

USBORNE

# GRUMPFORT

MEET THE WORLD'S WORST  
MONSTER HUNTER

"Hilarious!"  
JENNIFER  
BELL

"Brilliant!"  
LOUIE  
STOWELL

JAMIE HAMMOND





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For Mum & Dad x

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# GRUMPFORT

JAMIE  
HAMMOND



THE  
FOREST

# BOGFLOSS



the MOHC

the  
WEARY



# The Bogfoss Hearsay



**EXTRA!  
EXTRA!**

First-look exclusive  
into Fifteenth's  
legacy and life.

**WEAPONS  
ON  
WHEELS**



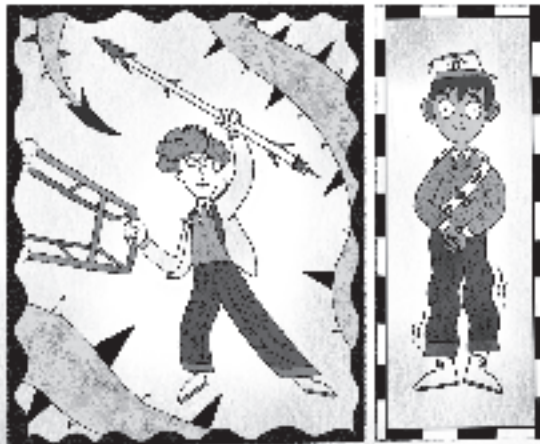
**SALE!**

GET THE  
LATEST  
WALKING  
FRAME!



Above: Monday the Fifteenth.

Below: Fifteenth in action, and Monday the Sixteenth.



## THE WORST MONDAY IN HISTORY

We are sad to announce that Monday the Fifteenth has died. As a beloved and respected Warden, she protected our village from monsters for sixty-two years (we heard she slayed a snuffhowken only last week with her bare hands – such skill!). She was determined to go on for ever and died reluctantly, clinging to her walking frame as she battered a goblin over the head in her final moments.

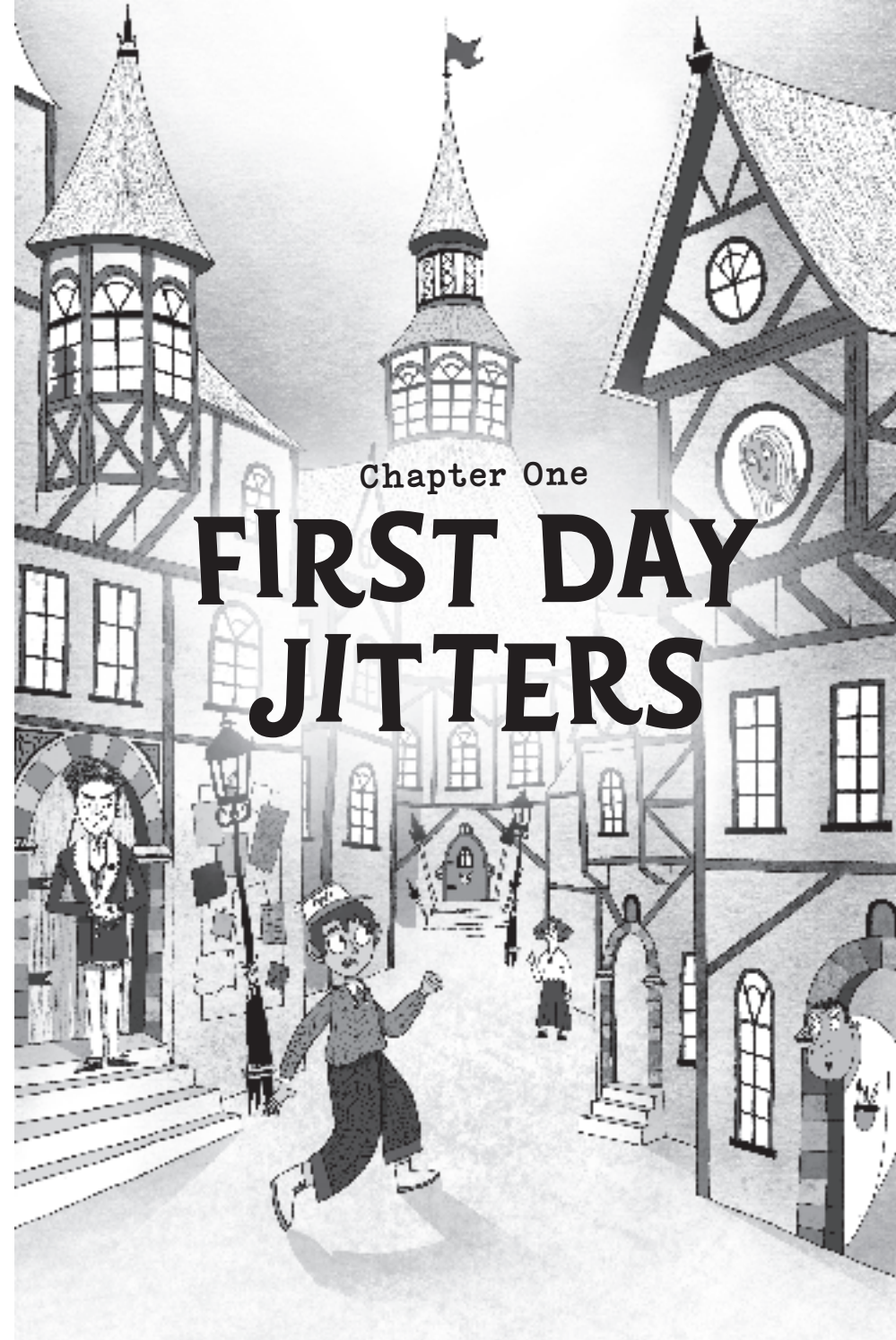
She was known for her ferocious spirit and deadly determination, so I'm sure this news comes as a blow to the entire village of Bogfoss. There

will no doubt be rumours bouncing around about her replacement, but Monday the Fifteenth was irreplaceable. The town will never have a Warden with her ability, talent or wit ever again.

But following village tradition and founding law, just as we have for the past two hundred years, we can formally announce that the next Warden to join us in protecting our village will be...

**Monday the Sixteenth.**

Heavens, pray for us all.

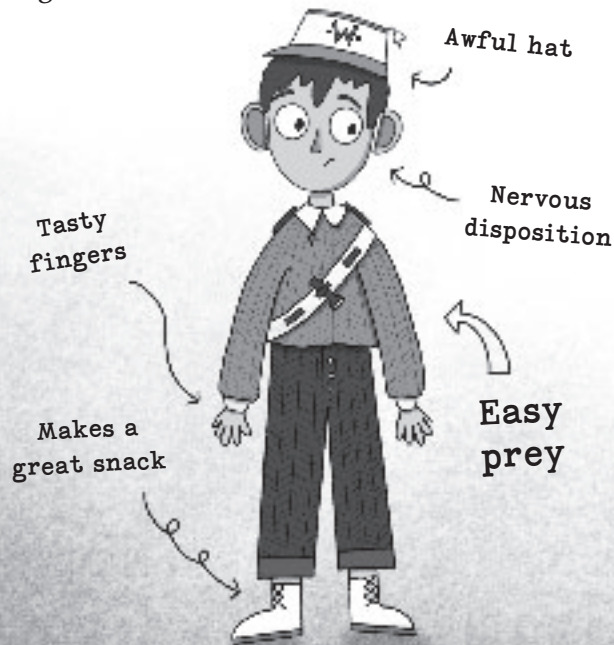


Chapter One

# FIRST DAY JITTERS

It was almost impossible to wander the narrow streets of Bogfoss without worrying that you'd be eaten. Troublesome monsters might gobble you whole (if you were lucky), or nibble on your fingers if they felt somewhat peckish. The woods surrounding Bogfoss were crawling with beasts, which meant they often crept inside for a light snack.

Normally Monday the Sixteenth, or Mo, as everyone called him, would remain in the shadows of the rickety buildings, ready to leap into the safety of the nearest house should a monster take a fancy to *his* fingers.



But today was different.

Today was Mo's first day as a Warden.

Today he *had* to be brave. He couldn't cower around corners or shriek at the sight of his own shadow. He had to make a good first impression.

But as he had overslept and was running late to his first day of training, he was already off to a bad start.

Mo hurried over the higgledy-piggledy cobbles, tugging down his woolly jumper and adjusting a cap over his mass of floppy locks. His new Warden uniform was so tight that it felt like it was squeezing the life out of him, which definitely didn't help his nerves.

You see, Mo really didn't want to be a Warden.

But he had no choice, because his grandma, Monday the Fifteenth, had died and Mo was next in line for her job. That was just how things worked in Bogfoss. Just like how the forest was

# STRICTLY FORBIDDEN!

and nobody, not even the Wardens, were allowed into it. *Ever*. Anything beyond the moat that circled Bogfoss was firmly **OUT-OF-BOUNDS**.

Mo had known the day was coming for a while. Generation after generation had followed the same rule: the next heir of each family would succeed as Warden. Sunday replacing Sunday, Monday replacing Monday; the heirs of the seven founding families always upholding the legacy to defend the village and take over the patrols for the day they were named for. A true honour in most people's eyes. But it felt more like a curse to Mo.

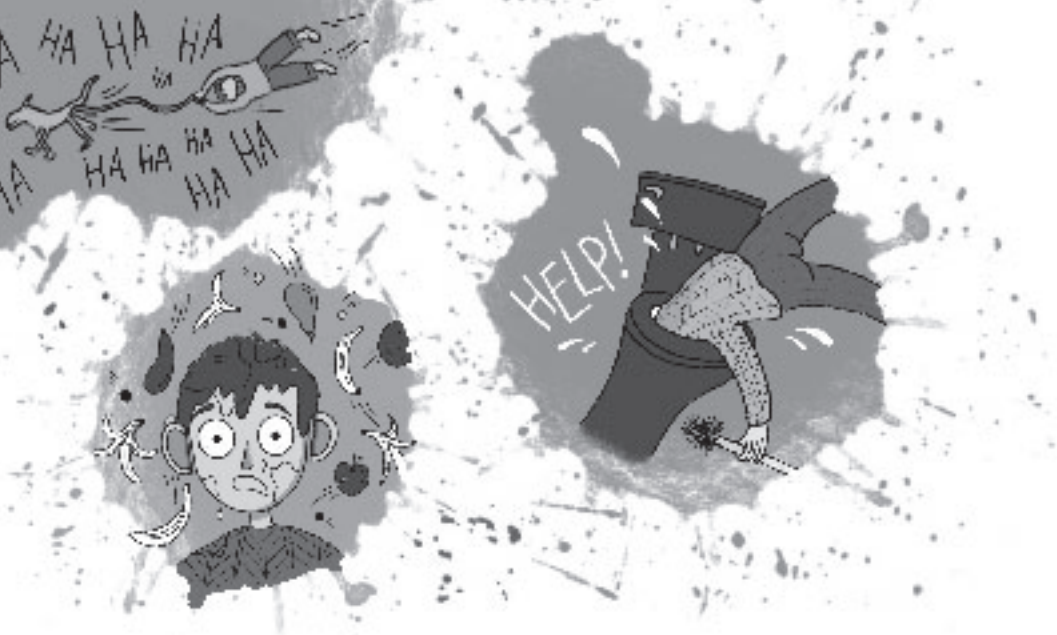
He had truly thought that his grandma would live for ever. She was the only family he had, so Mo would miss her terribly. She had tried so hard to train him in her ways, which had often led to arguments, but he had hoped to get up to speed on a few things before the inevitable happened. Things like the simple task of holding a weapon, not tripping over everything, or even slaying a monster with his bare hands – which now appeared to be his *job*.



But he wasn't prepared in any sense, and everybody from the sniggering market traders to the sneering shop owners knew it. Try as he might, Mo couldn't ignore the shouts of

as he made his way to The Roost – the very place which would train him to become a fearless monster hunter (he hoped).

Mo was quite used to this reaction. In an attempt to escape his fate as a Warden, he'd tried all sorts of jobs, but failed miserably at them all. It seemed like there was nothing he was particularly good at.



Eventually, everybody in Bogfoss asked him to stay out of their way.

So, as Mo took a final out-of-breath step up to The Roost, holding a copy of *A Beginner's Guide to Monsterology* firmly under his armpit, he had no idea if he'd make it through the Warden initiation in one piece. He just hoped he wouldn't fail as spectacularly as everyone expected.

*"Oh, look who it is!"* boomed a voice as rough as sandpaper as Mo inched open the door. "Thought you'd bottled it, Slow Mo," said Sunday the Fourteenth, flipping her hair over her shoulder.

"Please don't call me that," said Mo.

"Ugh, not **Slow Mo!**" groaned Saturday the Twelfth. "Careful, we don't want you bruising yourself on a sponge again."

Mo's head sank into his shoulders and he swallowed hard as the pair laughed heartily at their little joke. The sponge accident was years ago, and it definitely wasn't his fault!

Both Sunday and Saturday were twice

the size of him. Sunday's

shoulders were broad

and solid, easily able to

carry multiple swords

and axes, plus she had

a permanent scowl

painted on her face

and only needed to

look at a monster to

scare it away. She was the

type of Warden

everyone wanted

protecting them.





“AHEM,”

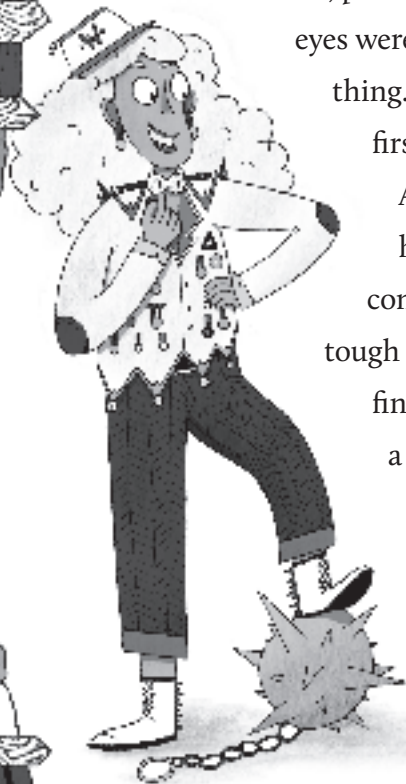
announced the Chief Warden.

Mo jumped, which caused Sunday to roar with laughter. But when the Chief gave a disapproving glare, Sunday immediately lapsed into silence and Saturday bolted out of The Roost entirely.

“Welcome to The Roost, Mo. Are you excited for— Oh, you’re wondering what this is?” asked the Chief, pointing to her necklace. Mo’s

eyes were fixated on the disturbing thing. “These are the eyes of the first goblin I ever defeated.

A reminder of how far I’ve come and how tough I am.” She finished with a wink.



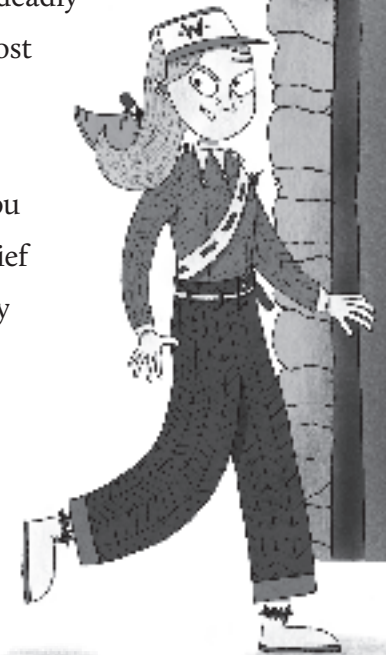
Mo gulped. He wasn’t sure he ever wanted a necklace like that.

“You’ll have trophies like this in no time, don’t worry. Now, because I’m feeling nice, I’ll save you the torture of Sunday running your initiation and do it myself. Sun, you can clock off. See you next Sunday.”

Sunday scowled at Mo and left with a sarcastic “Good luck” over her shoulder.

Mo was suddenly alone with the Chief – and hundreds of deadly weapons which would most likely kill him before the day was out.

“Which weapon do you like the look of?” said Chief giddily. “You’ve got to play with a few before one chooses you.”

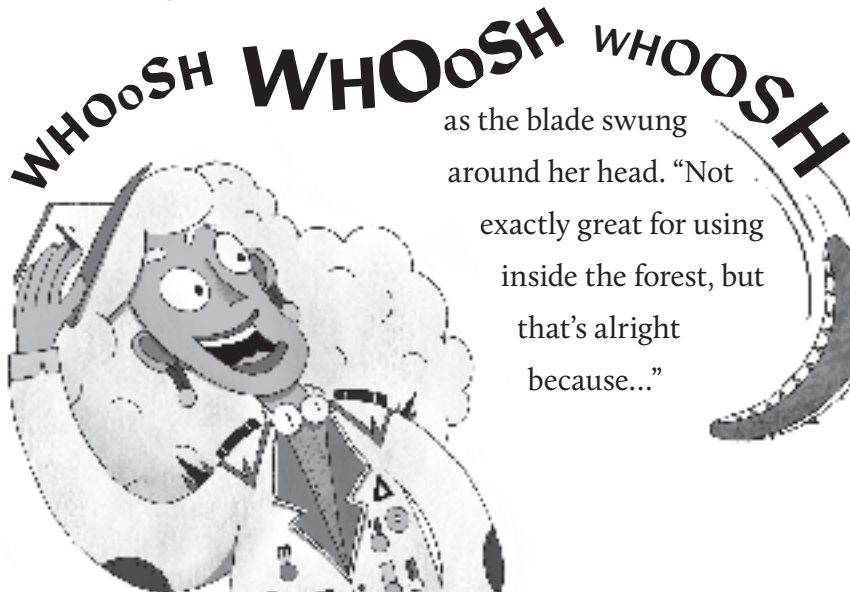


The Chief Warden grabbed sword after sword, swishing them through the air to demonstrate their sharpness. Mo was forced to take at least three steps back to avoid being shaved bald.

“This one comes in handy for Krankons,” continued Chief, stabbing a knife enthusiastically into a wooden table like it was the head of a beast.

“Oh, I LOVE this boomerang! If you throw it with some welly you’ll take out multiple monsters at once. Great for when there’s an open space,” she said with a

as the blade swung around her head. “Not exactly great for using inside the forest, but that’s alright because...”



The Chief gave him an expectant look. “It’s forbidden,” Mo managed to whisper. “Precisely! Now, the axes...”

Mo eyed the exit. He couldn’t do this. He wasn’t made for jabbing swords or swinging axes. The villagers were right, he belonged out of the way, tucked under a nice fluffy blanket with a mug of hot chocolate. That sounded much safer *and* you were guaranteed to keep all your fingers.

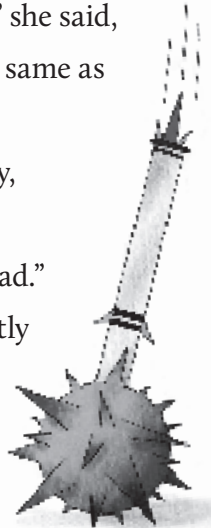
Mo wished he could politely decline the position as Warden, even if it meant breaking hundreds of years of tradition. He was sure the Chief would soon find someone else – someone better.

“Take this!” ordered Chief, thrusting a small axe into his grip. “This one might be a bit heavy,” she said, brandishing another. “It probably weighs the same as you do.”

Mo edged closer to the doorway. “Actually, I’m just going—”

“Nonsense!” ordered Chief. “Try this instead.”

The mace she tried to hand him fell bluntly to the floor, avoiding Mo’s toes by sheer luck.



He attempted to pick it up but, embarrassingly, he couldn't move it even a millimetre. He strained and heaved and tried with all his might...

And that was when the bells tolled.

Mo felt like someone had poked a spoon in his ear

and started wiggling it around in his brain.

He had heard the warning bells a million times before. They always filled him with a familiar dread. But never did he dream that he'd hear them on his first day as a Warden.

This wasn't good.

Mo began to panic. He was about to become mincemeat.

The Chief moved fast. She whipped across the room in a blur and grabbed as many weapons as she could hold.

**“A MONSTER ATTACK!  
COME ON, LAD!”**

she screamed with joy, shoving an axe, a sword and what felt like the whole armoury into his hands as he collapsed under their weight.

The blood drained from Mo's face. He felt sick. This was quite possibly the worst moment of his life.

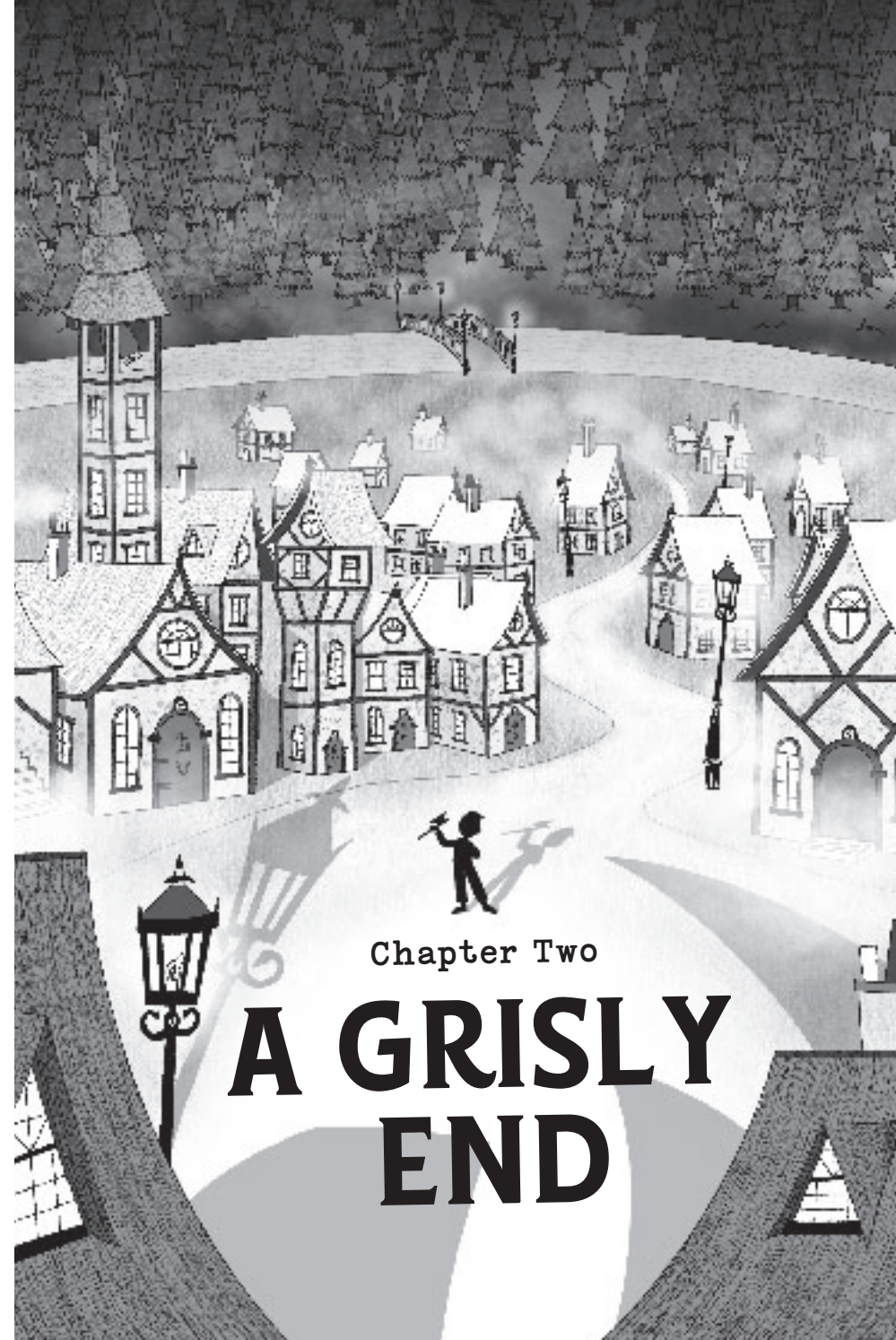
“Go on, this one's yours,” cheered the Chief.



“Your first monster!”

And with a vigorous shove from the giddiest woman he’d ever met, Mo was propelled outside to his certain doom.

“Knock  
‘em dead,  
kiddo!”



Chapter Two

# A GRISLY END

“Oh, *charming!*” muttered Mo as the last villager slammed their shutters.

The warning bells had stopped, the Chief had excitedly closed The Roost doors and Mo was alone on the cobbles of Bogfoss with nothing but his own deafening thoughts and a bunch of weapons he couldn't lift.

And a monster.

An eerie silence clung to the village, flowing out from the edge of the forest. Everybody in the village had grown up with the stories of creatures which lurked in the shadows of the whispering trees.

There were gigantic bog ogres who would crush your bones with their colossal hands. Ghoulish bogeymen appearing when the moon was full and bright. Krankons and ghouls and grizzly gobsnobbers duelling with snapping jaws. Boogying skeletons would rise from their graves and enchanted elves would



weave their webs of mischief; all wanting to lure you inside.

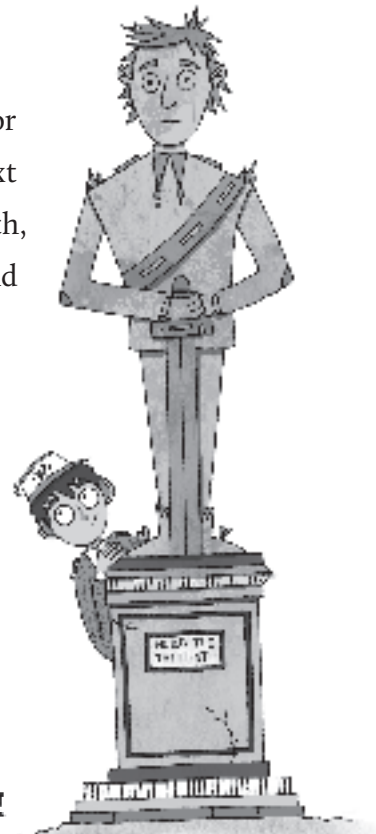


So it was clear why the forest was out of bounds, and why no one in their right mind would *ever* go inside. It was best to stay in the slightly-safer streets of Bogfoss.

Unless they had a monster wandering them.

Beasts only strayed inside the village about once a month, probably when they ran out of food and needed an easy meal. But there was no pattern or way of knowing whether the next invader would have claws or teeth, fur or scales. Or whether it would swoop overhead with nipping fangs and gobble you up whole.

After five long minutes of carefully peeking around the statues of his ancestors and street corners, the pong of something dreadful caused Mo's nose to twitch.



The stench reeked of rotten fish and farts. As Mo crept around The Jolly Jaws pub, the smell got stronger and stronger. It was worse than a room full of Wardens; and that was saying something.

The cobbled square lay empty. On a normal day you could barely move for the bustling activity. There would be shouting and hollering as sellers flogged their wares. The eerie hush was unsettling.

Then Mo caught a glimpse of someone.

Or rather, *something*.

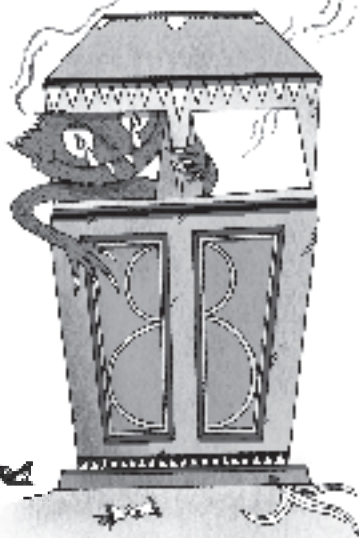
It was peering out of a bin, about halfway across the square. The creature was no bigger than a football. But that didn't fool Mo. He knew exactly how vicious it could be. He'd come across it in his *Monsterology* book numerous times.

Mo chewed his lip as he dug the book out from his pocket, flicking the pages.

*Gruffhuffer...*

*Gremlin...*

"A-ha!" he announced in a whisper.



# GOBLIN



**Size:** anything from a small aubergine to a large melon.

**Habitat:** Often found in underground burrows or large tree trunks. Habitats can be identified by the scratch-like markings left behind.

**Skill:** Malicious thieves. Devilishly quick. A bite with a sting.

**Notes:** Typically found in groups of six to eight, and are rarely found by themselves. Best to avoid if found – they're notorious for pulling victims apart limb by limb.

**Attack plan:** The smallest goblin will be the leader. Kill them first, and the rest will be easy. A sword or club should do the trick.

**Tips:** They are allergic to mushrooms. Often afraid of the colour yellow.



Mo quivered. He was an excellent worrier at the best of times, but this was worth a panic of momentous levels.

He'd already established that swords and clubs were not his thing, and where was he supposed to get mushrooms at such short notice? And his Warden uniform was unhelpfully *not* yellow, which would have been marvellous right about now.

Flustered, Mo tried to stuff the book back into his jacket – but it fell to the floor with a sickening



*Fiddlesticks!*

There was a moment of silence.

The goblin dropped whatever it was holding from the bin and squinted its wicked, unblinking eyes at Mo.

Mo held his breath. His heart pounded out of his chest. He didn't dare blink. He stood as still as he possibly could.

For one crazy moment, Mo considered darting forwards. He imagined somehow avoiding the goblin's vicious teeth, grabbing it by its neck and carrying it back to The Roost to present to the Chief. But that was a little far-fetched, even for Mo.

So instead, he legged it as fast as he could.

The streets of Bogfoss whipped by as Mo skated around corners, over drains and around lampposts. But, to his horror, the goblin followed – Mo could smell its fishy, farty stench getting closer.

Its **GRUNTS** and **GURGLES** made him run a little faster.





From all around came the scraping and rasping of wooden shutters as they opened. Mo glimpsed the heads of villagers peering down from above, searching for the sound of the commotion. Some even hung out of their window as if there wasn't any danger, heckling Mo to turn around and fight.

The goblin grew closer and closer.

*Come on, Mo, he thought. You cannot be the Warden who goes down in history for dying on his first shift.*

Suddenly a claw grabbed the back of Mo's uniform. He was yanked backwards and landed with a **THUMP** – straight on top of the creature. The goblin was squashed underneath Mo's body like a gnobbly pillow.

The beast emitted an indignant shriek.

Mo somehow found the courage not to squeal too and instead used his accidental advantage to keep the goblin pinned down. The thought occurred to him that perhaps he could defeat it. He wasn't doing so badly after all.

But the goblin's shriek wasn't fear...

It was a call for back-up.





Out of nowhere  
scuttled five more goblins,  
scarpering on all-fours  
straight at Mo. Their eyes  
glowed a crimson red,  
shimmering with anger and rage.

*I should have paid more attention to the book,* thought Mo in despair. *It said they work in groups.* It hadn't lied about the goblins' speed either – they were devilishly quick. All five launched themselves at Mo with their hooked claws as he swatted at them frantically with the book (which was about as useful as a paper boat).

“HELP!” Mo squealed.

A goblin landed on his head. It lifted his Warden hat, still attached to his neck with an elastic strap, and let it go with a wicked grin. The hat **TWANGED** Mo's head like his alarm clock in the morning.

Another tore off his shoe then whacked him around the face with his own sock and



twisted his pinky toe. One slurped up his shoelaces like they were noodles, as two more goblins tugged at his underwear to give him the biggest wedgie of his life.

Mo was outnumbered. He wriggled and elbowed and punched in all directions. But no matter how much he fought, the goblins only scrapped harder.

Then Mo heard the sound of clapping coming from the villagers at their windows.

“HELP ME!” Mo screamed, confused. “I can't do it! I'm not a Warden!”

But they only clapped harder, quicker.

“FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!” they chanted.

“He's no Friday the Thirteenth!” mocked one villager.

“You're going to plunge this village into doom! Come on, boy! *FIGHT!*”

Mo shook in terror. The biggest goblin ripped a golden bell from his uniform like it had found treasure at the end of a rainbow.



Then the creature suddenly stopped, an odd expression in its eyes, their red glow flickering in hesitation as if Mo was holding a forbidden yellow mushroom. Mo couldn't believe his luck. Was it...?

Suddenly, a beefy arm flung the goblin across the street. The creature **THWACKED** against a lamppost so hard that it flopped limply onto the cobbles. Seeing this, the others collected their fallen teammate and scarpered over the bridge, back to the eerie forest.

Sunday the Fourteenth  
towered over Mo.

Her cheeks  
were flushed  
crimson and her  
scowl was deep.

Furious was an  
understatement.



She extended a hand and pulled Mo to his feet. The villagers groaned in disappointment that their entertainment had been cut short.

“Looks like you’ve got your trophy,” was all Sunday said as they walked back to The Roost.

Looking down, Mo spotted a goblin claw clinging to his jumper. It must have torn off in the tussle.

Mo picked it off and inspected it closely.

*This would make a delightful necklace,* he thought.



The Bogfoss Hearsay

## M-OMEN: THE WARDEN WHO DOOMED US ALL

We don't need to relive the events of yesterday, and we certainly don't want it to happen again. Is it time to say enough is enough? Or should we all surrender ourselves to the vicious beasts, before Monday feeds us into their jaws himself?

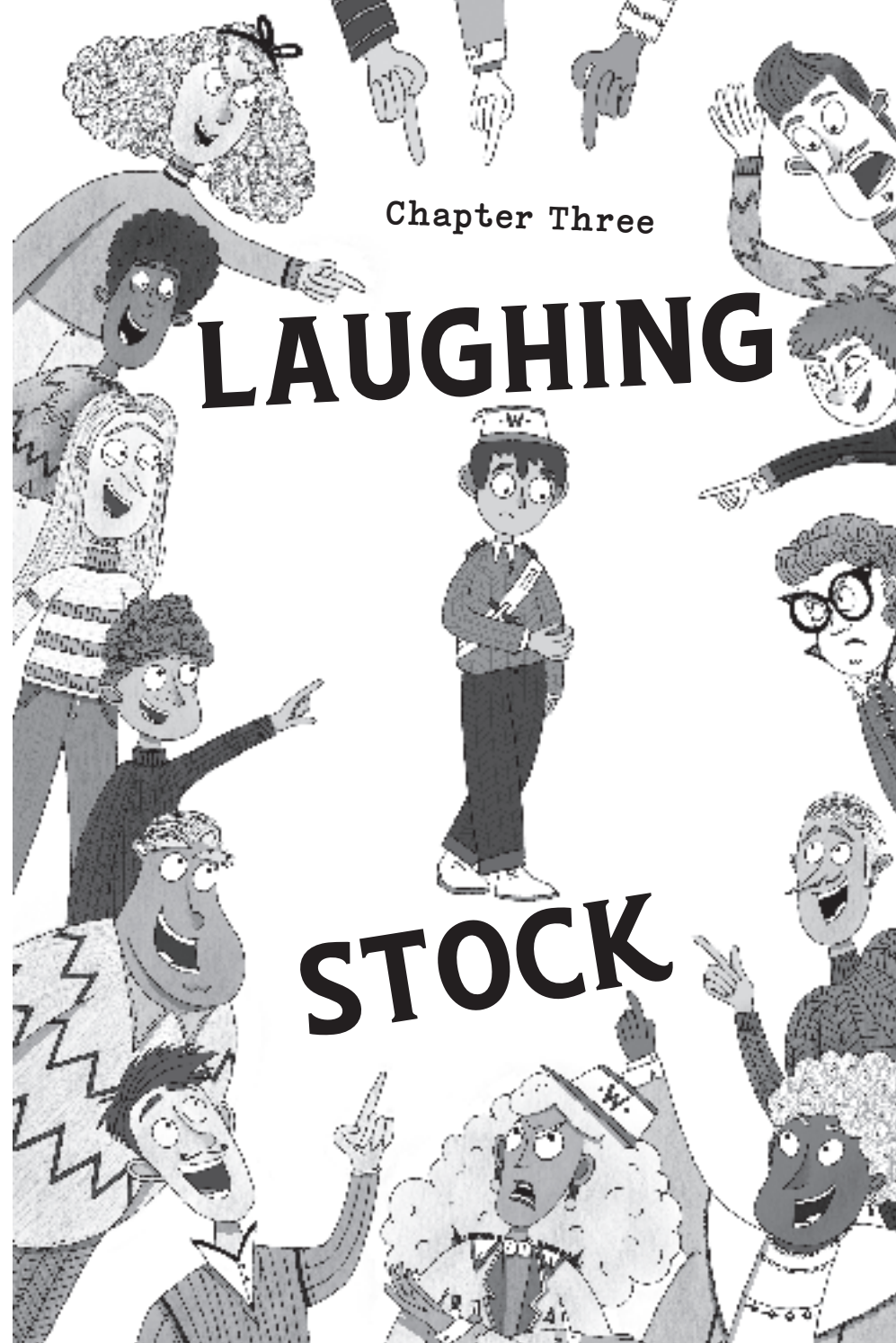
## MO-TION TO DISMISS

Swift action is required to protect us from the bumbling fool! Our village is in danger, and we cannot stand by for one Mo-ment longer. Mo-ve over, Mo!

The Bogfoss Hearsay

## NO MO-RE

The Bogfoss Hearsay has launched an official petition to remove Monday the Sixteenth from his position as Warden, despite what the laws say. To support a good cause, and perhaps stay alive, please sign our form and return it to us as soon as possible. Preferably, TODAY.



Chapter Three

# LAUGHING

# STOCK

Mo was a laughing stock. Villagers ridiculed him at every turn and the Chief had commanded him to be chaperoned for all future shifts (embarrassing). And the worst thing was that the chaperone was...Sunday (mortifying).

While Mo had disgraced his family's legacy, Sun was being heralded as a hero by the entire village. Everybody hooted and showered her with praise for saving them *from him!* It was unbearably humiliating. So after his first shift of Wardening, he went home to work out an emergency make-everybody-think-I'm-not-completely-useless plan.

Mo knew that the villagers wanted him to quit – and he would have been happy to. The problem was that Chief was a stickler for tradition and had declared

that quitting was impossible. So Mo's only option was to “buck his ideas up”.

He took *A Warden History* from the shelf and opened the book at a random page, pen poised to take notes.



*He's no Friday the Thirteenth*, Mo remembered someone shouting at him. What was so special about Friday the Thirteenth? He flicked to the end of the book to find out.

### *Friday the Thirteenth*

Unlucky in name, but a true legend. Friday was fierce, determined and deadly. There was no monster he couldn't beat and no attack too daunting. He understood the responsibility of being a Warden like nobody else, knowing how to banish beasts, slipping them a potion or slashing them into slices until his final day.



When the alarm bells rang that day, a thick fog filled Bogfoss. Friday was on duty, and if anybody could see beyond the fog, it was Thirteen. But when the fog cleared and the villagers realized it was safe to leave their houses, there was an eerie silence. Friday the Thirteenth was nowhere to be seen. After hours of searching, they found his Warden cap near the moat. It was all that was left of him. Tragically, he died at the age of eleven.

Mo trembled in the armchair, his hairs standing to attention. He was barely more than eleven himself.

Was this his fate as a Warden, too?

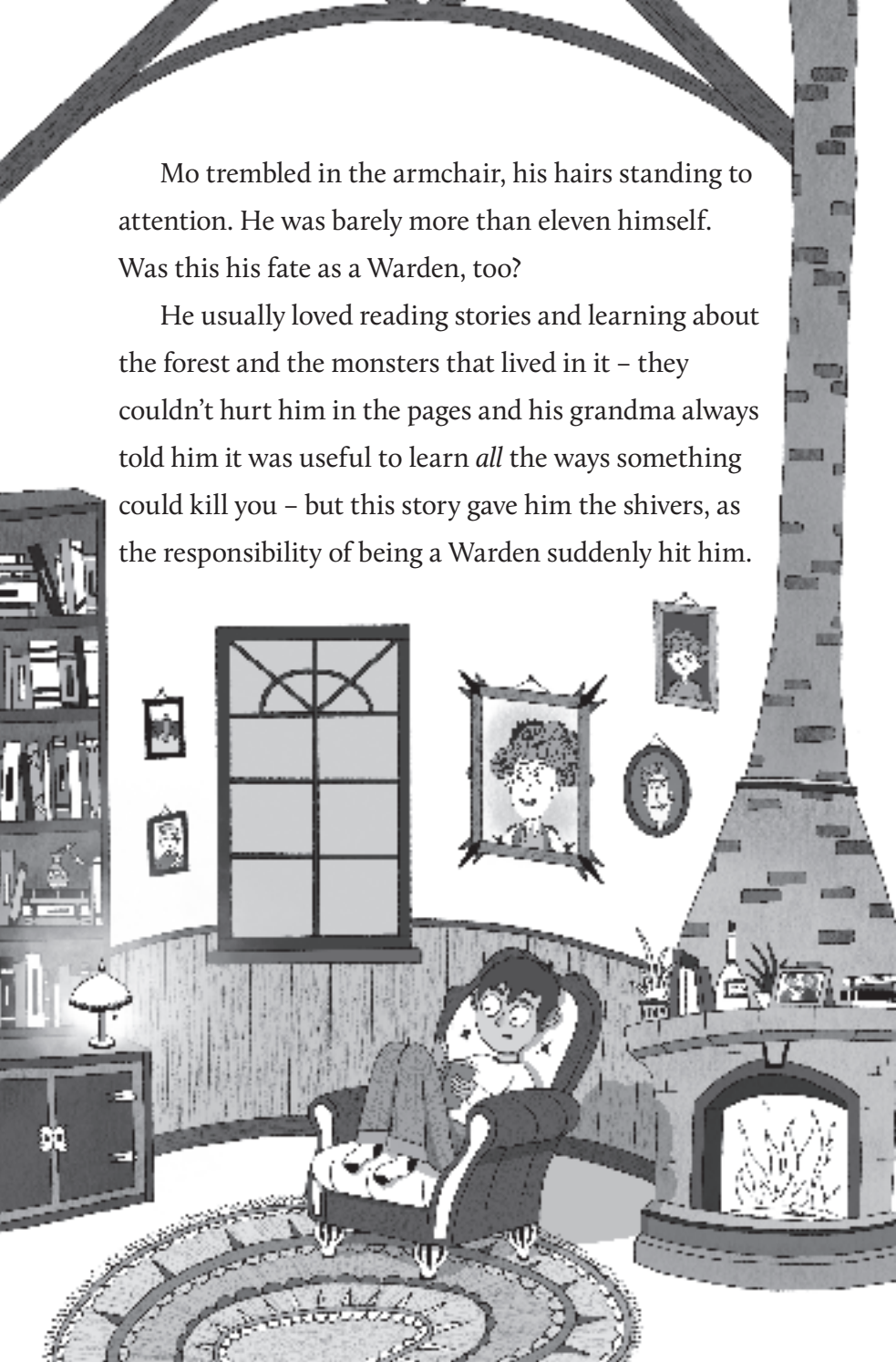
He usually loved reading stories and learning about the forest and the monsters that lived in it – they couldn't hurt him in the pages and his grandma always told him it was useful to learn *all* the ways something could kill you – but this story gave him the shivers, as the responsibility of being a Warden suddenly hit him.

There had been monster attacks for as long as he could remember, with furfluffles and shenanighosts always wandering into the village, but in recent months they'd seemed more frequent, which meant his job was even more vital to the village's safety.

His grandma had attempted to make him Warden-worthy. She'd been determined to mould a fierce warrior – one who could defend the village by themselves, just like their predecessors. She'd taught Mo about the legend of the seven families who founded Bogfoss. She'd whipped out axes at any opportunity and told tales of her battles in gory detail. But it was too gruesome for Mo. He was squeamish and only interested in the books, because if Mo couldn't protect himself from the monsters, the least he could do was learn what they were.

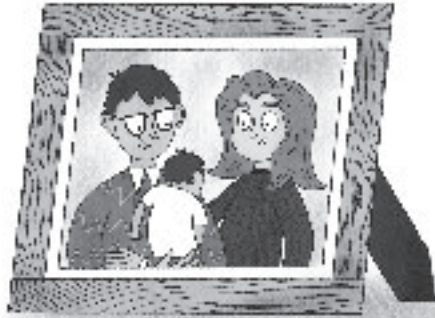
Mo knew that failing to defeat a goblin (which was one of the easiest monsters to defeat, according to the records) was more than embarrassing, it was dangerous. It was only a matter of time before he met a grisly end like Friday the Thirteenth.

"I won't let that happen," Mo said to himself.



Mo picked up a framed photograph from the mantelpiece. The figures of a man and a woman wearing excited smiles gazed out as they cradled a new-born baby in their arms.

His parents would've been his biggest supporters, he knew it. They would've read stories while tucking him into bed, helped him come up with clever strategies and traps that didn't involve pointy weapons, and ultimately shown Mo how to be brave in his own way.



But his parents had died when he was too young to remember, and he'd had to muddle through with Grandma, who'd never really understood him.

The tears started to flow.

*I promise I'll be a good Warden,* thought Mo.

*I promise to make you proud.*

All he wanted was to become the Warden his parents had wanted him to be, and prove all of Bogfoss

wrong in the process. He imagined a day when the villagers would respect him for warding off monsters and saving their lives, when they'd look forward to Mondays because Mo would protect them. Other Wardens would clap him on the back with pride. He would be the hero everybody loved.



Mo shoved his hands in his pockets and something sharp spiked his finger.

He pulled out the goblin claw which had clung to his jumper earlier. He held it up and the cogs started spinning in his brain.

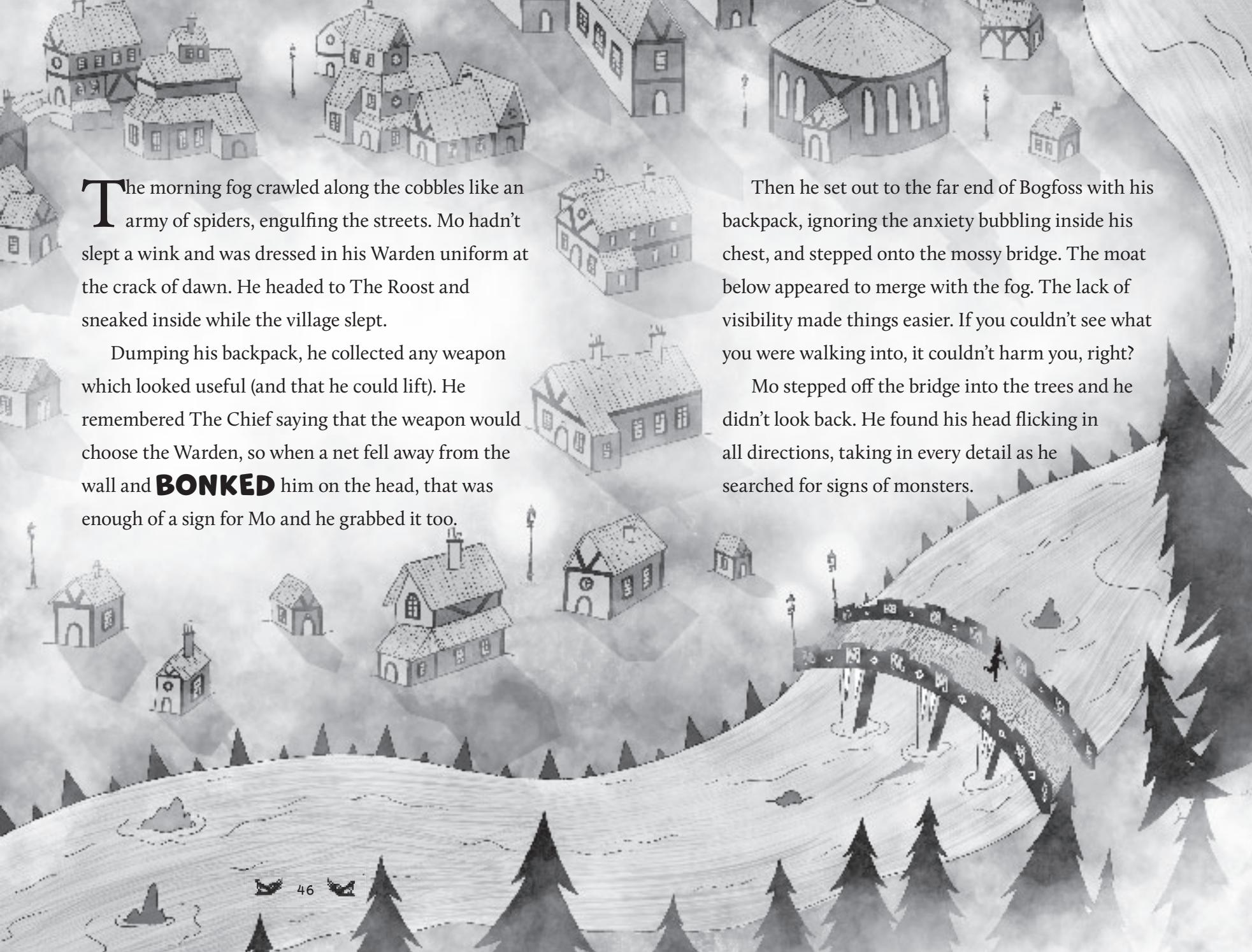
*A reminder of how tough I am*, he remembered the Chief saying.

Mo *could* be a good Warden. All he had to do was prove himself. And he knew exactly how a Warden would do that.

Mo had a plan. Tomorrow, he would brave the forbidden forest and prove everybody wrong.

Tomorrow, he was going to catch a monster.



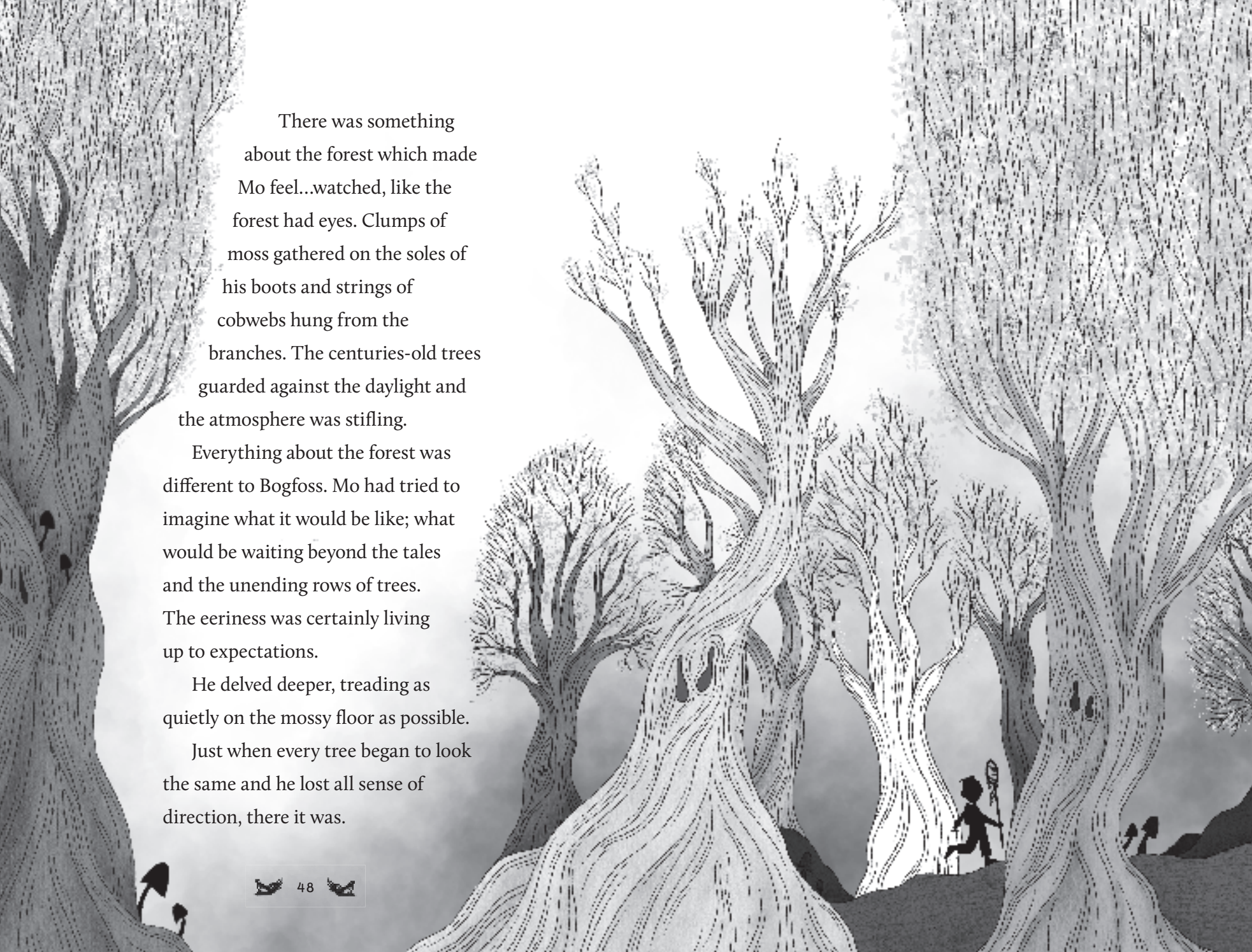


The morning fog crawled along the cobblestones like an army of spiders, engulfing the streets. Mo hadn't slept a wink and was dressed in his Warden uniform at the crack of dawn. He headed to The Roost and sneaked inside while the village slept.

Dumping his backpack, he collected any weapon which looked useful (and that he could lift). He remembered The Chief saying that the weapon would choose the Warden, so when a net fell away from the wall and **BONKED** him on the head, that was enough of a sign for Mo and he grabbed it too.

Then he set out to the far end of Bogfoss with his backpack, ignoring the anxiety bubbling inside his chest, and stepped onto the mossy bridge. The moat below appeared to merge with the fog. The lack of visibility made things easier. If you couldn't see what you were walking into, it couldn't harm you, right?

Mo stepped off the bridge into the trees and he didn't look back. He found his head flicking in all directions, taking in every detail as he searched for signs of monsters.



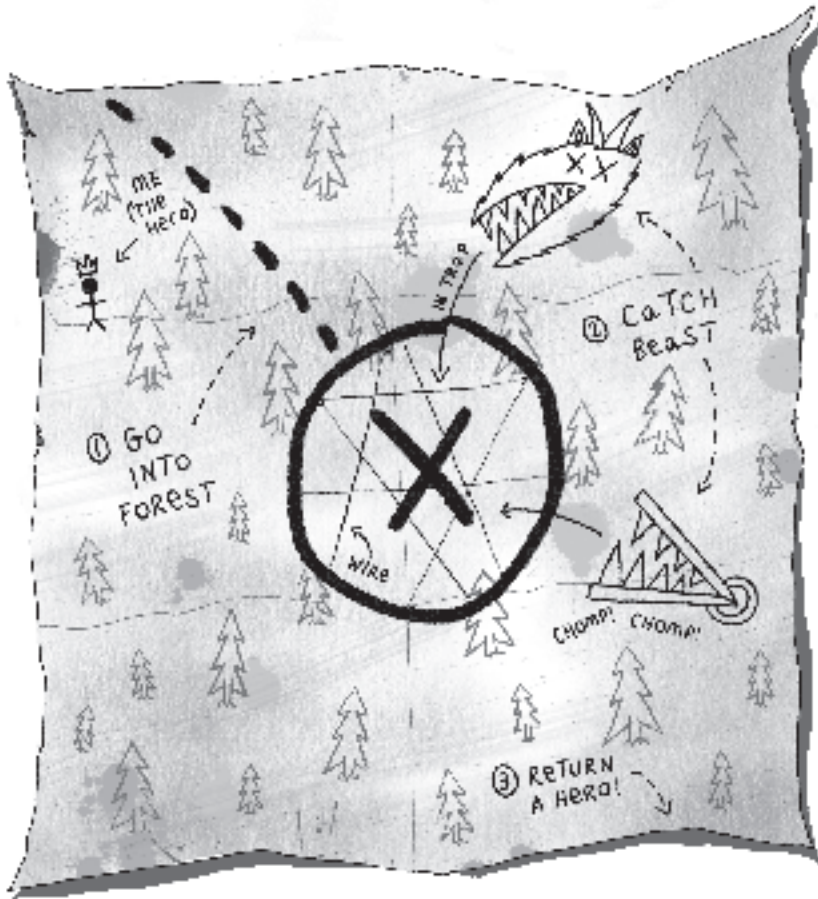
There was something about the forest which made Mo feel...watched, like the forest had eyes. Clumps of moss gathered on the soles of his boots and strings of cobwebs hung from the branches. The centuries-old trees guarded against the daylight and the atmosphere was stifling.

Everything about the forest was different to Bogfoss. Mo had tried to imagine what it would be like; what would be waiting beyond the tales and the unending rows of trees. The eeriness was certainly living up to expectations.

He delved deeper, treading as quietly on the mossy floor as possible.

Just when every tree began to look the same and he lost all sense of direction, there it was.

The perfect place to set a monster booby trap.



Mo worked quickly, then stood back and placed his hands on his hips triumphantly. The trap looked like it might actually work.

“Not bad, Slow Mo,” he joked.

A soft thud echoed from the branches. Mo whipped around, eyes darting left to right. The noise had sounded exactly like a monster trying to creep up on him.

Suddenly, everything felt more sinister. The forest grew darker and more menacing.

If Mo was braver, he would’ve swung an axe and charged at the hidden monster head first. But Mo only had so much bravery, and he had already broken at least two laws whilst entering the forbidden forest, so that was enough for one day.

He’d just have to rely on his booby trap.

Mo slipped behind a nearby tree trunk, using a prickly bush for camouflage. The wind whispered unnaturally through the branches above, like the trees were talking to each other. Mo tried to push the thought out of his mind – and then was distracted by the sound of crunching leaves. He edged his face around the trunk to see what was happening.

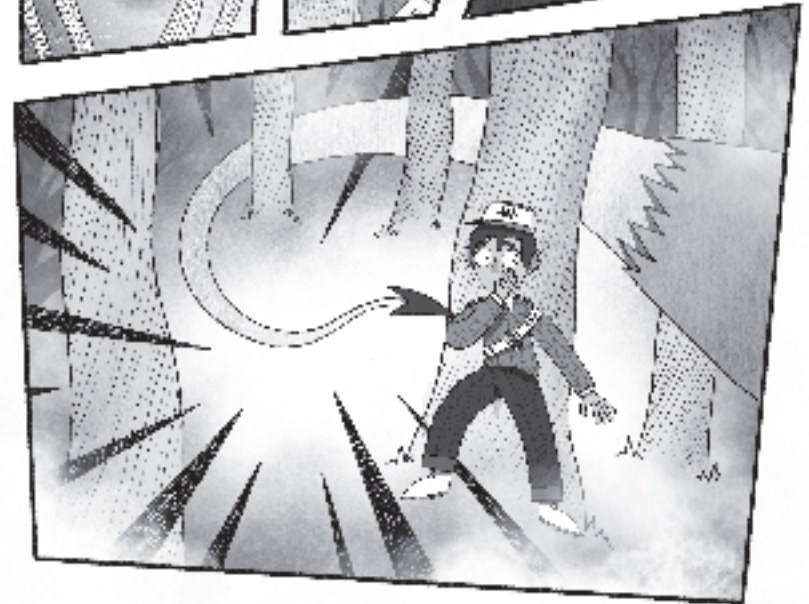
A monster stepped into the clearing.

A thorny tail flicked out of the shadows. Its claws glistened with sharpness as it stomped over the undergrowth, and its body swayed like it could barely hold its own weight. Mo held his breath as the beast took another pounding step forwards.

*That's it. Just a little more,* thought Mo.

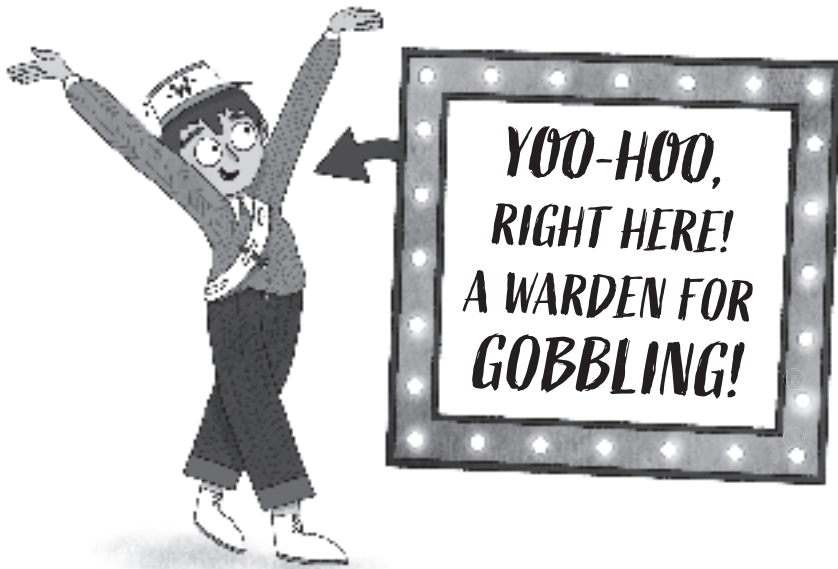
In an instant, the trap

**THWACKED!**



His trap had failed! The monster had broken free and now it could be anywhere! Mo edged out from his hiding spot and swayed from side to side, unsure of which direction to run.

There might as well have been a sign saying:

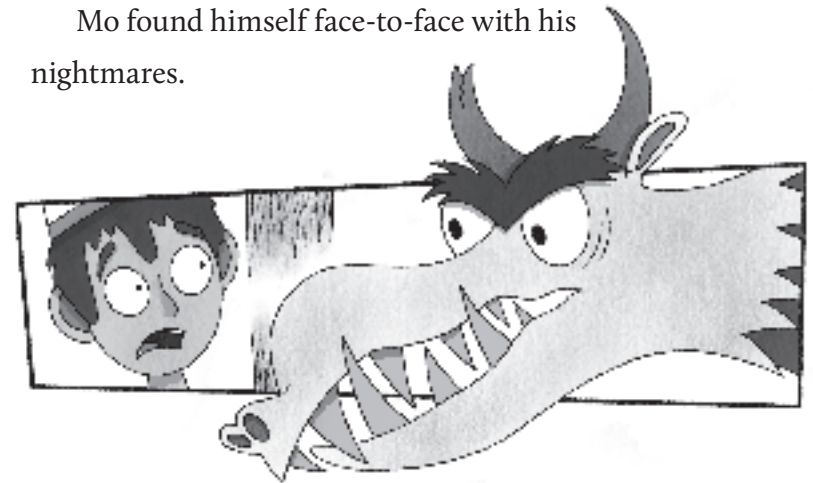


**THUD  
THUD  
THUD.**

Mo's heart pounded out of his eyeballs as he swivelled on the spot.

*Uh-oh.*

Mo found himself face-to-face with his nightmares.



A beast with bulging eyes stood before him.  
A run of never-ending, razor-sharp teeth grinned

in a humongous mouth. Spikes ran down the monster's back, jutting out like endless daggers. It looked exactly like something out of Mo's **Monsterology** book.

But Mo had no time to determine what type of monster it was. Licking its fangs, the beast looked Mo up and down from head to toe as smoke billowed from its gigantic nostrils.

Mo's heart vibrated like an alarm clock.

The beast opened its mouth in a moan of triumph.

*I've changed my mind, thought Mo. Forget grappling with goblins, THIS is officially the worst moment of my life.*

GULP.



Chapter Five

# FOOLISH BEHAVIOUR