

# *“Not now! Maybe later.”*

*By  
Peter  
Blackerby*

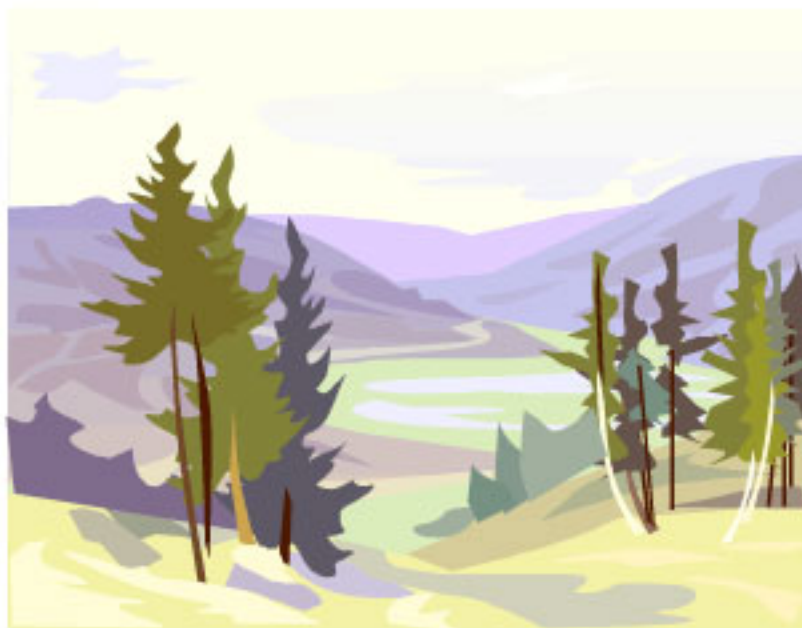
*Illustrated  
by  
MS Word Clip Art*

*Give a name to the boy (this page) in this story and, if chosen, receive special recognition (to be determined) from the publisher (address inside). Multiple winners okay. Include your name and return address with entry.  
( No purchase necessary. )*



*Thomas Thomson, Publisher*

*"Not now! Maybe later." by Peter Blackerby*



*Dedication*

*To Christopher, Amanda, and Annette Blackerby*

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**I** got a new book today.

*I can't read.*

*Mom can read.*



*So, I said, “Mom! Mom! Mom!”*

*Mom said, “What?”*

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*I said, “Will you read me my new book?”*

*Mom said, “Not right now.”*

*I said, “When?”*

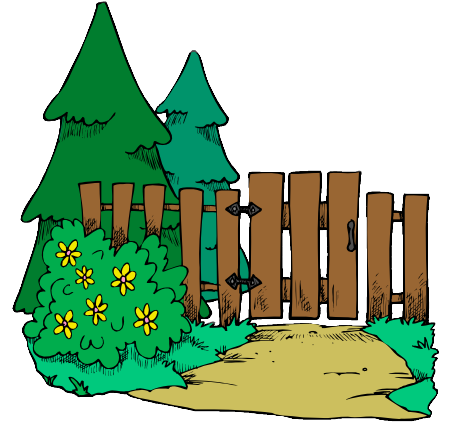
*Mom said, “Maybe later.”*

*I went into the backyard.*



*I looked over the fence.*

*Dennis was not there.*



*I went into the front yard.*

*Dennis was not there, either.*

*I went to Dennis' back door.*

*The door was open.*

*I said, "Dennis! Dennis!  
Dennis!"*



*Dennis' Mom came to the door.*

*I said, “Can I come in to play?”*

*Dennis' Mom said, “No, not right now.”*



*I said, “When?”*

*She said, “Maybe later.”*

*I said, “Can Dennis come outside?”*

*She said, “No, not right now.”*

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*I said, "When?"*

*She said, "Maybe later."*



*I went back to my yard.*

*Dad was washing our car.*

*I said, “Dad! Dad! Dad!”*

*Dad said, “What?”*

*I said, “Can I help?”*



*Dad said, “What?” again.*

*I said, “Can I help you wash  
the car?”*

*“Not now! Maybe later.” by Peter Blackerby*

*Dad said, “Not right now.”*

*I said, “When?”*

*Dad said, “Maybe later.”*



*I went into the garage.*

*Danny was fixing his bicycle.*

*I said, “Danny! Danny! Danny!”*

*Danny said, “What?”*

*I said, “Will you fix my bike?”*

*Danny said, “No, not right now.”*

*I said, “When?”*



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*Danny said, “Maybe later.”*



*I looked across the street.*

*Stacy was playing in her front yard.*



*I looked at Dad.*

*I said, “Dad! Dad! Dad!”*

*Dad said, “What?”*

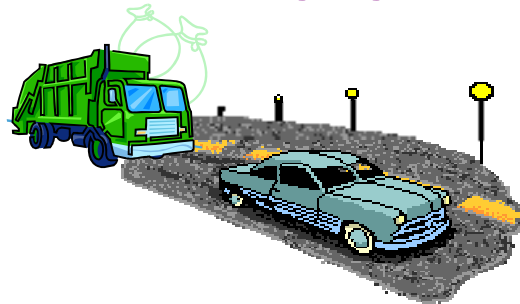
*I said, “May I cross the street?”*

*He said, “Okay.”*

*I looked both ways.*

*I waited for a blue car..*

*I waited for a big green truck*



*I looked again. There were no cars.*

*I crossed the street.*

*I went into Stacy's yard.*

*I said, “Can I play?”*

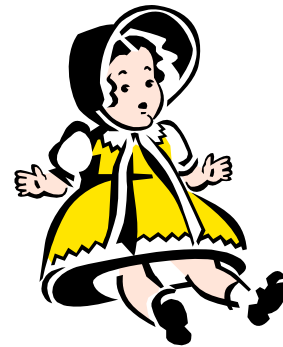
*Stacy said, “What do you want to play?”*

*I said, “We can play with my football.”*



*Stacy said, “No way! Footballs are for boys.”*

*I said, “So what?”*



*Stacy said, “Let’s play dolls.”*

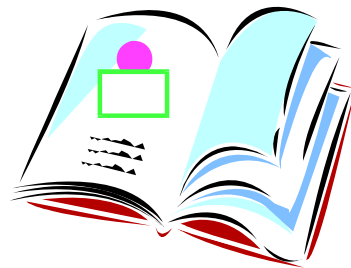
*I said, “No way! Dolls are for girls.”*

*Stacy said, “So what?”*

*I said, “I got a new book right here in my brown pouch.”*

*Stacy said, “I can’t read.”*

*I said, “Me too.”*



*Stacy said, “We can color.”*

*I said, “Okay!”*

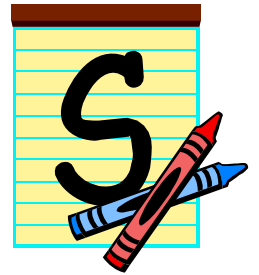
*Stacy went into her house. She  
Came back with crayons.*



*She went into her house again.  
She came back with paper.*

*Stacy’s Mom came to the door.*

*Stacy’s Mom said, “Stacy.”*



*Stacy said, “What, Mom?”*

*Stacy’s Mom said, “It’s time to  
eat.”*

*I said, “Can she play a little while longer?”*

*Stacy’s Mom said, “No, not right now.”*

*I said, “Can Stacy come out again?”*

*Stacy’s Mom said, “Yes.”*

*I said, “When?”*

*She said, “Maybe later.”*



*I went to the street. I looked  
across the street.*

*I yelled, “Dad! Dad! Dad!”*

*Dad said, “What?”*

*I yelled, “May I cross the  
street?”*



*Dad said, “Yes.”*



*I looked both ways. I waited for  
a bike. I looked again. I waited  
for a dog. There were no cars.*

*There were no dogs. I crossed  
the street.*



*Dad was done washing the car.*

*I said, “Dad! Dad! Dad!”*

*Dad said, “What?”*

*I said, “Can you take me to the  
park?”*



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*Dad said, “Not now.”*

*I said, “When?”*

*Dad said, “Maybe later.”*



*I walked to the steps. I sat down. I held my chin in my hands. I started thinking.*

*Dad put his stuff away. He walked to the steps. He sat down.*

*I was still thinking.*

*I said, “Dad!”*



*Dad said, “What, son?”*

*I said, “How long is later?”*

*Dad said, “That’s a good question.”*

*I said, “Dad!”*

*Dad said, “What?”*

*I said, “What’s the answer?”*

*Dad said, “Why do you ask that?”*

*I said, “Mom said she would read me a book later.*



*“Dennis’ Mom said he could play later.*



*“You said I could help wash the car later.*



*“Danny said he would fix my bike later.*



*“Stacy’s Mom said Stacy would come out later.*



*“You said ‘Maybe later’ when I asked if you could take me to the park.”*



*Dad said, “So, that’s why you want to know about ‘later.’”*

*I said, “Yah! Right.”*

*Dad held his chin in his hand.  
He was thinking.*



*I scratched my head . I waited.  
I stopped waiting.*

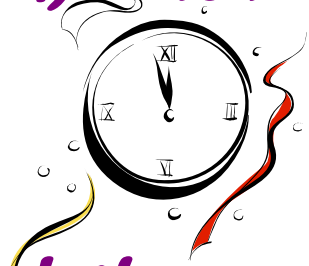


*I said, “Dad!”*

*Dad said, “What?”*

*I said, “So, when is later?”*

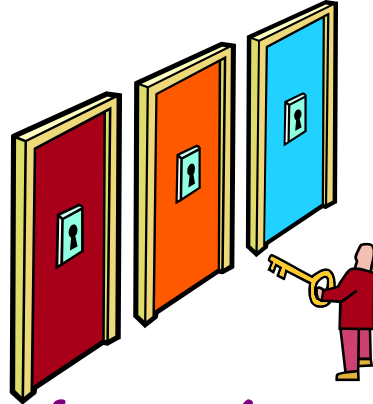
*Dad said, “How about right now?”*



*I started thinking again.*

*First of three endings. You make the choice and tell or write about the choice you made:*

*I said, “Okay.”*



*Second ending:*

*I said, “‘Later’ doesn’t matter anymore.”*

*Dad asked, “Why not?”*

*I said, “Because I never know when ‘later’ is.”*

*Dad said, “Then, what will you do?”*

*I started thinking again.*

*I said, “I’ll play alone until someone asks me.”*

*Dad said, “Asks you what?”*



*I said, “To do something with them.”*

*Dad said, “Good idea.”*

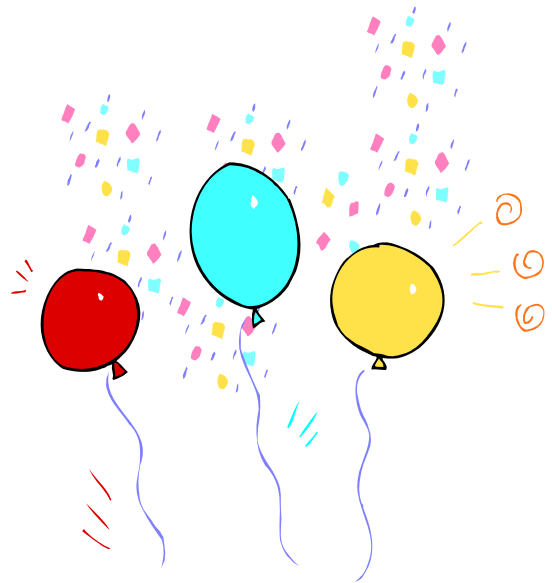
*Third ending:*

*I said, “Dad!”*

*He said, “What?”*

*I said, “Why is ‘later’ now?”*

*Dad said, “Because it’s your birthday and there’s a surprise*



*party for you. Dennis is coming. Dennis' Mom is coming. Danny is coming. Danny's Mom is coming. Stacy is coming. Stacy's mom is coming. We are all having your party at the park.”*

*I said, “Dad!”*

*He said, “What?”*

*I said, “Can I tell you something?”*



*Dad said, “Like what?”*

*“Like I want to do stuff with you,” I said.*

*Dad said, “What kind of stuff?”*

*“Go fishing, biking, reading, teaching me things, do stuff with you,” I said.*

*Dad raised his eyebrows, moved his eyes around, and thought for a while.*

*“Okay!” Dad said. “Let’s go fishing ~ right now.”*

*“Not now! Maybe later.” I said.*

*“Why not now?” Dad said.*

*“Because people are here for my party,” I said.*

*“Okay! Later, then?” Dad said.*

*“Okay! Dad,” I said.*

*\*\*\*\*\**

## Advanced Reading

*Which ending did you choose—and why? There is no right or wrong answer. How does your mom or dad spend time with you? Do they spend too much time going out alone, or sitting at the computer, or watching television, or talking on their cell phones? Do they take you to parks, take you camping and fishing, go on bicycle rides with you? Do they go to the library with you, or bookstores and*

*help you pick out books you like? Do they read to you? Do they help you with your homework when it is hard to finish? Do they prepare home-cooking and eat and talk at the dinner table with everyone? Do they teach you how to cook? Tell or write on a piece of paper how your parents (or parent) spend time with you and how you would like to spend more time with them:*