The TINDIMS of Rubbish Island
and the Spooky Secret
Sally Gardner
Lydia Corry

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Head of Zeus Ltd
First Floor East
5–8 Hardwick Street
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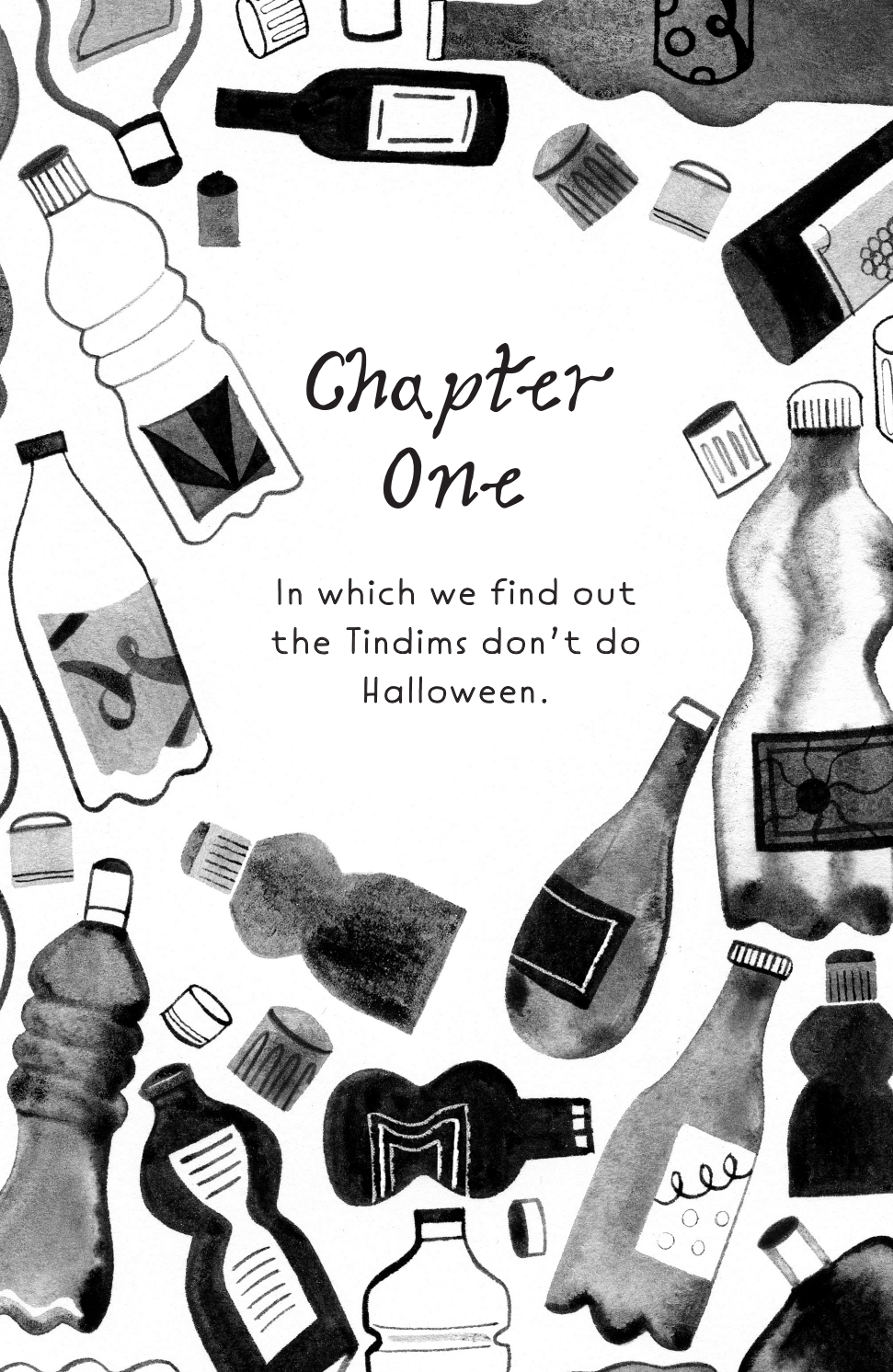


# Chapter One

In which we find out the Tindims don't do Halloween.

The Tindims don't do Halloween. They don't know what Halloween is. Tiddledim the explorer, who had written a book all about the Long Legs, had never said anything about dressing up as ghosts or witches. By Long Legs he means grown-ups and by Little Long Legs he means you.

The Tindims were busy that driftsea,

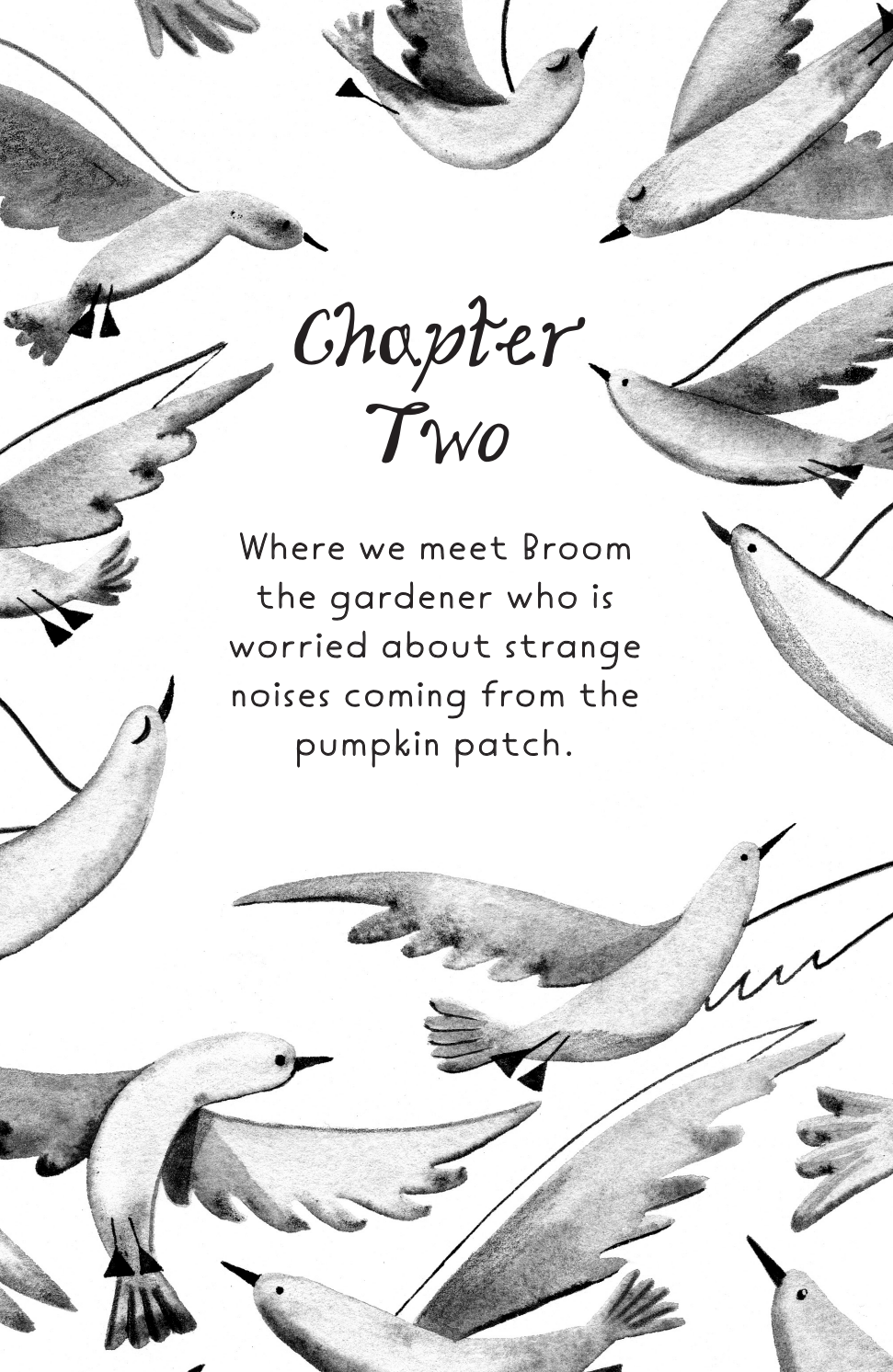
which is what they call autumn, a time of mists and fogs. There was always so much to do.

Along with the harvest, pumpkins had to be brought in. Every year the Tindims hoped they would grow bigger than they had the year before. They never did. This was a disappointment as one of their favourite treats was pumpkin pie.

But they didn't mind too much, because at this time of year strange and wonderful things would often wash up in Turtle Bay. After all, the Tindims' motto is: 'Rubbish today is treasure tomorrow.'

And there were jumpers and scarves to be knitted, socks to be mended. Oh – and making Roo-Roo jam and bottling fruits and pickles. Then it was on to collecting wood so they could keep warm when the days grew colder and the nights grew longer. That's when the Tindims like to sit around the fire, toasting their tootsies and listening to a good story. And because they didn't know about Halloween there was no need to

dress up and look spooky or go knocking on each other's doors, shouting, 'Trick or treat?' But this driftsea things were different and it all started with the small pumpkins.



# Chapter Two

Where we meet Broom the gardener who is worried about strange noises coming from the pumpkin patch.

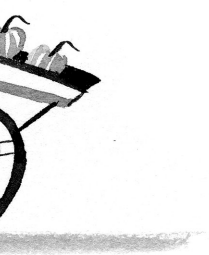
Broom the gardener lived in a tall greenhouse. Driftsea was even busier for him than the other Tindims. There was so much to be harvested and carefully stored away. He liked everything to be neat and tidy for when wintery brightsea weather arrived. He collected all the wood and sticks he found and stacked them neatly in the wood shed, ready for when it grew cold.

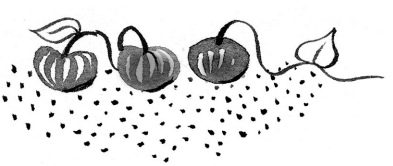
That sunny floodtide – which is afternoon to us Long Legs and Little Long

Legs – Broom was in his garden with his wheelbarrow looking at the pumpkins. They were a sorry sight. *What is wrong with them?* he wondered. *They never grow big. This year there's hardly enough for one pumpkin pie.*

Broom yawned. He hadn't been sleeping well which wasn't like him. He wasn't sure if he was imagining things, but he was as sure as he was not sure that something or someone was following him. He even thought he'd heard it go, 'Boo'. But whoever this something or someone was they were invisible, for search as he might he couldn't see them.

Then he heard something or someone say, 'Those are the smallest pumpkins I've ever seen.'





Broom looked down and was surprised when sparks came from the pumpkins.

'Well, I never,' he said.

He took off his hat and put his ear to the ground, hoping to hear what was going on. He nearly jumped out of his green fur when Pinch, Skittle's furry purry pet, raced up to him.

'What are you doing?' Pinch asked.

'Oh...
nothing,'
said Broom,
blushing
and putting
his hat
back on. 'Just
wondering why the
pumpkins are so small again this year.'

'They are on the little side of nothing,' said Pinch. 'I don't think they'll even make good lanterns for Ethel B Dina's café.'

Just then Pinch heard something or someone say, 'That should do the trick.'

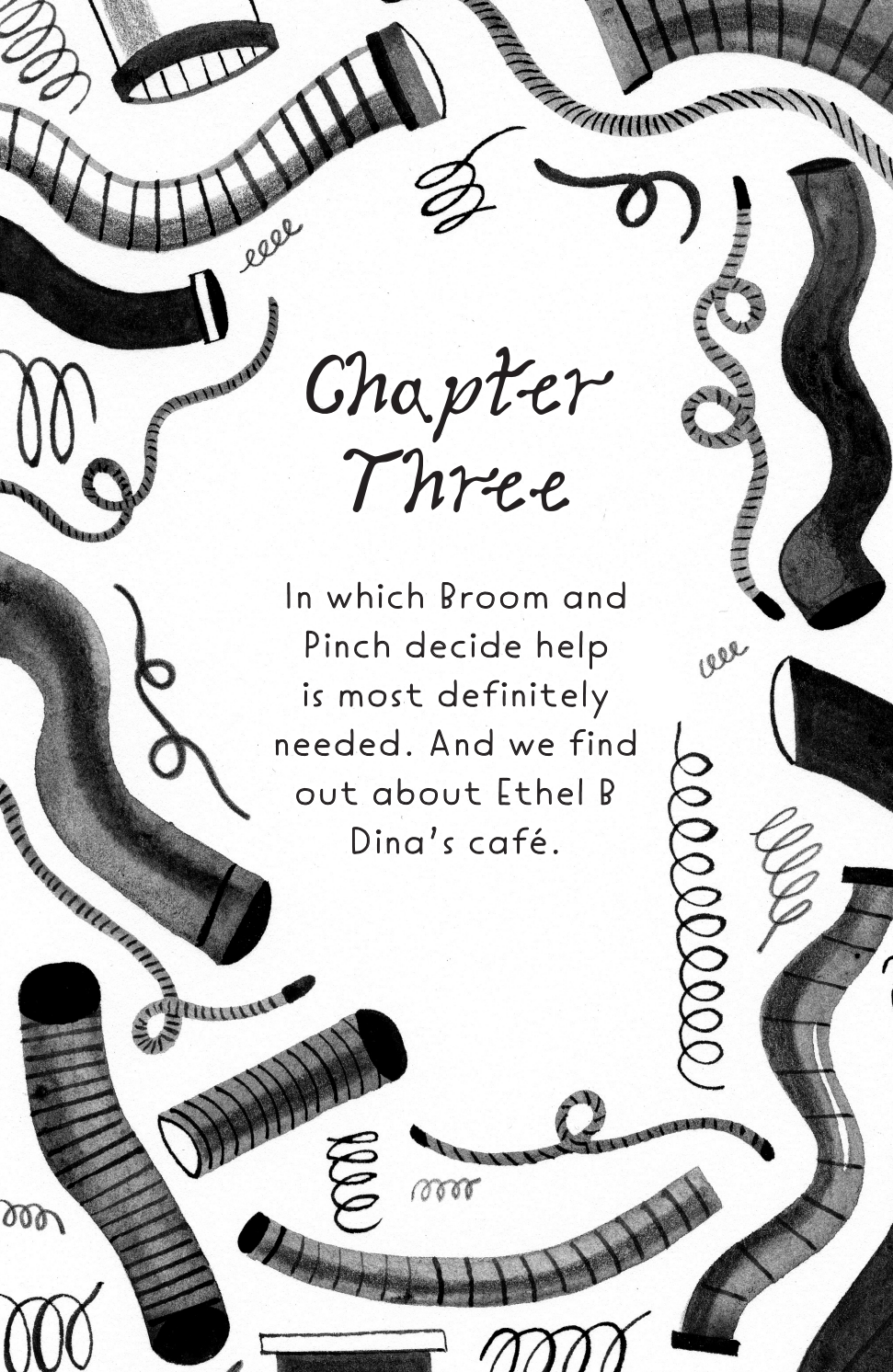
'Who said that?' said Pinch.

'Oh, good,' said Broom. 'You can hear it too. What a relief.'

‘You mean,’ said Pinch, ‘you can hear someone talking who isn’t me and isn’t you?’ He sniffed about, but the something or someone was nowhere to be found.

‘It’s very strange,’ said Broom. ‘And a bit spooky.’

‘You can say that again,’ said Pinch.



# Chapter Three

In which Broom and Pinch decide help is most definitely needed. And we find out about Ethel B Dina's café.

'It's very strange and a bit spooky,' said Broom.

'Yes,' said Pinch. 'And saying it twice does make it sound a bit less spooky.'

They laughed until their tummies jelly-jiggled which made them feel a lot better.

As Skittle's mum, Admiral Bonnet, always said, 'If you can't laugh at something that worries you, the worry only gets bigger'.

'We should go and speak to Jug,' said Pinch. 'He's a fountain of facts.'

'The same idea is running round my hat band,' said Broom. 'Jug might find it funny and, more importantly, he might know what the something or someone is.'

'*And that's a fact*,' said Pinch as they set off to Ethel B Dina's café.

Ethel B Dina lived in a flat beneath Rubbish Island where she could see fishes swimming past her window. She ran the Fish Hospital and recently she'd felt it would be good for a few of her patients to stretch a fin, waggle a tail and have a different view of life.

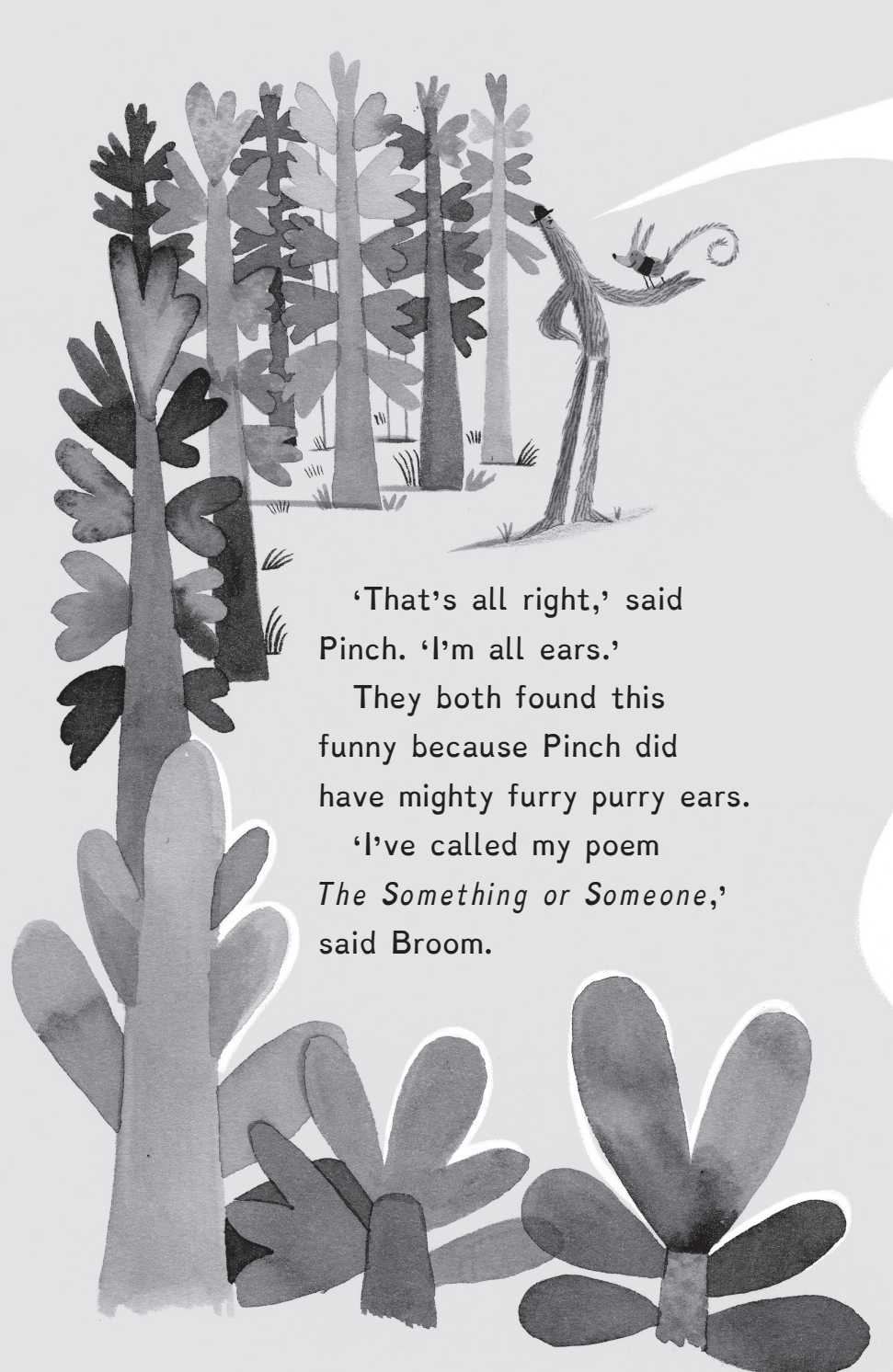
She had asked Spokes and Barnacle Bow to build her an outdoor café with a wall of fish tanks so her patients could admire the wonders of Rubbish Island.

Ethel B Dina ran the café with Granny Gull. It was a great success and not only with the fishes. The Tindims met there for a good old natter especially at gleetime, which they always do properly with white table cloths, china teacups and plates, and a pot of Granny Gull's glee, which is tea to you and me.

Broom and Pinch walked together through the Roo-Roo Woods and as they walked they tried to think what the something or someone might be. Broom said he'd made up a poem in the middle of the

night, when he had been woken again by the something or someone huffing.

'It isn't finished,' he said, 'because I can't finish it without knowing what the something or someone is. So it's missing the last verse.'



'That's all right,' said Pinch. 'I'm all ears.'

They both found this funny because Pinch did have mighty furry purry ears.

'I've called my poem *The Something or Someone*,' said Broom.

'Someone speaks when
I'm not talking,

Something mumbles when I
go away,

Someone follows me out walking,
Something's in the pumpkins today.

Someone, I tell myself, is nothing.

Something is decidedly not right.

Someone keeps me awake by huffing.

Something spooks me out
at night by huffing.