" Zoz asked as his head popped out of the pile of snow.

"How did you end up here?" his pals asked.

"I was sitting here pondering when would you turn up," Zoz grumbled. "And while I was waiting, I got a bit covered in snow..."

"Pondering?" Titus asked.

(How did I end up here?)

"If there aren't any very berries at hand, it can happen," Zoz nodded.

"We've brought a big bag of berries!" Lilwed said and pointed to the sledge. "But we couldn't find the mound on our way back home."

"It's just over there..." Zoz pointed. "Follow me!"

(Does anyone understand any of this?)

It wasn't long before Lilwed and Titus were standing surrounded by the rest of the Grickles on the top of their mound.

Lilwed unhitched her bag from the sledge and dished the very berries out. All the Grickles were very happy. And while they munched away, Titus told them all about the five-eyed berry guard's silly riddle.

"Excellent!" Bela announced with a quick click of his fingers. "We really should organise a day of nonsensical games in the middle of the meadow!"

The other Grickles thought that this was a super idea! But being as it was getting very chilly, they decided to discuss the details tomorrow instead.

They all hurried back to their snug burrows to warm themselves up. The snowy mound fell quiet and the snowballs that lay around Titus's sledge got slowly covered in fresh snow.

### Bernie Gets Big

(Is it going to be cold in this story, too?

Thankfully, we can expect sunny, warm weather here. No rain is anticipated from the passing clouds. Those sensitive to increased temperatures may sense the occasional presence of peculiar creatures...)

It was a mild morning. If anyone thought that the Grickles – according to their standard habit – were lying around on top of their mound, then they'd be wrong because they were sitting around. It looked like they were waiting for someone.

(Patience is a virtue!)

"Who are we actually waiting for?" Zoz asked the others, because he wasn't exactly sure. "Lilwed," Jello told him. "This story starts with her. You'll see, she'll show up on the next page!"

(If you look down, you'll see Grickles sitting around!

This way to the next page!

That's where I'm going!)

And that's exactly what happened.

"Look what I've found!" Lilwed shouted from a short way away. And she was clutching a greenish-yellowish thing in her hand. The others all gathered around to take a closer look.

"What's that?" Zoz asked, because he was asking a lot of questions that morning.

"I don't know, but it's so sweet!" Lilwed squeaked.

"We've discussed this a *thousand times* that there's to be none of this 'it's so sweet' business in the meadow!"

(Here I am!)

"Sorry, I forgot," said Lilwed. "Don't you know what it could be?"

"A lost baby fur worm?" Jello guessed.

"A dwarf badger in its winter coat?" Hilda pondered.

"Winter coat?! In spring?" Bela said with a shake of his head. "It looks more like a miniature hare lion to me!"

(None of those...)

"Oh no it's not!" Firdle interrupted. "It's none other than a greedy grizzly lizard."

"That's it!" the others all shouted. "A grizzly lizard! What else?"

"But why *greedy*?" Zoz asked.

"Because it's got a famously massive appetite," Bela replied.

(What's happening here?)

"Oh it's so swee... I mean cute!" Lilwed yelped. "I'm going to keep it!"

"That's not such a good idea," Bela told him. "Grizzly lizards really are very greedy little fellows!"

"I'm still keeping it! I'm still keeping it!" Lilwed protested.

"It's your decision entirely," Hilda reassured her. "We won't interfere..."

"I'm going to call it Bernie!" Lilwed said, and hopped off back to her burrow with Bernie.

(Grrr!)

The Grickles were sitting around on their mound again that afternoon when they heard a terrible shrieking and squawking noise.

"What on earth's that?" Titus said, suddenly sitting up straight.

"That's the sound a hungry grizzly lizard makes," Bela said with a stern expression.

"You're not going to believe this!" Lilwed gabbled as she hurried out of her burrow. "But Bernie's eaten all my wild marzipan, and he's still hungry! I'm taking him to graze in the meadow!"

(Hello there!)

"He's *terribly* sweet!" she shouted and skipped past them, pulling her pet behind her tied to the end of a pink ribbon.

"That thing looks a bit bigger than it did this morning," Jello said as he watched them go.

"Grizzly lizard puppies grow extraordinarily quickly," Bela told him. "And so does their appetite..."

(Squeak! Squeak! Squeak!)

The day went on like days normally do and Lilwed only reappeared around bedtime.

“Just imagine!” she announced. “First of all Bernie ate wild spinach then wild carrots and then wild oats. Then he ate some wild potatoes and a load of wild apples. And then, after all of that, he gobbled up a whole pile of wild marzipan.

“Did he leave anything for us to eat at all?” Zoz asked with a look of considerable concern.

“Not.. a lot..” Lilwed replied with an awkward smirk.

It soon began to get dark. The Grickles had just settled down to a game of flick flea polo at the foot of the mound, when Lilwed showed up again.

“There’s a small problem!” she said. “Bernie’s grown! He’s so big that I can’t fit into my burrow next to him. Could I sleep in one of your burrows tonight?”

“There’s plenty of room at my place!” Hilda told her.

“I’ll build Bernie his own burrow tomorrow!” Lilwed promised.

All the Grickles woke the next morning to the sound of shouting.

“Thief! Thief! Someone’s stolen my breakfast!” Zoz ranted.

“Mine, too!” Jello raged as he hopped out of his Grickle hole.

“And mine, too!” Titus complained with only his head sticking out.

“And I didn’t get a wink of sleep because of that terrible chomping!” Bela said in the sleepest voice you can imagine.

Suddenly, they all said nothing. The strange sound was coming from the very top of the mound.

When they looked up, not one of them could believe their eyes.

(Only turn to the next page if you’re not easily scared!

Why do strange things keep happening here?)

(I’m moving out!

For sale)

(Ladies and gentlemen, there has been a change of plan...

Should I stay or should I go?

Isn’t this a bit too much for a children’s book?)

“What’s happened to you, Bernie?” Lilwed said sounding sad when she and Hilda went up to see what was causing the noise.

“Bernie’s got big,” Titus told them pointing a thin finger to the top of the mound. “This can’t go on! We’ve got to do something!”

Then they all produced their pocket encyclopaedias to see if they could find anything useful.

Yes, I forgot to mention, Grickles always carry a pocket encyclopaedia just in case a massive animal wants to eat their breakfast up.

“The grizzly lizard’s favourite food is the knobbly banana fig...” Firdle read.

“You’ll find a knobble banana fig bush over there!” squawked a curdle bird that just happened to be flying by.

(This is Zoz’s back, but his front’s not reading either...)

“Fair enough, but how will we ever get Bernie to the bush?” the Grickles asked each other and scratched their chins.

“Why don’t we paint Zoz to look like a giant knobbly banana fig?” Hilda suggested. “Maybe we can use him as bait to tempt Bernie over and then we can leave him there...”

“Are you sure there’s no other solution?” Lilwed asked.

“I wanted to ask that, too,” Zoz said.

(Yum!)

His friends slowly shook their heads.

It was with a sad heart that Lilwed handed them her prized paints.

“The similarity’s astounding!” Firdle enthused, when they’d finished painting Zoz. Zoz wasn’t so very impressed.

“Walk around the mound!” Hilda told him. “When Bernie sees you, start to skip over to the bush!”

Zoz set off slowly down the mound and tried to do his best impression of a knobbly banana fig. The second Bernie saw him, he hopped to his feet and hurried as fast as he could towards the bush with Bernie hot on his trail.

Then the rest of the Grickles followed on behind.

“Luckily Bernie’s far too fat to catch him!” Jello comforted the others.

(A couple more bounces and you’re there!)

When they reached the bush, Zoz hid away and let Bernie feed his face on the ripe fruit.

“Let’s get away as soon as we can!” whispered Titus.

“Won’t he be sad when he sees we’ve gone?” Lilwed said with a tiny sob.

“He’s only interested in his tummy!” Bela told her. “It’s sad but true.”

Lilwed gave a great big sigh and then hurried off after the others.

(Are they sad or happy down there?)

“That was exciting!” Titus said when they all got back to the mound.

“Are you sure he won’t come back again?” Zoz asked sounding more than a little bit worried.

“Grizzly lizards only remember as far back as their last meal,” said Bela.

“Well, I’m really going to miss him!” Lilwed said in a sad voice.

“You’ll soon find yourself another pet,” Hilda reassured the little Grickle.



“Something really small that doesn’t eat a lot,” Titus added.

“So that won’t include Zoz!” Firdle chimed in.

“Take that back!” Zoz shouted and started to chase Firdle around the mound.

The other Grickles laughed as they watched them run.

(Why’s that big knobbly banana fig bouncing around on the mound?)

That put Lilwed in a much better mood. She suddenly remembered that Bernie had gobbled up everyone’s breakfast, so she skipped down from the mound in search of food for all her friends. She was careful to steer clear of any knobbly banana fig bushes. So she set off in the opposite direction where she saw a signpost...

(Goodbye!

Do you think that was a good end to the story?

I don’t know, I’ve only just arrived.

This way to more banana fig bushes and other things.

This way to the end of the story and other things.)

(Go straight on to find the end of the book!

That’s easy for you to say!)