

A Review of Muddle Earth by Paul Stewart and Chris Ridell

When Randalf the wizard tries to summon a warrior hero to Muddle Earth, the place where anything can happen (and it usually does!), he gets a small boy named Joe and his dog, Henry. Having to play the part of Joe the Barbarian, he gets kitted out in very low-cost barbarian gear (the helmet of sarcasm is a frying pan) at a goblin shop and heads off to work on a mission for the Horned Baron, ruler of Muddle Earth. The Horned Baron turns out to be a very small man in a horned helmet. He wants Joe to find a rogue ogre who has been causing trouble and squeezing sheep, for some reason. And so Joe sets out on his adventures. Along the way, he encounters exploding nervous frogs, rather nice trolls, an ogre who wants his comfort blanket back and a dragon who likes her hoard of sparkling junk.

But there is more stake than a ogre or a cutlery-obsessed dragon. These are all plots of the fiendish Dr Cuddles, the insane inhabitant of Giggle Glade. He has an evil plot to, like all good bad guys, take over Muddle Earth. And to do it, he has kidnapped all the wizards and a big book of all the spells in Muddle Earth. It's up to Joe, Randalf, a rather wimpy ogre and a sarcastic budgie to save the day! The odds don't look good, but remember: In Muddle Earth, anything can happen.