

HOW TO TRAIN YOUR
**DRAGON
SCHOOL**

Fight of the Flamestrike



written and illustrated by

CRESSIDA COWELL





STARBOARD

First published in Great Britain in 2026 by Starboard

Text and illustrations © Cressida Cowell, 2026

The right of Cressida Cowell to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the Copyright, Designs & Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978 1 444 98195 7

Signed edition ISBN 978 1 510 11462 3

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Elcograf S.p.A.



Starboard
An imprint of Hachette Children's Group
Part of Hodder & Stoughton Limited
Carmelite House
50 Victoria Embankment
London EC4Y 0DZ

The authorised representative in the EEA
is Hachette Ireland, 8 Castlecourt Centre,
Dublin 15, D15 XTP3, Ireland (email:
info@hbgi.ie).

An Hachette UK Company
www.hachette.co.uk

www.hachettechildrens.co.uk

** Any relationship to any historical fact whatsoever is entirely accidental*



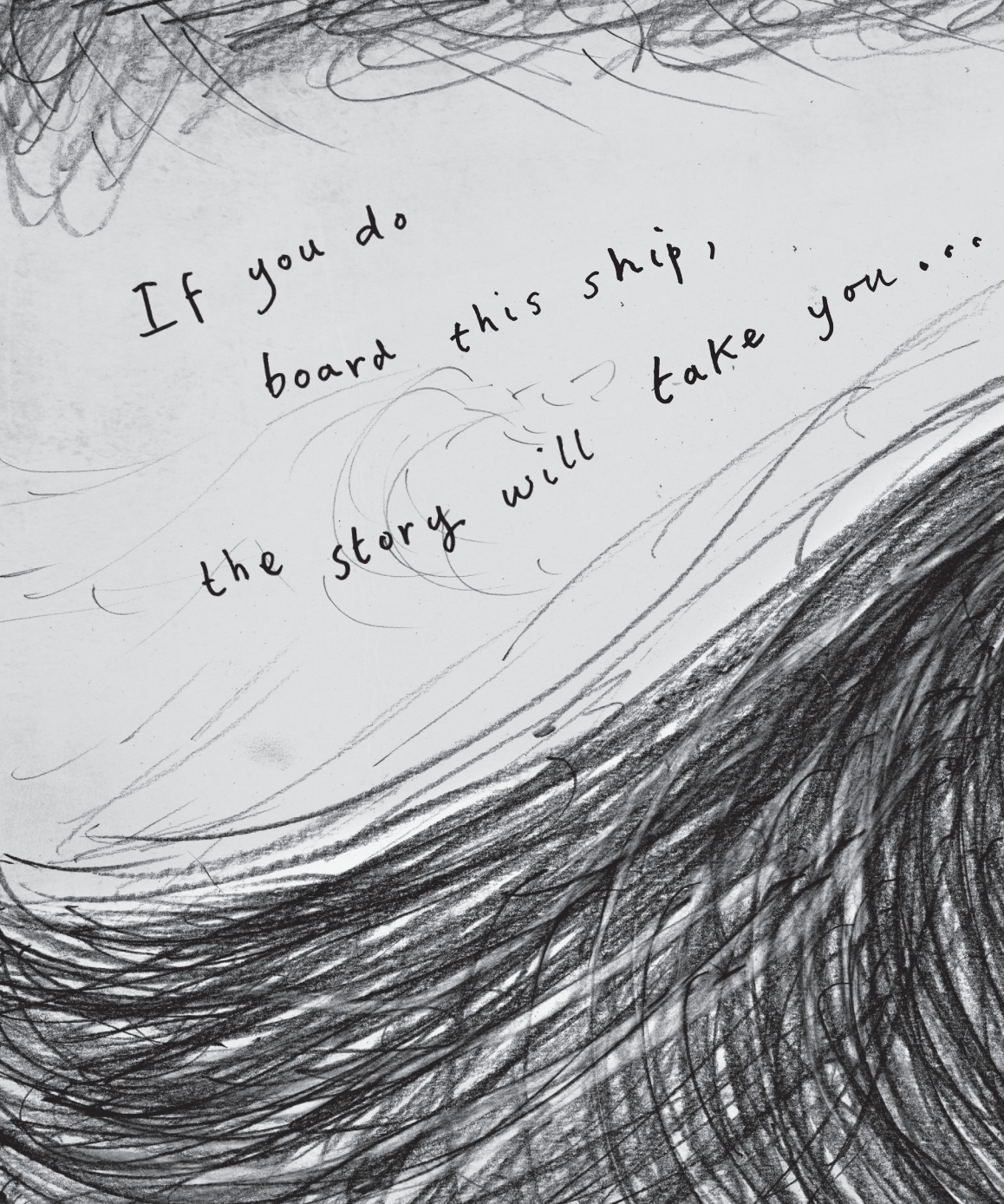
PROLOGUE IN WHICH IT
IS STRONGLY ADVISED
THAT YOU DO NOT
BOARD THIS SHIP

One windy night, a Viking ship named *The Ship of Disaster* was plunging across the stormy seas of the Barbaric Archipelago.

Its sails were torn. There was blood on its decks. *Nobody appeared to be steering it.* Where were the ship's crew? Had they been thrown overboard? *Something truly terrible looked like it had happened here...*

So perhaps you should let the boat pass by, taking whatever secret it contains out into the wilds of the Atlantic Ocean, to be lost, and never to return...

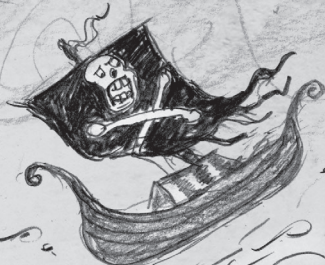
Whatever happens do not board this ship.

A hand-drawn illustration of a stormy sea. The top of the image shows a ship's wake with several curved lines. Below this, the sea is depicted with dense, dark, swirling lines that create a sense of movement and turbulence. The overall style is sketchy and expressive, using charcoal or pencil-like textures.

If you do

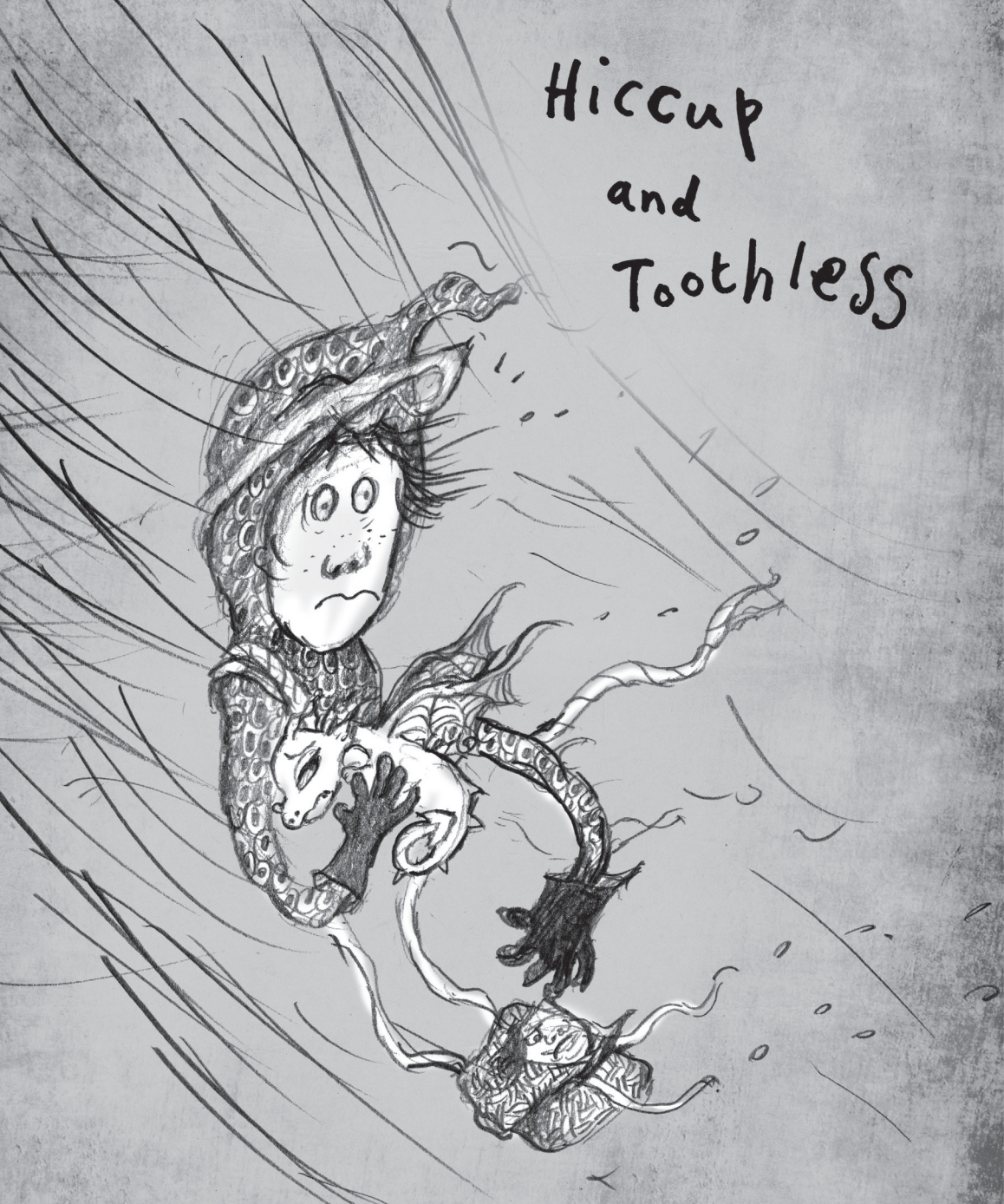
board this ship,

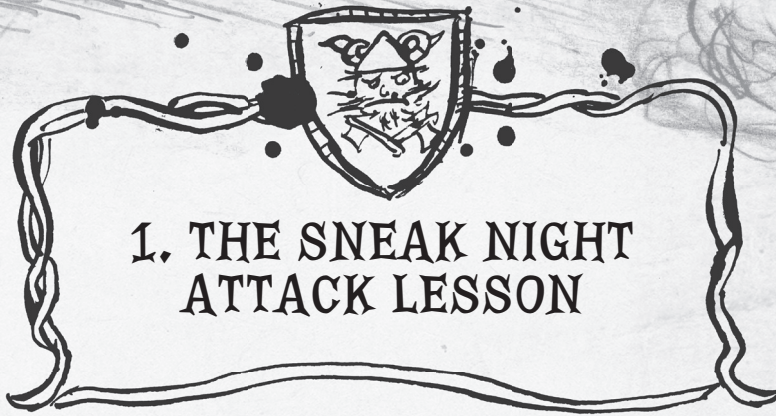
the story will take you...



...to face one of the
deadliest, scariest
dragons in the Archipelago.
The **FLAMESTRIKE**.

Hiccup and Toothless





1. THE SNEAK NIGHT ATTACK LESSON

Meanwhile, a little distance away from where the crewless *Ship of Disaster* was wildly criss-crossing the windswept ocean, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third was one of thirty soaking-wet young Warriors who were standing on the deck of the Hooligan ship *The Big Blue Whale*, being battered and blown by the fury of the storm.

These boys and girls from the Tribes of the Hairy Hooligans, Bog-Burglars, Meatheads, Peaceables and Bashem-Oiks were students at the Viking and Dragon Training School on the Isle of Berk. Standing in front of them was their teacher, an enormous hairy Warrior

called Gobber the Belch. Gobber had arm muscles the size of watermelons and a beard like an angry porcupine.

‘Nice breezy night,’ whistled Gobber through his broken front teeth as the gale threatened to blow off his hairy shorts.

Perched on the shoulder of each boy and girl was a dragon.

The dragons were hunting-dragons of different kinds and sizes. There were Slitherhawks with watchful eyes, plump warty Gronckles, a couple of Basic Browns and many other species.

‘OK, LISTEN UP, YOU MISERABLE PIECES OF TADPOLE VOMIT!’ yelled Gobber the Belch. ‘This is the Viking and Dragon Training School, where Viking Heroes are made! In this Sneak Night Attack lesson we will sneak up on a ship belonging to the Quiet Life Tribe and **PRETEND TO BURGLE ALL THEIR VALUABLES! ANY QUESTIONS?**’



Gobber the Belch

Hiccup Horrendous
Haddock the Third put up
his hand.

Hiccup was a thin,
freckly, string-bean of a
boy. He was the only son
of Stoick the Vast, O
Hear His Name and
Tremble, Ugh, Ugh,
Chief of the Hairy
Hooligan Tribe.

Hiccup was having
a little trouble
living up to being
the kind of Viking
his father wanted
him to be.

When the
adult Vikings met a



problem, their answer was to **PUNCH** it.

Hiccup liked to **THINK** his way out of problems, and **THINKING** was not considered one of the key Viking skills.

‘Why are we attacking the Quiet Life Tribe?’ asked Hiccup. ‘They’re just minding their own business...’

‘We’re only **PRETENDING** to burgle all their valuables,’ said Gobber. ‘This is how we practise our pirate skills at the Viking and Dragon Training School.’

‘But how will the Quiet Lifes *know* we’re pretending?’ argued Hiccup. ‘Won’t they get the most terrible shock?’

‘SILENCE!’ roared Gobber. **‘I AM THE CAPTAIN OF THIS SHIP, HICCUP! LEAVE THE THINKING TO ME!’**

‘Hiccup the Useless is just **AFRAID** to board an enemy ship,’ sneered Snotlout, Hiccup’s cousin,

HA

HA

HA

HA!

a tall boy with skeleton tattoos. He had a blood-red Monstrous Nightmare hunting-dragon called Fireworm, with rippling muscles and razor-sharp teeth. 'You're just a little scaredy-cat, aren't you, Hiccup the Useless?'



If Hiccup was out of the way, *Snotlout* would be Chief of the Hooligan Tribe instead, and Snotlout thought he would make a much better job of it.

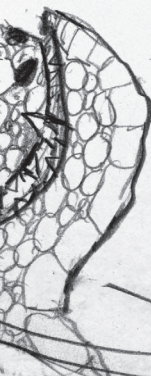
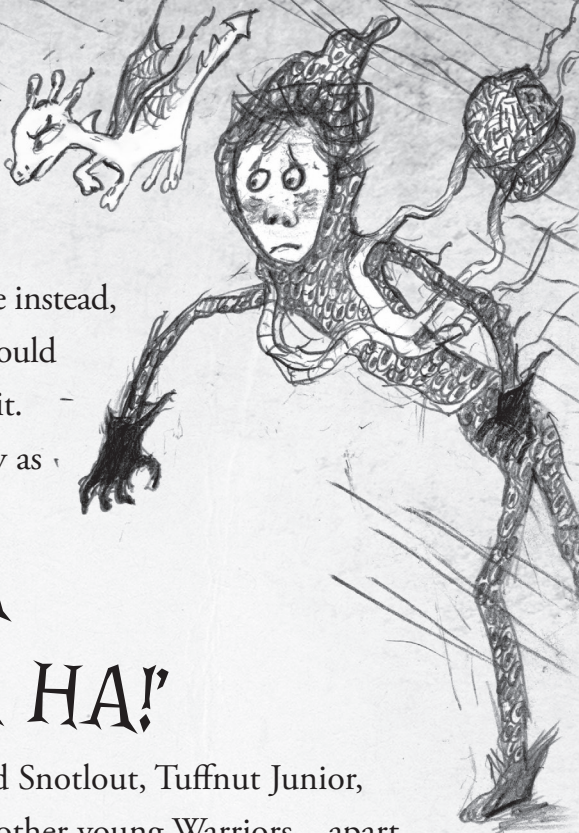
Hiccup turned nearly as red as Fireworm.

‘HA HA HA
HA HA!’

roared Snotlout, Tuffnut Junior, Dogsbreath and all of the other young Warriors – apart from Hiccup’s best friends, Fishlegs and Camicazi.

Fishlegs had a vegetarian hunting-dragon called Horrencow, and he was the only student at Gobber’s Viking and Dragon Training School who was doing worse in all the subjects than Hiccup.

There were three levels in each lesson at the



Viking and Dragon Training School: Nanodragon, Hunting-dragon, and Seadragon. The young Warriors received a badge when they reached that level. Fishlegs was still only on Nanodragon Level in most of the subjects, apart from Art of Battle.

‘Don’t worry too much, Hiccup. I bet all those lucky Quiet Lives are tucked up in bed on a night like this one,’ said Fishlegs, who was a pale-green colour because he tended to get seasick in choppy conditions. ‘Lucky them...’



Viking and Dragon
Training School



SEADRAGON
LEVEL




HUNTING-
DRAGON
LEVEL



NANODRAGON
LEVEL



Egg Level (to be ^{new-}added) 

Camicazi
and her
Mood-Dragon,
Stormfly



Camicazi was a tiny blonde Bog-Burglar with a wild tangle of hair that looked like a couple of squirrels had been having an all-night party in it. She gave a sniff and a toss of her head. ‘I mean, I *love* a Sneak Night Attack,’ said Camicazi, adjusting her Burglary Suit, that contained everything the modern burglar might need. Ropes. Keys. Unpicking equipment. ‘But Hiccup is right, Quiet Lifes are **SOFT**. We should be looking out for the Danger-Brute, or Murderous Tribes... burgling from *them* would be proper sport.’

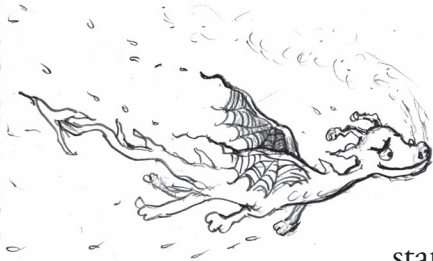
Sitting on Hiccup’s shoulder was his hunting-dragon, Toothless, who was by far the smallest hunting-dragon anyone had ever seen.

The wind had gone to Toothless’s head, and he was showing off to Camicazi’s hunting-dragon, Stormfly – a chameleon Mood-dragon that changed colour according to her mood. Toothless thought Stormfly was **MARVELLOUS**.

‘T-T-Toothless going to BITE those

I'm going to bite them
on their enemy
b-b-bottoms!

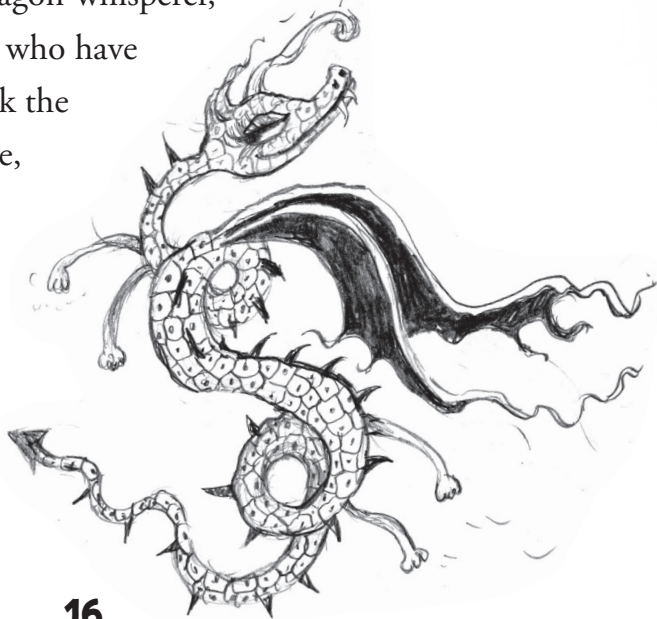
← Toothless



enemies on all of
their GREAT BIG
ENEMY BOTTOMS!

squeaked Toothless,
whirling round in such a
state of overexcitement, that he
accidentally bit the end of his own
tail and let out a squeal of complaint.

‘Gently, Toothless, gently,’ Hiccup said
soothingly to his dragon in Dragonese,
for he was a secret Dragon-whisperer,
one of the few people who have
ever been able to speak the
language of Dragonese,
which is the language
that dragons speak
to one another.



‘BEFORE WE BOARD,’ yelled Gobber the Belch, ‘I WANT YOU TO PRACTISE YOUR VIKING YELLING, TO TERRIFY THE “ENEMY” WHEN WE FINALLY ATTACK! LIKE *THIS...*

‘*ROOOOARRRRRRRR!*

Gobber let out the Hooligan Holler, a terrible bellow that could have been heard several miles away if it weren’t for the howling of the wind.

‘*ROOOARRRRRRRR!*’ the young Warriors roared back obediently.

‘*USELESS!*’ yelled Gobber. ‘*ABSOLUTELY USELESS! I HAVE NEVER HEARD SUCH HOPELESS ROARING IN MY ENTIRE LIFE! CALL YOURSELVES VIKINGS? YOU’RE LIKE A BUNCH OF EIGHT-YEAR-OLDS!*

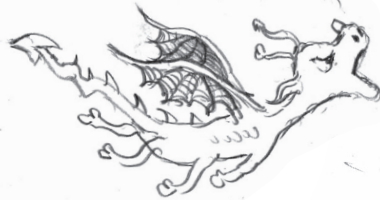
‘*LIKE THIS...*

← Storm fly

'RRRRROOAR!'



Unfortunately, Toothless was so thoroughly overexcited and confused by the loudness of Gobber's yelling that he launched himself at Gobber's bottom in the mistaken idea that Gobber was the enemy in question.



‘W-W-Watch me, Stormfly!

Watch me!’ squeaked Toothless, as he bit.

‘I’m watching!’ purred Stormfly,
laughing so hard she turned bright yellow.

‘GERROOFFFF!’ roared

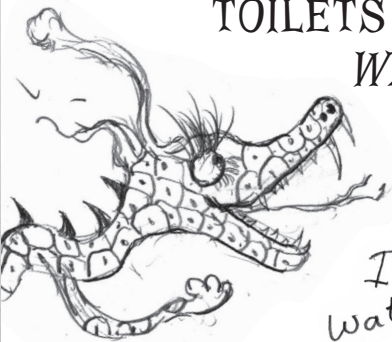
Gobber, batting Toothless off. ‘Hiccup,
you’re supposed to be the son of a Chief.

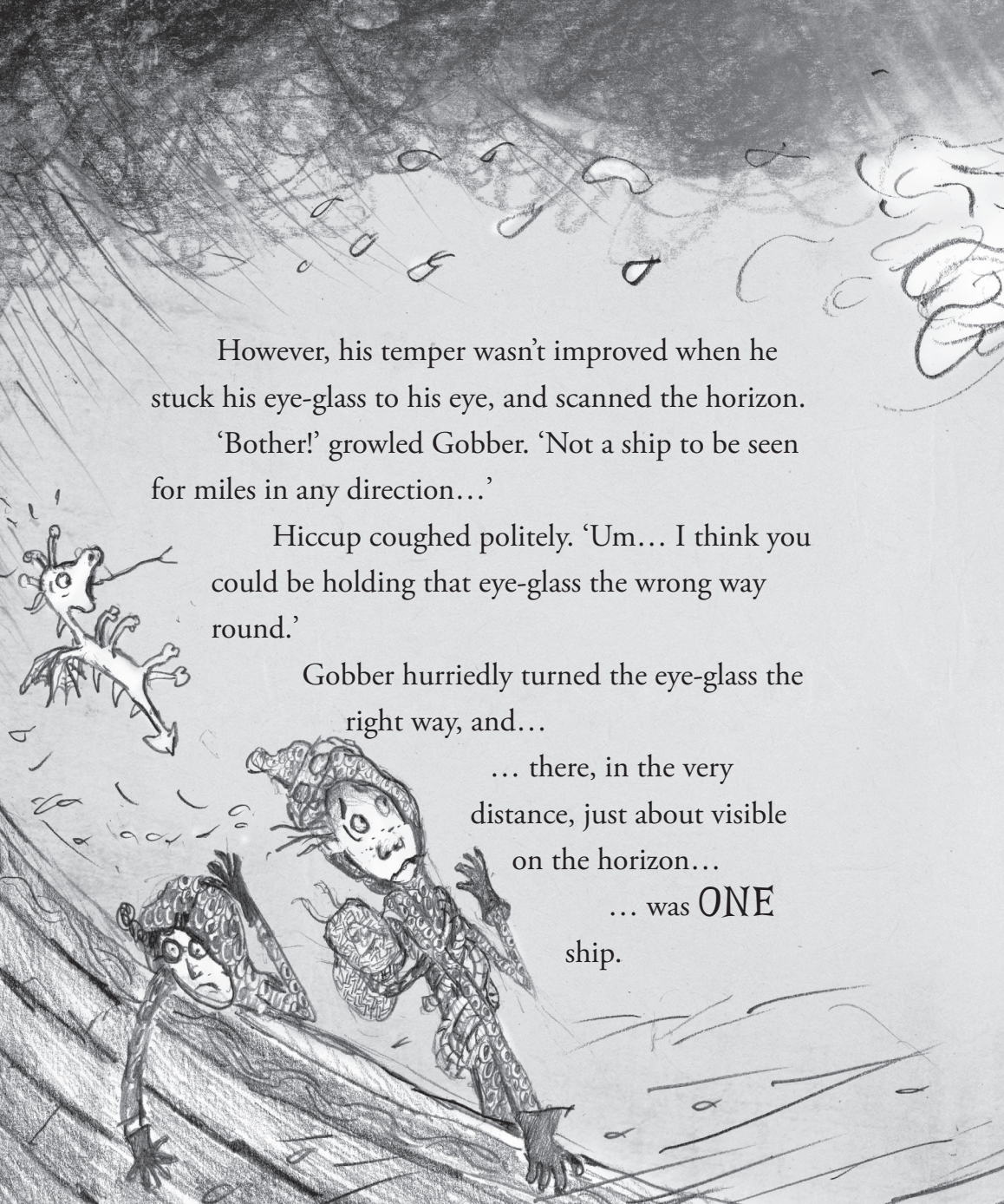
Can’t you even control your miniscule
little hunting-dragon for one minute?

**AND THE NEXT PERSON
OR DRAGON WHO LAUGHS WILL
BE CLEANING OUT THE DRAGON
TOILETS FOR THE NEXT *THREE*
WEEKS!**

Gobber drew himself up to his full
six-and-a-half feet and calmed down.

*I’m
watching!*





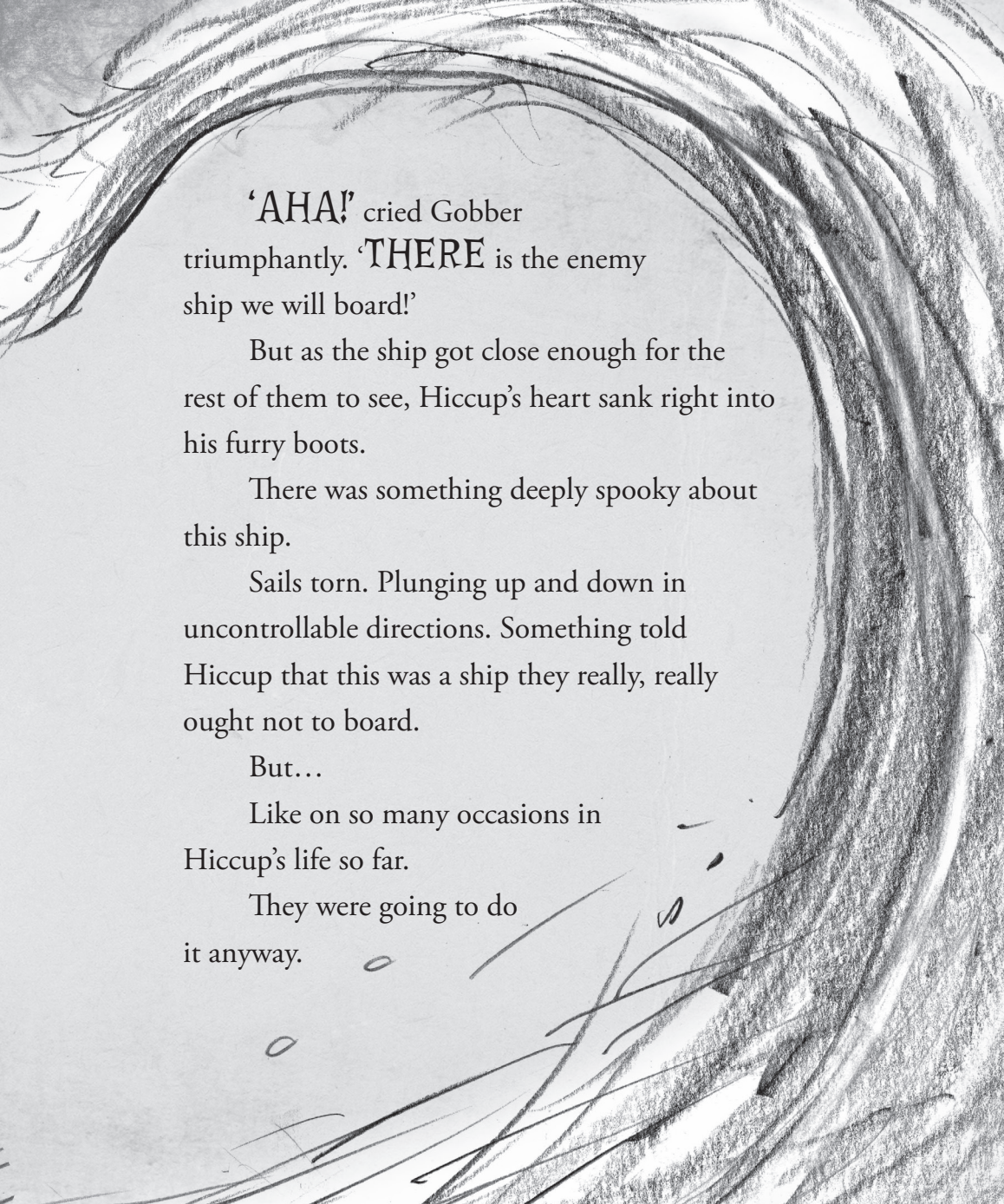
However, his temper wasn't improved when he stuck his eye-glass to his eye, and scanned the horizon. 'Bother!' growled Gobber. 'Not a ship to be seen for miles in any direction...'

Hiccup coughed politely. 'Um... I think you could be holding that eye-glass the wrong way round.'

Gobber hurriedly turned the eye-glass the right way, and...

... there, in the very distance, just about visible on the horizon...

... was **ONE** ship.



‘AHA!’ cried Gobber triumphantly. ‘**THERE** is the enemy ship we will board!’

But as the ship got close enough for the rest of them to see, Hiccup’s heart sank right into his furry boots.

There was something deeply spooky about this ship.

Sails torn. Plunging up and down in uncontrollable directions. Something told Hiccup that this was a ship they really, really ought not to board.

But...

Like on so many occasions in Hiccup’s life so far.

They were going to do it anyway.