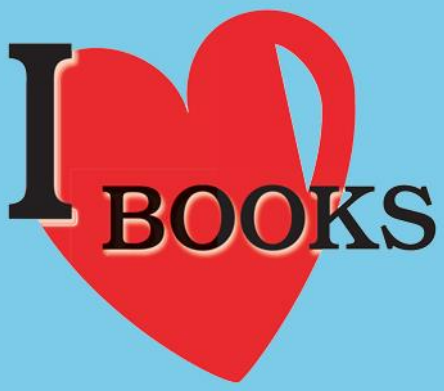

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Opening extract from

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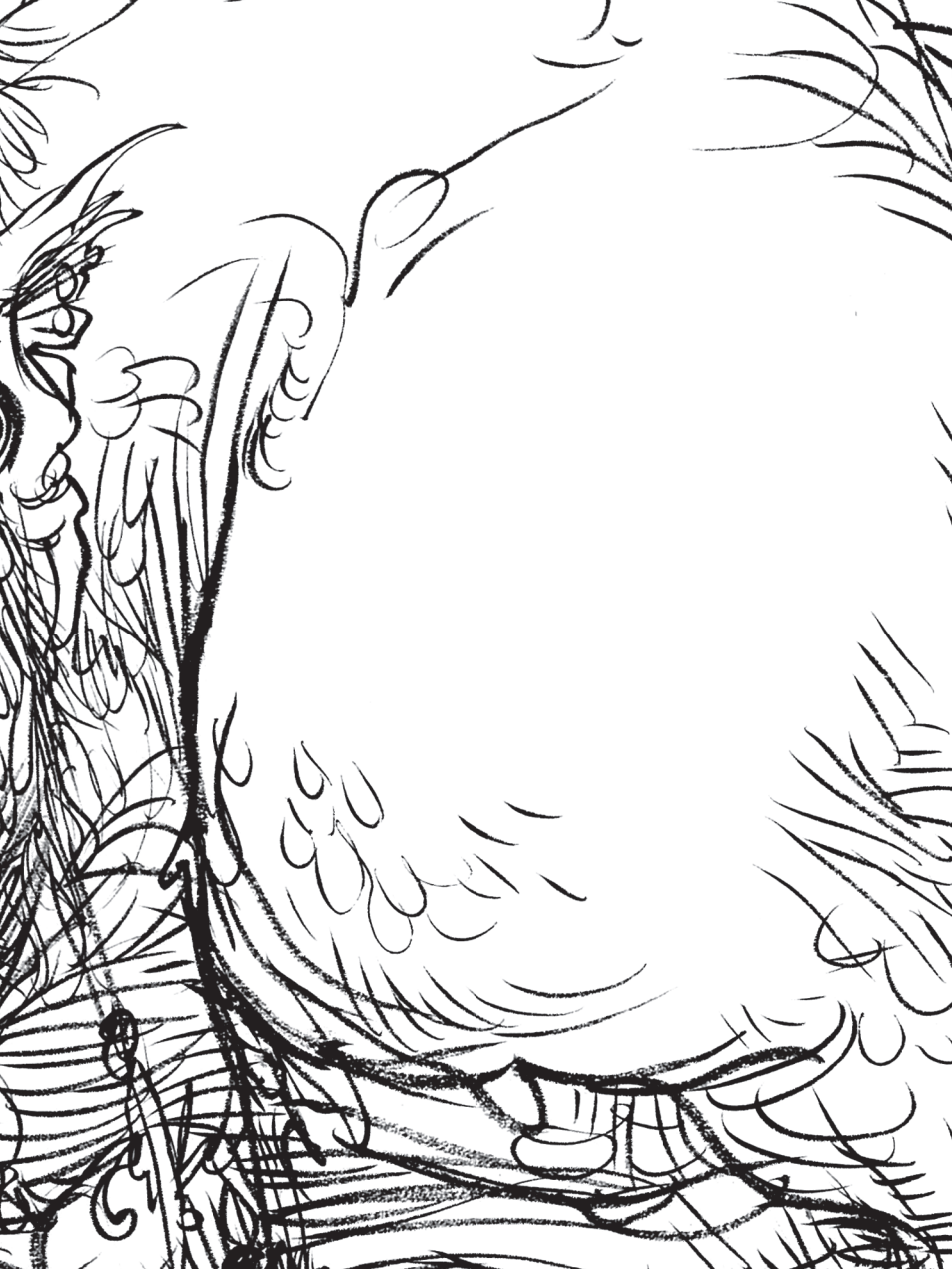

The Feast to End all Feasts

Long, long ago, when the land was covered in forests, and wolves and demons crouched in every shadow, there lived a powerful king. He was as famous for his kindness as for his strength. When his last great battle was over and there was peace again, he decided to hold a wonderful party to celebrate.

He sent out invitations to the rich and the poor. Then he set about building a gigantic hall where he could hold his special feast.

All his people came to help him build the hall, from the oldest to the youngest, and the new building rose in no time at all in a vast clearing in the forest.

It was a majestic hall, with wooden walls and towers that reached higher than the highest trees. It was the tallest, finest building that had ever been seen in the land. And the King was proud of it. Nothing as grand had existed in his kingdom before. The people called it the Great Hall.

As soon as the Great Hall was finished, the party began. It was to be the feast to end all feasts. It began one morning as the sun rose and then went on day after day, night after night.

Long tables sagged under the weight of the food, and the guests sagged under the effect of the drink. It made their heads spin and made them sing louder and louder and dance more and more wildly.

All this happened in distant times, when wild boars roamed the countryside, and moon-mad wolves slunk past in the night. It was a time when the world was heaped in magic and wonder.

The feast was a roaring success. The music and singing grew louder and louder, and the louder it became the further the sound travelled. At last it was heard beyond the forest, by the one creature no one in their wildest dreams would have invited to the feast.

It was heard by the monster, Grendel.