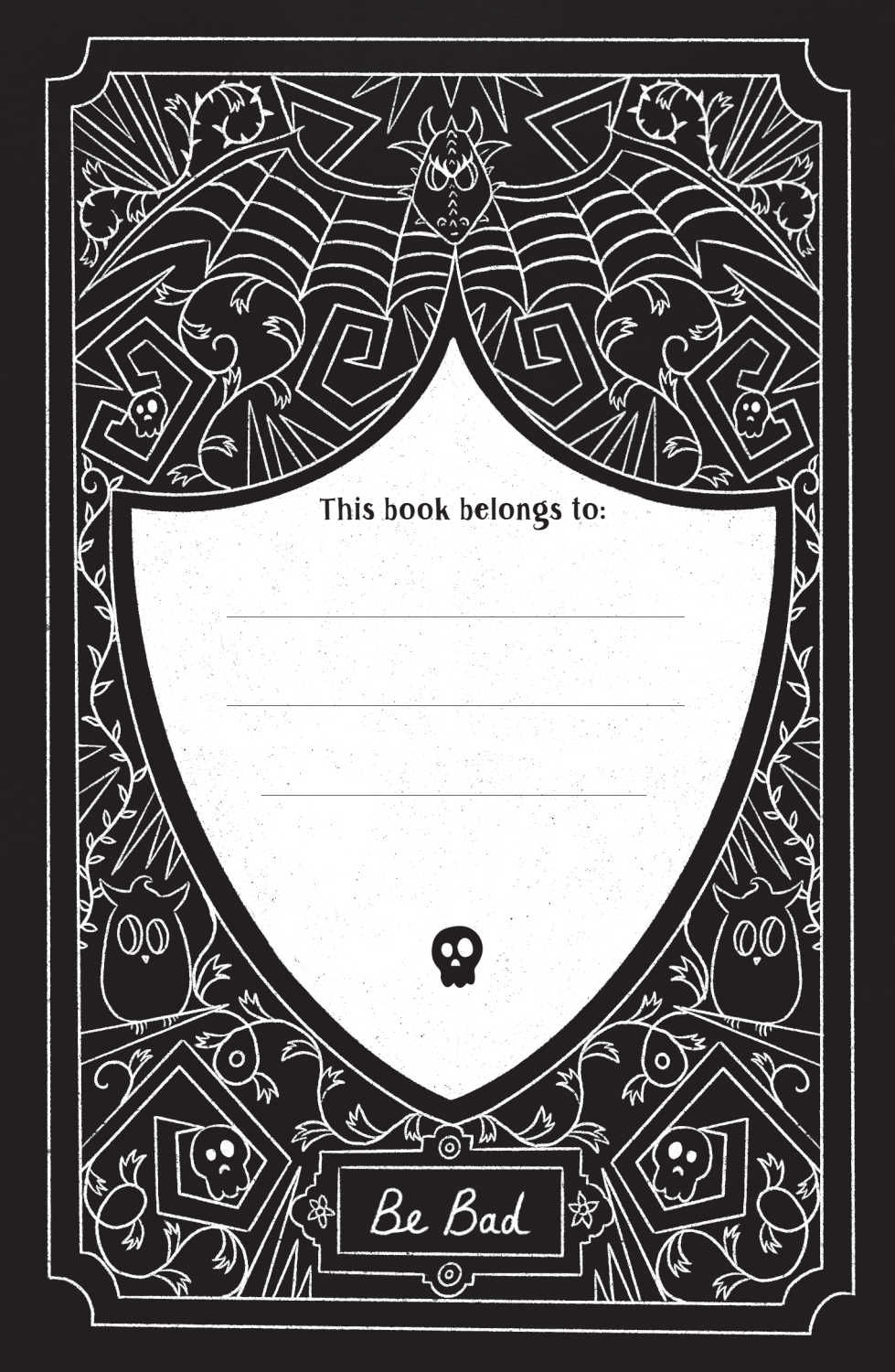




This book belongs to:



Be Bad

PRAISE FOR VILLAINS ACADEMY

‘Frightfully fun – *Villains Academy* had me
cackling from the very first page!’

Katie Tsang, co-author of the Dragon Realm series

‘I loved the spookily funny *Villains Academy*.
It’s a work of (evil) genius!’

Jenny McLachlan, author of *The Land of Roar*

‘Criminally fun!’

Danny Wallace, author of *The Day the Screens Went Blank*

‘Heart-warming and hilarious – *Villains Academy* is a spookalicious
treat, set to terrify every other book on your shelf.’

Jack Meggitt-Phillips, author of *The Beast and the Bethany*

‘An absolute HOOT! Evil laughs aplenty!’

Sophy Henn, author and illustrator of the Pizazz series

‘A delightfully fun adventure with real heart and humour.’

Benjamin Dean, author of *Me, My Dad and the End of the Rainbow*

‘Immersive, funny, and with a cast of scarily loveable characters,
Villains Academy made me feel like I was IN the book!’

Mel Taylor-Bessent, author of *The Christmas Carrolls*

‘A fabulously funny adventure. I want to enrol at Villains Academy!’

Nick Sheridan, author of *The Case of the Runaway Brain*

‘Wickedly funny and full of quirky yet loveable characters.’

Iona Rangeley, author of *Einstein the Penguin*

‘This is a brilliant, bonkers work packed with top-notch illustration.’

Jack Noel, author and illustrator of the Comic Classics series

‘Full of wonderful characters, *Villains Academy* is such a FUN read!’

Rikin Parekh, illustrator of *The Worst Class in the World* series

Dear reader,
Please find enclosed your pass
to **BADNESS**.

Being bad is a choice. Don't be
bad all of the time, please. But do
read on if you want to learn how
to be a *true* villain.

P.S. Sorry, adults . . .



Reader
WHEREVER YOU LIVE
BLAH BLAH BLAH



PROPERTY OF
Sheila x

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*So don't think
about it or
ELSE!*

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**VERY
NAUGHTY
VILLAINS**

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places
and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or
are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual people living or
dead, events or locales is entirely coincidental.

*Though I, Sheila,
am **VERY** real.*

SEE

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MIX
Paper from
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*No, I
DON'T!!*

BRAM
MASTER
MADBYBUM



VILLAINS ACADEMY



Written, illustrated and designed by

RYAN HAMMOND

SIMON AND SCHUSTER



For Mum and Dad.
For making me believe
anything is possible.

X







CHAPTER 1

HOW TO BE BAD

Master Mardybum's enormous sleeves billowed through the air as he entered the classroom, his eyes burning red. 'Welcome, Class Z, to Villains Academy – the most prestigious villain school in the entire land. You'll either leave here as a fully formed villain . . . or in *tatters*.'

Bram watched the teacher in awe as sparks shot from his fingertips. Master Mardybum had been one of the most



notorious villains back in the day. There were rumours that he had conquered entire cities, destroyed heroes in the blink of an eye and even flushed his arch nemesis' head down the toilet. Bram hoped that one day he could be a smidgen as bad as Master Mardybum.

'OH, BUMBERSHINS!'

Bram exclaimed, frantically searching through his bag.

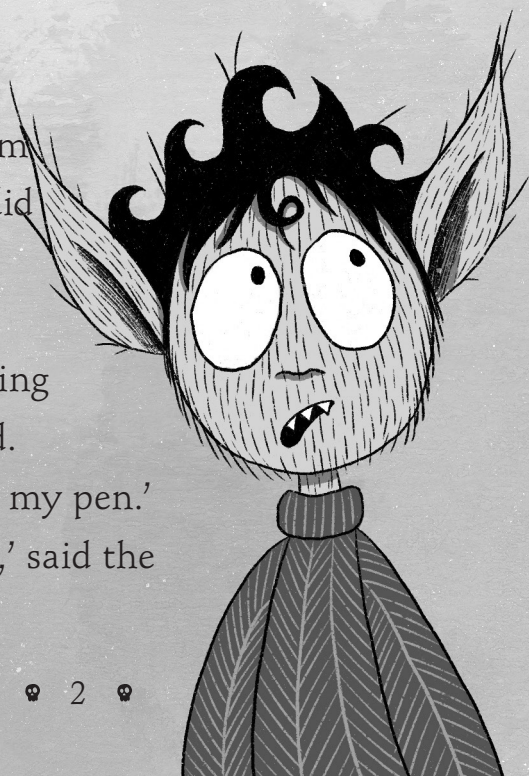
'Excuse me?'

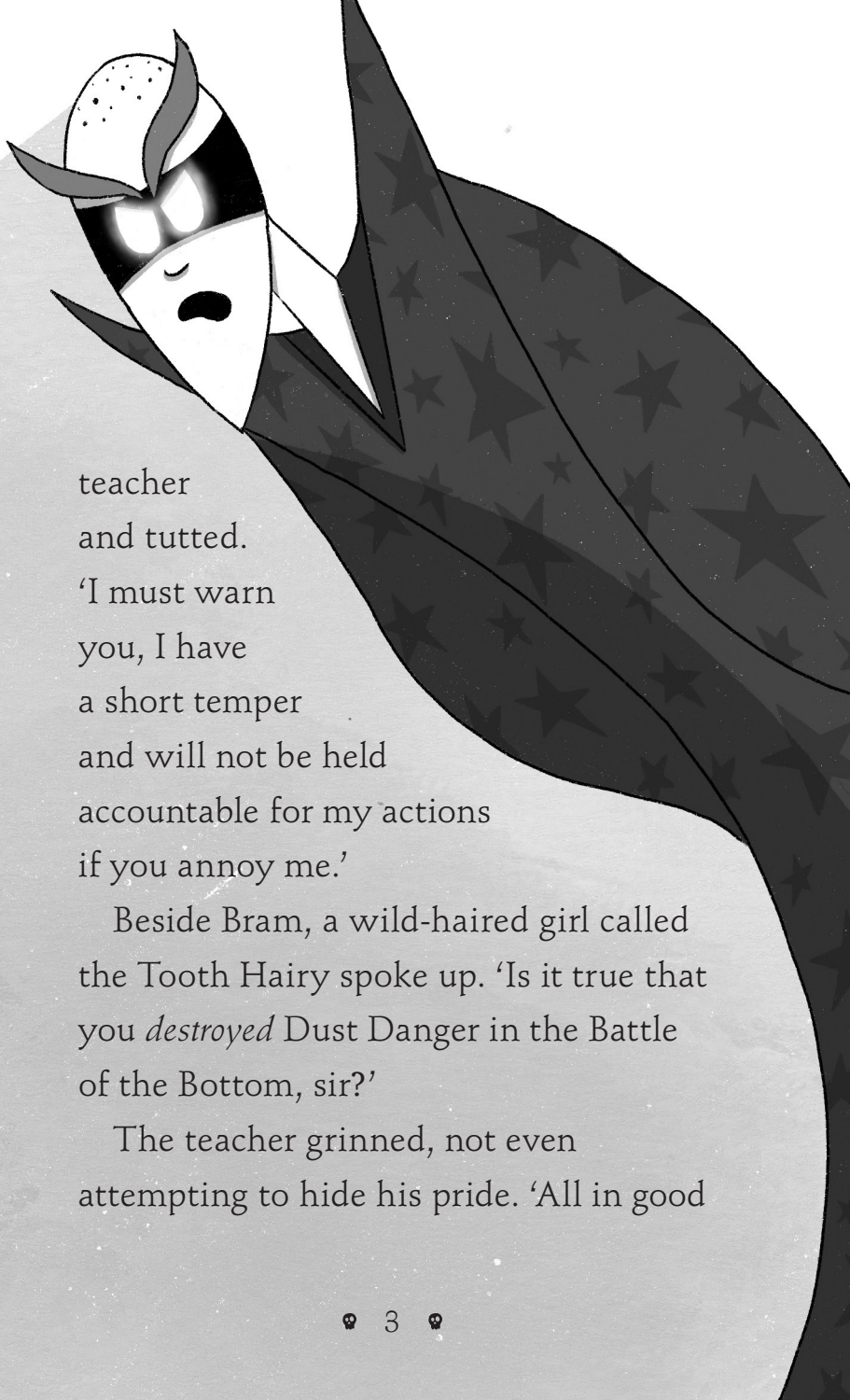
Master Mardybum scowled. 'What did you just call me?'

'Nothing, sir,' Bram said, growing hot and flustered.

'I . . . I can't find my pen.'

'Likely excuse,' said the





teacher
and tutted.
'I must warn
you, I have
a short temper
and will not be held
accountable for my actions
if you annoy me.'

Beside Bram, a wild-haired girl called
the Tooth Hairy spoke up. 'Is it true that
you *destroyed* Dust Danger in the Battle
of the Bottom, sir?'

The teacher grinned, not even
attempting to hide his pride. 'All in good

time. And it was the Battle of the *Bootom*, not Bottom. It's a wonderfully dark forest in the depths of Ick. I'll tell you about it one day . . . maybe. Now, back to the lesson. Over the next year, I'm going to teach you everything you need to know about being *bad*. I'm a big believer in hands-on activities to give you the best chance of surviving as a villain in the big wide world.'

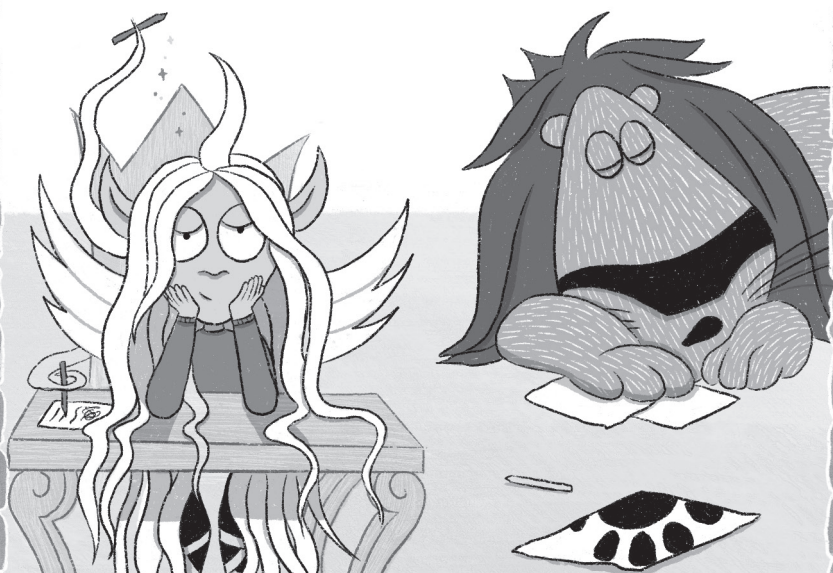
The students watched in wonder.
A boy with screws in his head wrote
down notes eagerly. A toad
in a top hat scratched his
tummy, looking bored.



And in the corner, at the back of the room, a humongous lion *snored*.

Bram felt the pit of his stomach tingle with first-day nerves and he began to wonder what he'd let himself in for. His mind spun with doubts. Would he ever be bad enough to graduate Villains Academy? And if he did, would he be able to get a job in the real world as a villain when there were so many others to compete with?

He looked around at the eclectic mix of animals, humans, elves and all-round awful creatures. They burped, hissed and



radiated badness without even trying. And the worst part of all was that every one of them was likely to destroy Bram as easily as Master Mardybum had destroyed Dust Danger with his . . . bottom, was it?

‘You’ve been accepted into this school to train as villains,’ Master Mardybum continued. ‘You’re all young, so there’s time to whip you into shape, even if your skills are still . . . basic. Now, you there, toad face. Tell me, what’s the *baddest* thing you’ve ever done?’

‘I ate a child,’

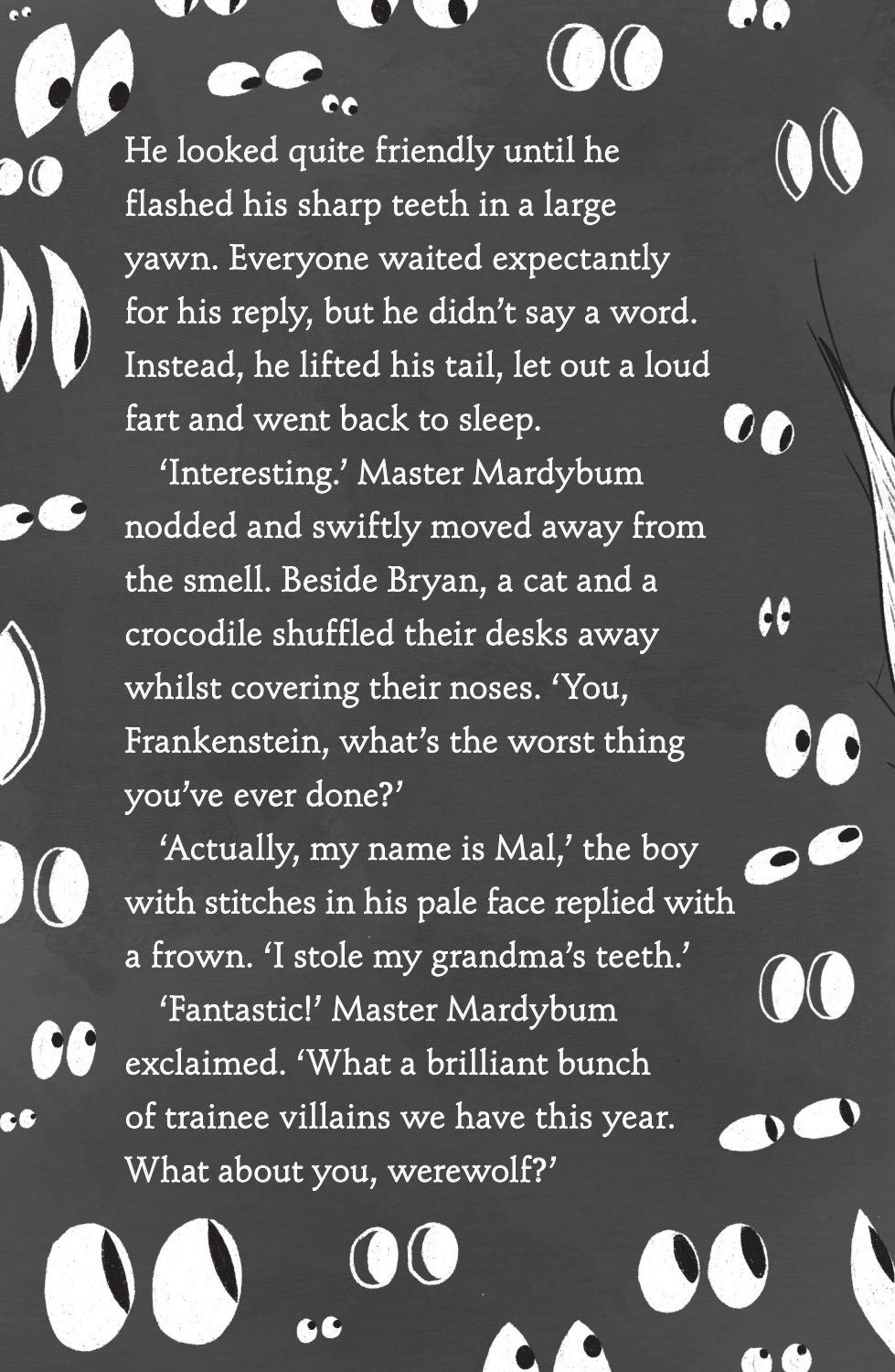
the toad said in a *tremendously* posh accent. ‘It was making too much noise and I *hate* noise. So I swallowed it whole. Though I did eventually spit it back out

covered in slime. I'm not a total monster.'
A wicked smile split his face.

'Excellent! Children are the *worst*,'
Master Mardybum agreed. 'Oi, you,
Bryan the sleepy lion! What's the baddest
thing you've ever done?'

The lion stirred slightly and cracked
open one eye. His head was ginormous
and covered with fluffy auburn hair.



The page is decorated with numerous white, stylized eyes of various sizes and orientations scattered across a black background. Some eyes are simple circles with dots for pupils, while others are more complex, resembling almond shapes or having multiple pupils. They are positioned around the text, creating a sense of being watched.

He looked quite friendly until he flashed his sharp teeth in a large yawn. Everyone waited expectantly for his reply, but he didn't say a word. Instead, he lifted his tail, let out a loud fart and went back to sleep.

'Interesting.' Master Mardybum nodded and swiftly moved away from the smell. Beside Bryan, a cat and a crocodile shuffled their desks away whilst covering their noses. 'You, Frankenstein, what's the worst thing you've ever done?'

'Actually, my name is Mal,' the boy with stitches in his pale face replied with a frown. 'I stole my grandma's teeth.'

'Fantastic!' Master Mardybum exclaimed. 'What a brilliant bunch of trainee villains we have this year. What about you, werewolf?'

Bram felt like a hundred pairs of eyes
were watching him.





He didn't have strong muscles or an evil mind, and he certainly wasn't a terrifying lion. His fur was pale green and covered his whole body. Apparently it was supposed to glow in the dark on a full moon, which was when he was meant to feel the most powerful and **BAD**, but that had never happened in his entire life. As Bram was always in wolf form, his parents assumed that he'd be *extra* bad. But he wasn't. His claws were small and cared for. His teeth were clean and bright. He wasn't scary or intimidating on the outside, and he wasn't sure that his insides were bad either.

Bram tried to think of an answer, to explain how he *was* bad, but the closer Master Mardybum came, the more flustered Bram grew. The teacher reached his desk and walked on with a sigh.

'It seems like killing people with

silence is your talent, Bram. Not the best power I've seen.' He frowned and turned his attention to his next victim. 'You, witch girl, tell me your worst tale. You look like you have a nemesis or two.'

The elf-witch, Mona, rolled her eyes upwards towards the

'GO AWAY'

badge on the top of her hat. She had rich brown skin and long dark hair that flowed down past her waist and there was an air of mystery about her. 'I do.'

'And who are they?'

'None of your business. You'll have to work that out for yourself.'

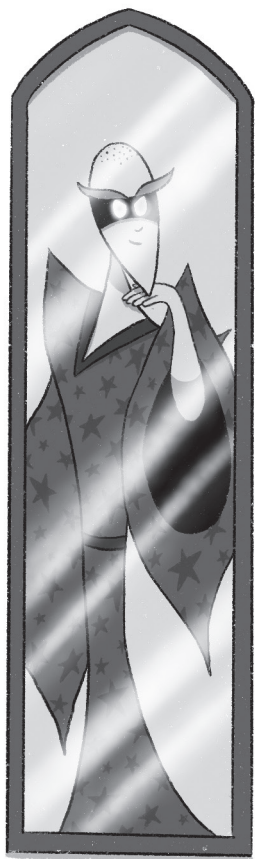


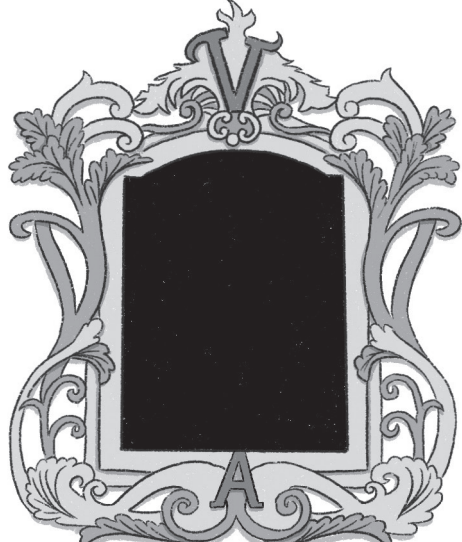
Master Mardybum's eyes glowed red. 'Thinking like a villain already and not revealing your secrets – I'm impressed. That kind of thinking will win you Villain of the Week.'



The teacher swished around the room, gesturing to pictures of himself on the walls. He stopped to admire himself in a full-length mirror for a moment before pointing to a large, ornate frame with a plaque underneath that said: **VILLAIN OF THE WEEK.**

'Each week, I'll choose the





**VILLAIN OF
THE WEEK**

baddest, evildest student and crown them Villain of the Week. I don't give out the title lightly, so you must prove yourself in order to

win it. Consider it a little competition between yourselves. Speaking of which, I'm *thrilled* to announce that as the sun sets at the end of this week, you'll all be competing as teams in a Mystery Maze in the Wicked Woods. At the end of the task, I'll name the student who stood out the most from the winning team as Villain of the Week,' he said.



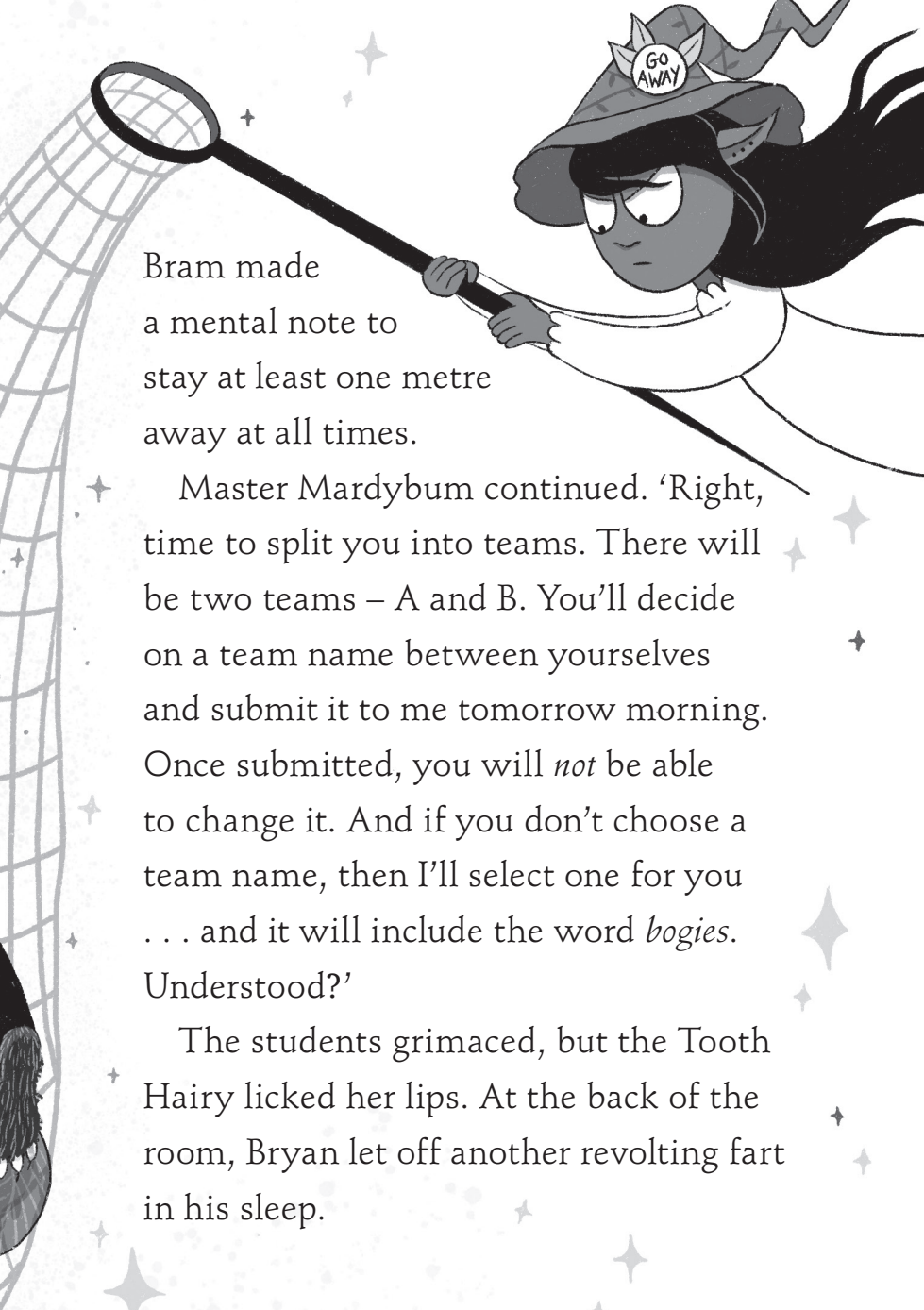
✦ ‘Do we *have* to work in teams?’ Mona moaned. ‘I’d rather complete the maze by myself than with this . . . useless bunch.’ Her eyes lingered on Bram.

‘Yes,’ snapped Master Mardybum. ‘My decision is final. Consider this your first lesson – even villains need allies.’ ✦

Mona had already switched off and was faffing with a net by her side, which sparked as her fingers fiddled with it. Bram had overheard her bragging about the net in the corridor before class began. ✦ Apparently, it was her weapon of choice, gifted to her by her parents, and it was said to entrap anyone that crossed her path. ✦

What would happen . . .





Bram made a mental note to stay at least one metre away at all times.

Master Mardybum continued. ‘Right, time to split you into teams. There will be two teams – A and B. You’ll decide on a team name between yourselves and submit it to me tomorrow morning. Once submitted, you will *not* be able to change it. And if you don’t choose a team name, then I’ll select one for you . . . and it will include the word *bogies*. Understood?’

The students grimaced, but the Tooth Hairy licked her lips. At the back of the room, Bryan let off another revolting fart in his sleep.



Master Mardybum clicked his fingers and a flame appeared in mid-air. It twirled and swirled, growing slightly larger than intended with all the methane gas in the air, and then gracefully transformed into a small piece of paper. The class watched in amazement as the teacher unfolded the note and read out the name 'Mal' as the



first member of team A.

The flames continued to appear and burn, sorting the students into their teams. Mona was the first member of team B and was quickly joined by a ghost named Sheila Boo, a skeleton named Tony and Bryan the Lion, who refused to wake from his slumber. Mal was joined in team A by the Tooth

Hairy, Mr Toad and Spike the Crocodile, leaving Bram and a cat named Jeeves as the last to be chosen.

Bram began to think. Which was the lesser of two evils? Which team looked *nice*?

Neither, was the answer.

‘And the last member of team A is . . . Jeeves!’ Master Mardybum announced.

A loud cheer came from the group – so loud that nobody even heard Bram being announced as the last member of team B.

He walked over to his new team members with a shy smile and offered out his hand.

Mona shook her head. ‘No, thank you. I hate you all.’

Bram withdrew his hand in embarrassment and scratched his head. He’d hoped that he’d make friends *and*



learn how to be bad at Villains Academy. But so far, he'd been embarrassed by his teacher, rejected by his classmates and, worst of all, his nose hairs were burning with the rancid smell in the air . . . and it was only his first lesson! It seemed that being bad was going to be a lot of hard work.



WHO IS

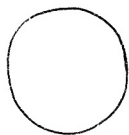
RYAN HAMMOND?

Ryan Hammond is an author, illustrator and book designer. He likes cute animals, quirky characters and VILLAINOUS traits.

He currently lives in Sheffield in an extremely haunted house, surrounded by lots and LOTS of books. *Villains Academy* is his first book.

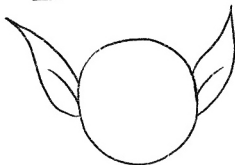
HOW TO DRAW BRAM

1.



Draw a circle.

2.



Add ears.

3.



Add eyes, a nose
and a mouth.

4.



Add the swirls of
Bram's hair.

5.



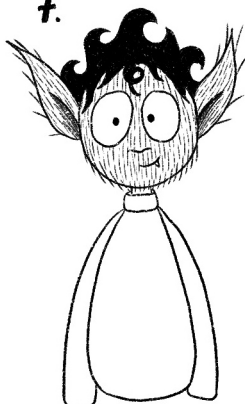
Add strands of hair
below the swirls.

6.



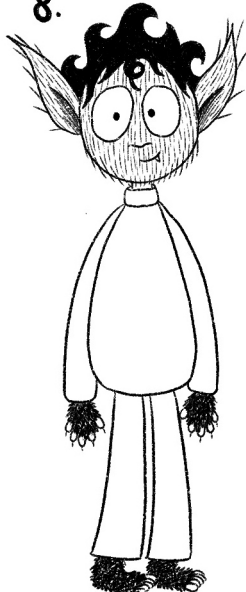
Add fur all over.

7.



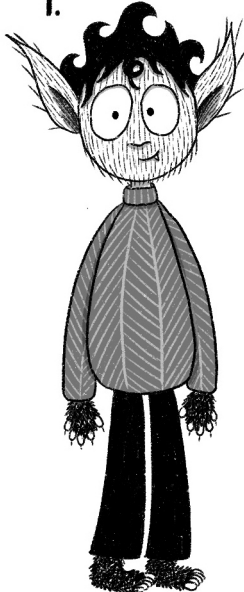
Draw a body
and arms.

8.



Add legs, feet
and hands.

9.



Colour in for a woolly
jumper effect!

**And there's a villainously
good audiobook too . . .**

