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Opening extract from

Muncle Trogg and the Flying Donkey

Written by

Janet Foxley

Published by

Chicken House Ltd

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Muncle
Trogg
and the
Flying
Donkey

From The Chicken House

Muncle has been busy becoming a star since his first book became a bit of a bestseller. He's been translated into lots of different languages, and has even taken a trip to Hollywood (Emily went too, of course)!

Thankfully he's back in Mount Grumble now, as his friends and family really need his advice ...

I love Muncle's stories. Janet Foxley is writing future classics and this small publisher fellow (that's me) thinks they're wonderful!

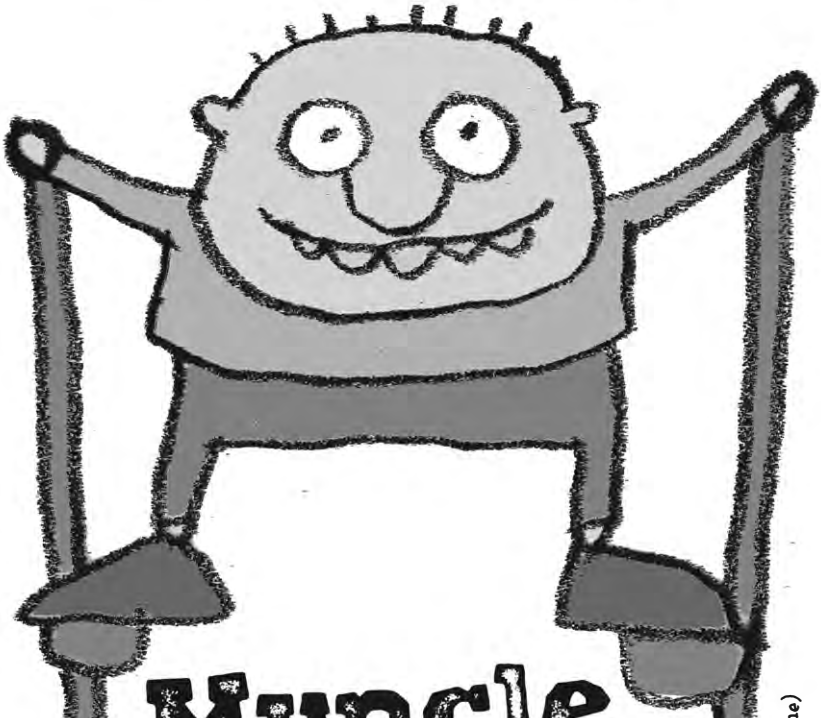
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Janet Foxley

Illustrated by Steve Wells



Muncle Trogg and the Flying Donkey

(He's a giant, but a tiny one)

Dedication
For Donald, Rachel and Sebastian,
with love and gratitude

Text © Janet Foxley 2012
Illustrations © Steve Wells 2012

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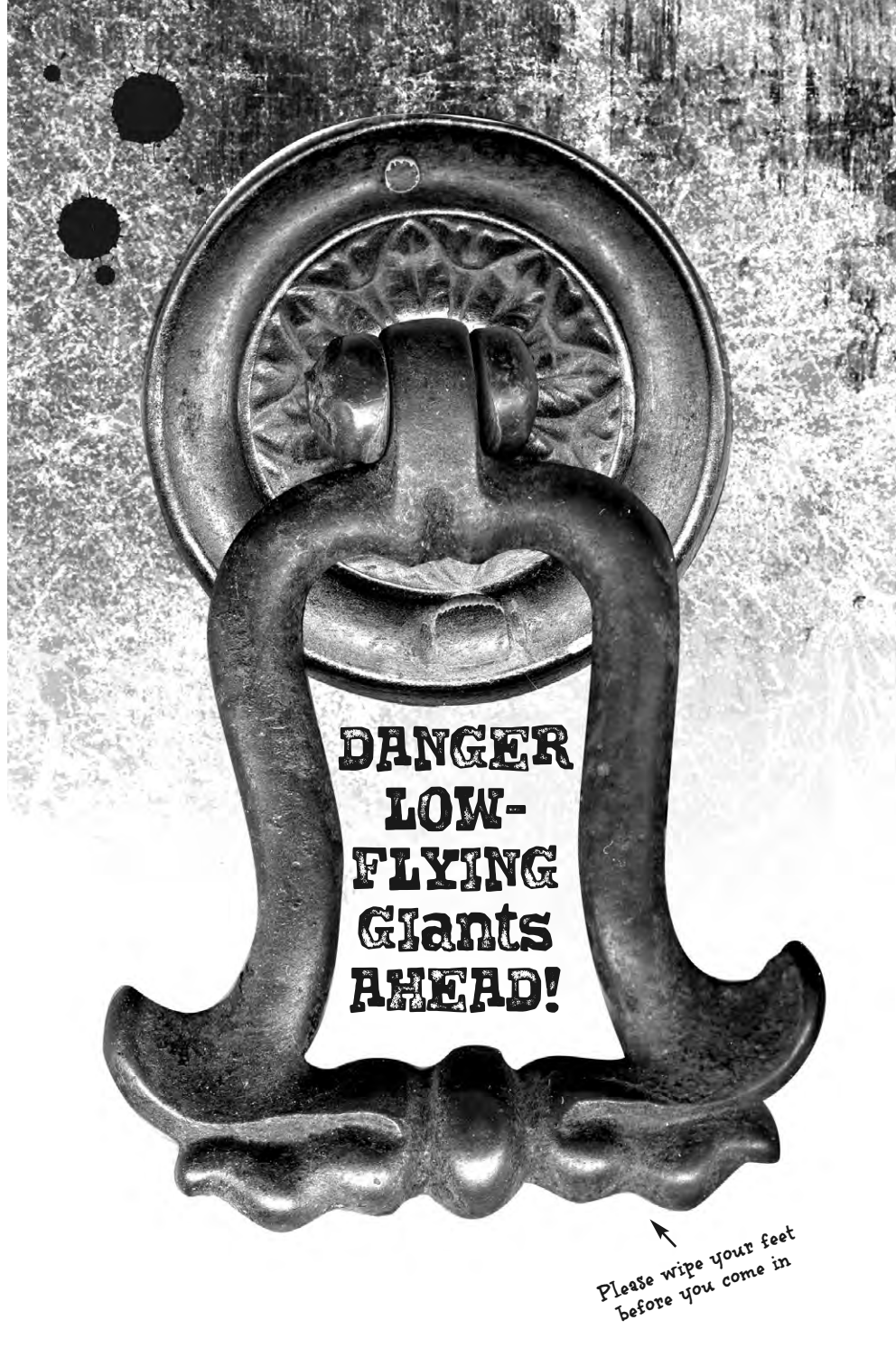
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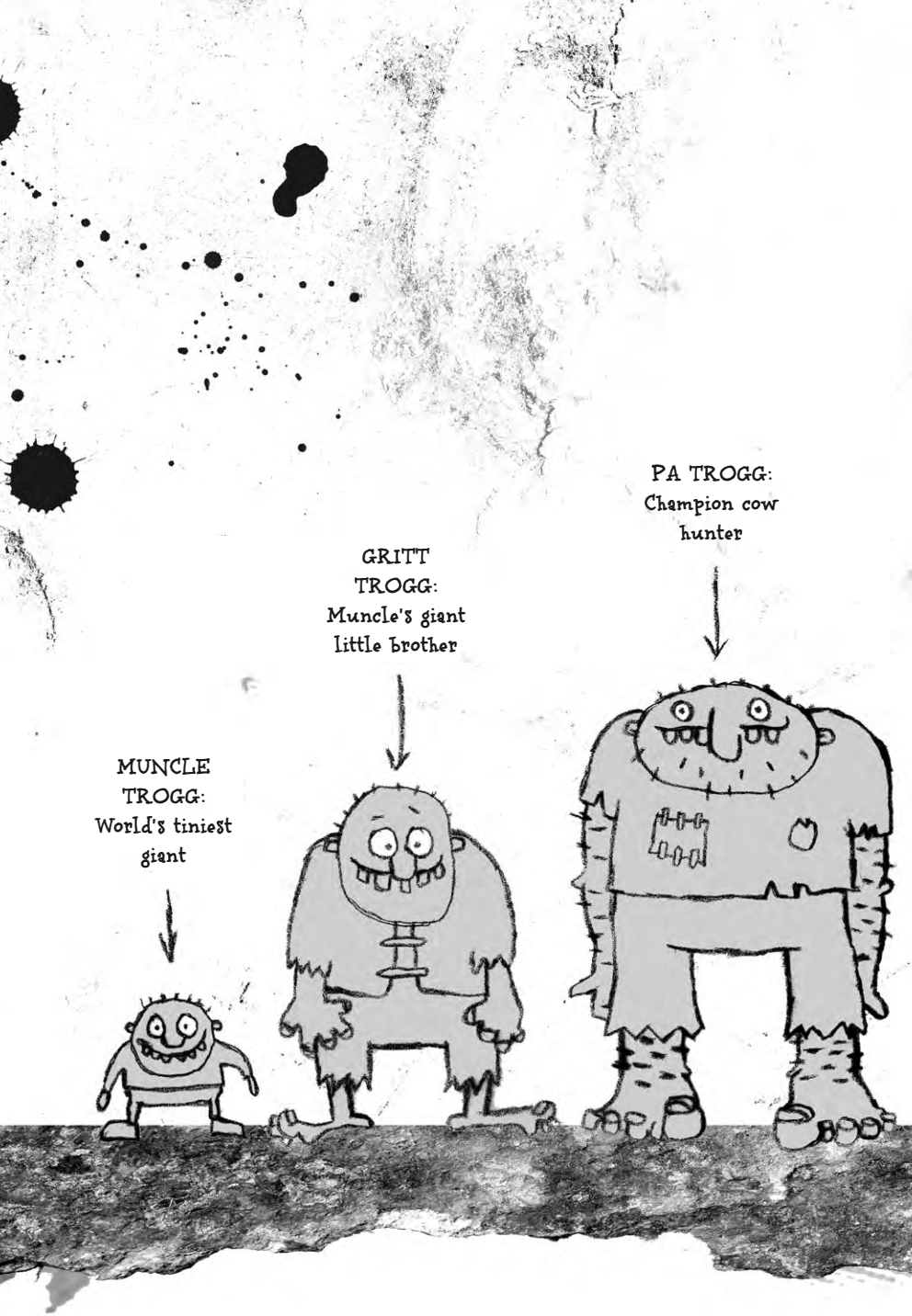
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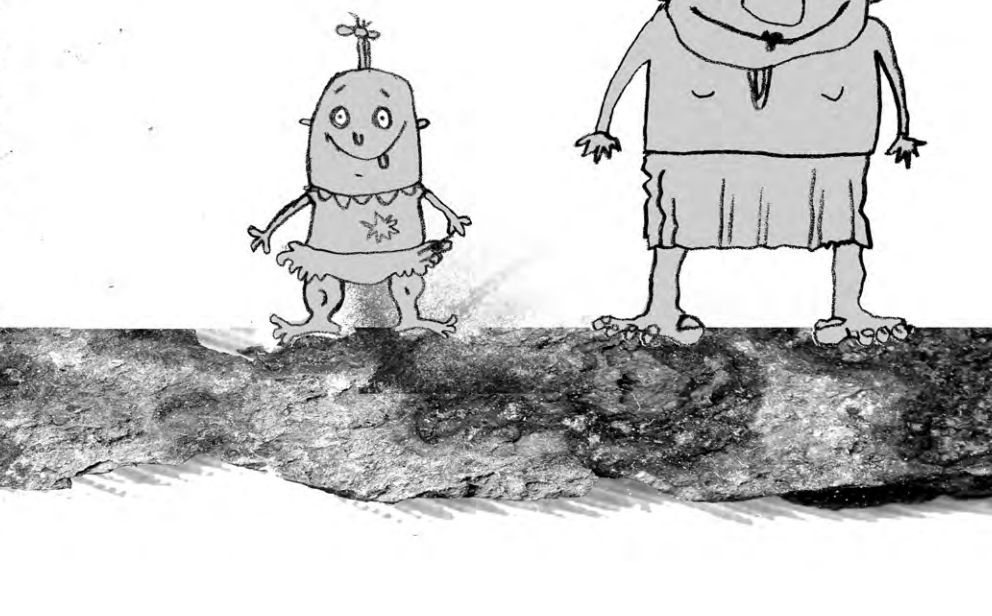

DANGER
LOW-
FLYING
Giants
AHEAD!
Please wipe your feet
before you come in


PA TROGG:
Champion cow
hunter
GRITT
TROGG:
Muncle's giant
little brother
MUNCLE
TROGG:
World's tiniest
giant

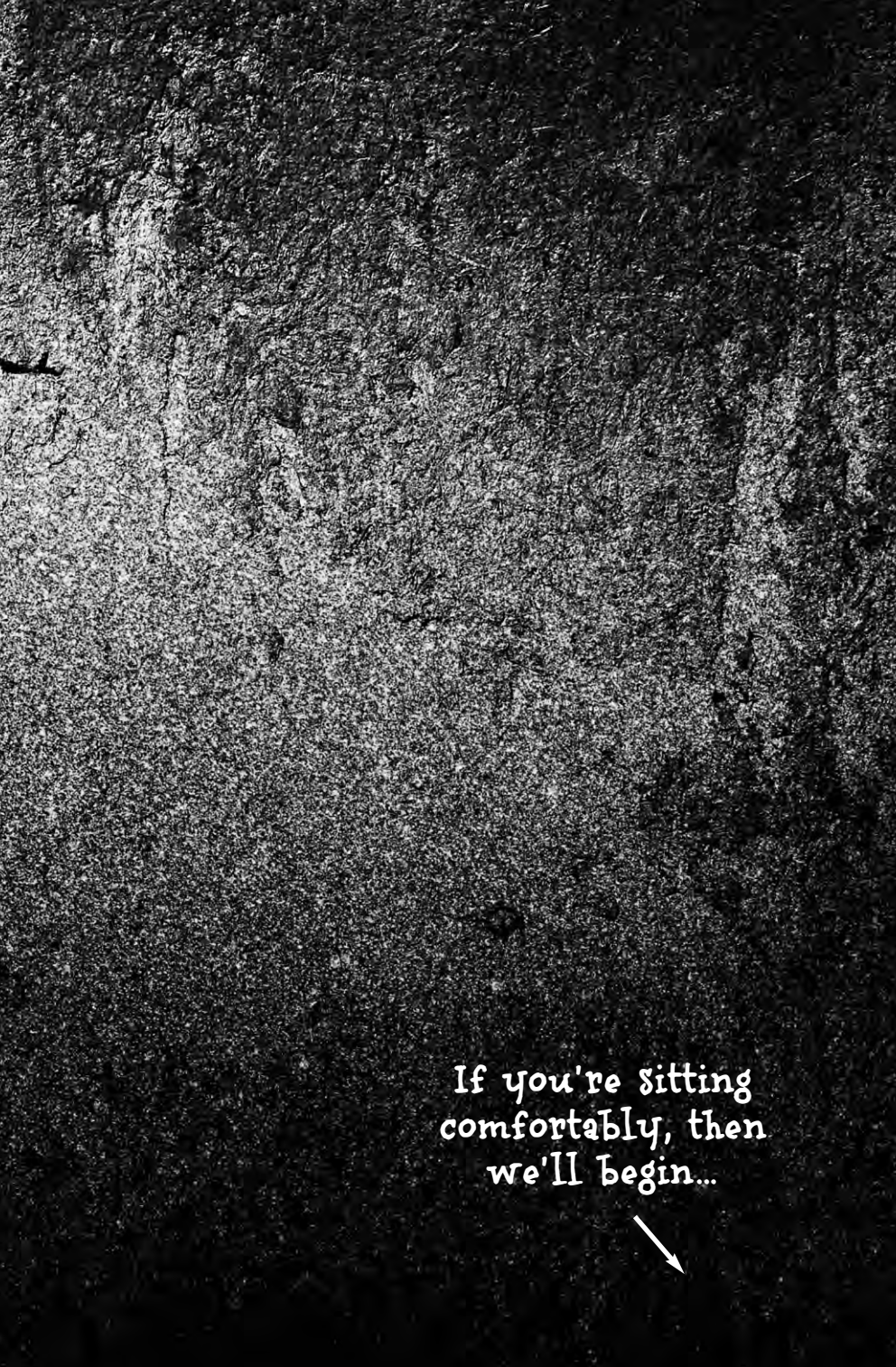
Meet Muncle and his family

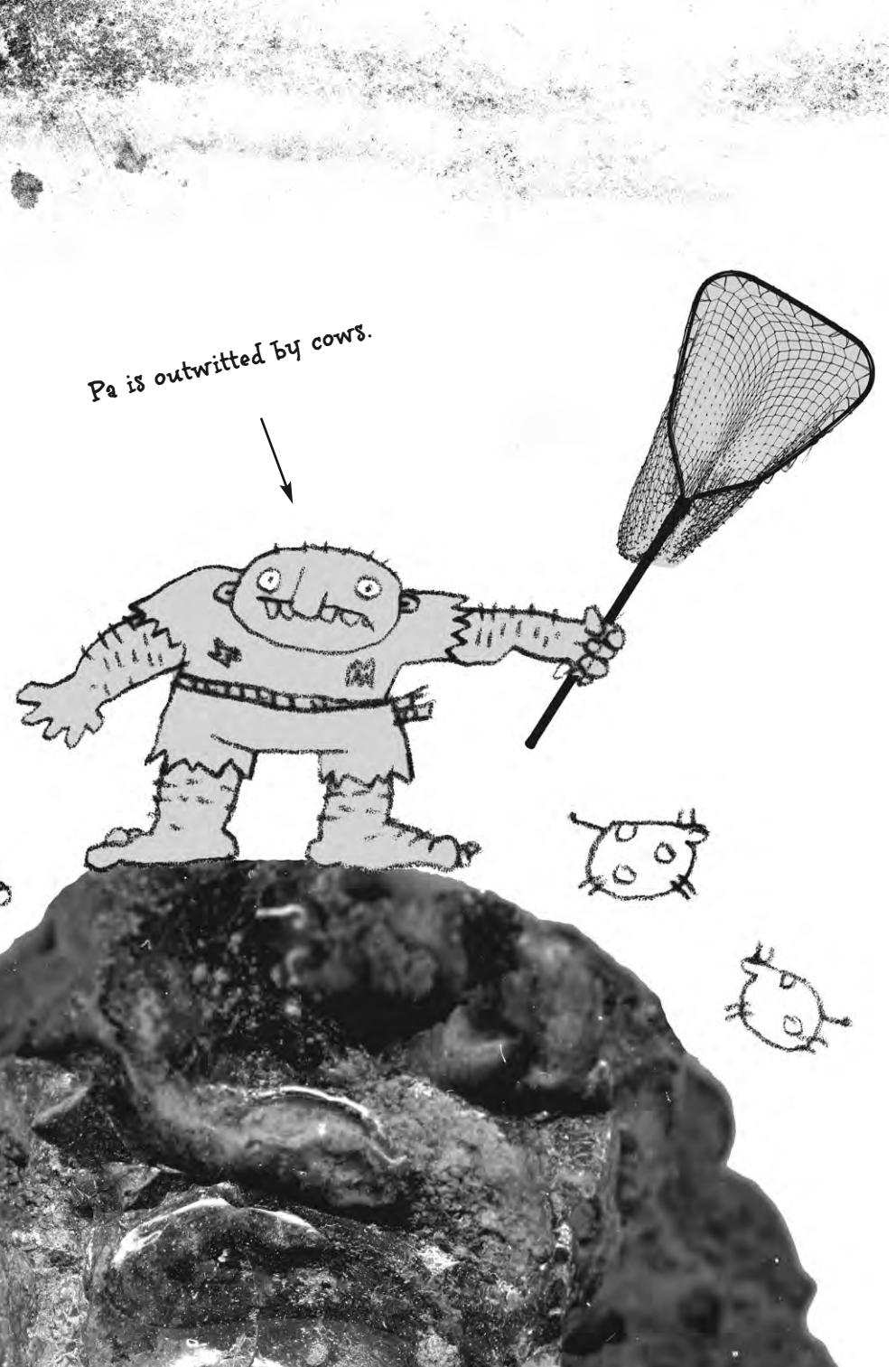
MA TROGG:
Cooker of
disgusting fungus-
based stews

FLUBB TROGG:
Muncle's
baby sister




Welcome
to Mount
Grumble


If you're sitting comfortably, then we'll begin...


Pa is outwitted by cows.

Chapter one

'Don't drop me, Gritt!' shrieked Muncle, bouncing on his younger brother's huge shoulders.

'Sorry,' puffed Gritt, 'but Pa's at the Smalling farm already. I don't want to miss seeing him catch an ox. It'll be so exciting!'

Muncle clung to Gritt's hair as he charged down the mountain, scattering sheep.

It was their first hunting trip. Until the Great Smalling Battle – the first one for centuries – only hunters like Pa were allowed out of Mount Grumble, and they had to creep out at night. But now that they'd made the Smallings run away, King Thortless the Thirteenth had said everyone could go out whenever they liked, even in broad daylight.

Pa was waiting for them at the bottom of Mount

Grumble, next to the Smalling fields. On the other side of a thin metal fence were some sleepy-looking black-and-white animals. They watched the three giants curiously. The fields were covered with dark-brown puddles.

Gritt dumped Muncle on the ground.

'Thanks,' said Muncle. For once it had been useful to have a younger brother who was the strongest seven-year-old in Mount Grumble. It'd have taken him donkey's years to get here on his own.

'Are these the oxen?' Gritt whispered in awe.

'Cows,' said Pa. 'Same thing, just a bit smaller.'

'They're still a lot bigger than sheep,' said Muncle.

'But not as big as me.' Pa puffed out his chest. 'And they're really, really slow. I'll catch one in no time.'

He leapt over the metal fence.

The cows began to back away.

'Mind you don't touch the fences, boys,' said Pa, unfolding his hunting net. 'The Smallings put spells on them.'

'Spells?' said Muncle. 'What makes you think that?'

'I bumped into one once and the magic ran through me like a shiver. You'd better go round by the gate, Muncle. The fence is too high for you. Gritt, you come

with me. And mind the splats.'

'The what?' Gritt stepped carefully over the fence.

'Splats.' Pa pointed to the dark-brown puddles. 'It's the proper name for cow-plops. Now, boys, this is how you hunt a cow. You chase it, then throw the net over it, and wrestle it to the ground. Watch and learn.'

Pa ran after the cows.

Gritt ran after Pa.

The cows ran away. They weren't that slow after all.

Muncle sighed. This was going to take a long time.

He made his way towards the gate, thinking. How could such a thin fence keep in all those big cows? His Smalling friend Emily had told him that magic didn't exist, but if Pa had actually *felt* a Smalling spell ... well, sometimes Muncle didn't know what to believe.

The cows were charging back towards the gate now – with Pa and Gritt in hot pursuit.

At the last minute, the cows changed direction.

So did Gritt.

But not Pa.

Squelch! Straight into a splat.

Pa's feet shot from under him, and he slid across the field on his bottom.

'Mooooo!' The cows hurried back to the far side of

the field. They almost sounded as if they were laughing.

'Why don't you creep up quietly behind them?' Muncle suggested.

'CREEP?' roared Pa. 'Hunters don't CREEP!'

'You may be the new Wise Man, Muncle,' said Gritt, 'but Pa's the one who knows about hunting.'

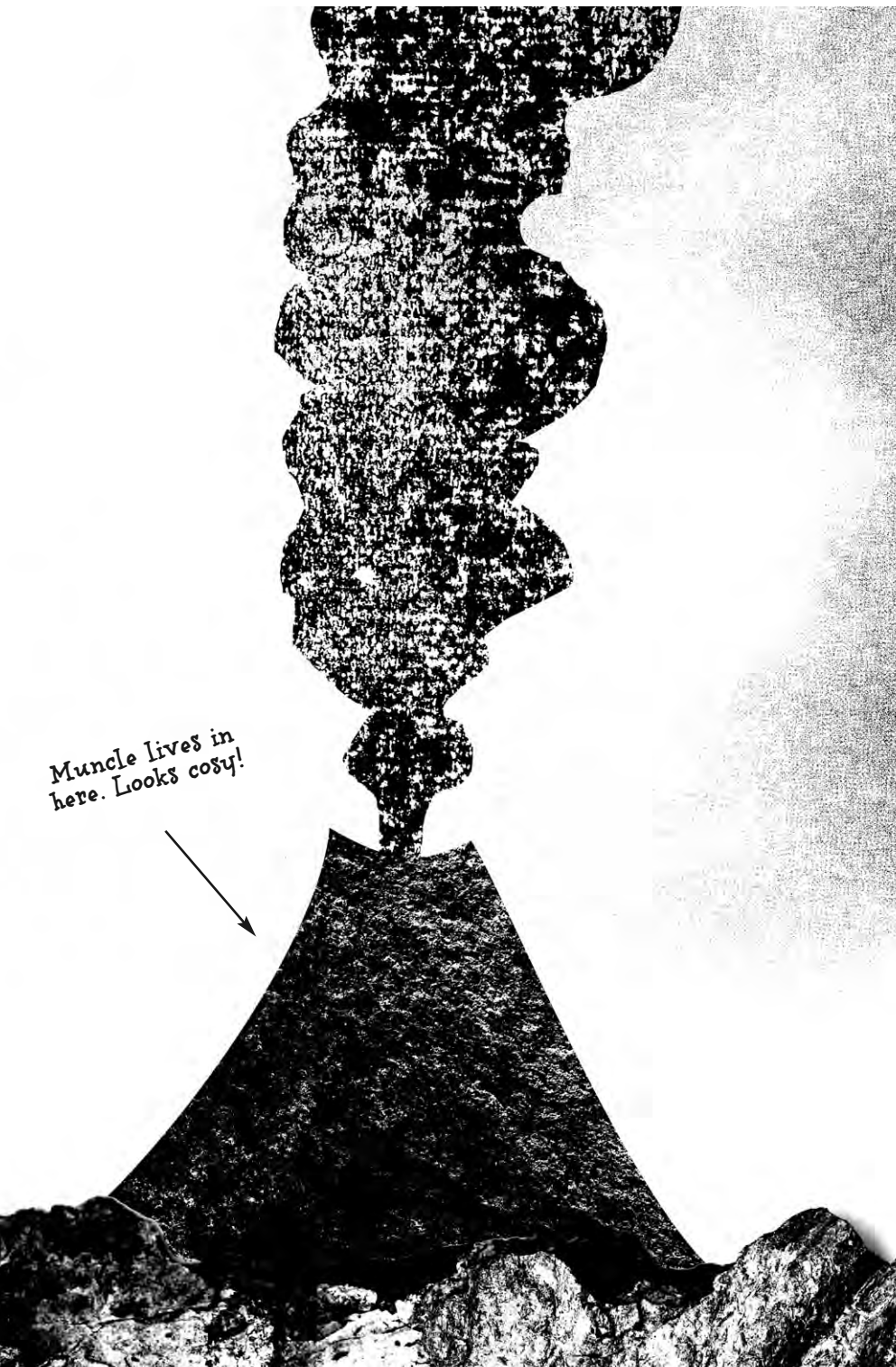
'That's right!' cried Pa, struggling to his feet, and he and Gritt charged after the herd once more.

Muncle hadn't got used to being the new Wise Man yet. He might have saved the giants by making the silly Smallings think Mount Grumble was a volcano – even though giants knew mountains couldn't blow up! – but he'd only just left school, so it felt a bit frightening to have such an important job.

Besides, he didn't really feel wise enough yet. He still had a lot of Wiseness to learn. Maybe this was a good place to start.

He wandered off and looked into the next field. The animals here were a lot smaller, not much bigger than sheep. They looked so funny with their little horns and wispy beards that Muncle couldn't help laughing at them.

'Bleeeeh!' one of the animals laughed back, leaning over the fence and taking a bite out of Muncle's


Muncle lives in here. Looks cosy!

breeches. Now it was Muncle's turn to run away. His clothes were ragged enough already – he didn't want any more holes.

He trotted across the farmyard. Birds scattered squawking from under his feet. They were bigger and fatter than pigeons, and Muncle thought about trying to hunt them, but he wasn't quick enough to catch one.

At the other side of the yard some even funnier-looking animals peered at him over the top of a wall. They had round pink faces, blunt noses and floppy ears. Muncle went over to them cautiously, but these animals didn't seem interested in biting him. They were too busy rooting about with their noses in the mud of their small pen. Some were bigger than others, but they were all plump with short legs and smooth skin, and just a few bristles here and there – a bit like giants' skin, only pink not grey. Muncle had never seen anything like them. And they smelled as lovely as Ma's perfume!

Hearing sudden footsteps behind him, Muncle spun round in alarm before he remembered that the Smallings had run away. It was only Pa. He was panting, his clothes were covered with splats, and sweat trickled down his face, which had turned from grey to purple. His net was empty.

'Didn't you get one?' said Muncle.

Pa shrugged. 'I ... ah ... changed my mind,' he said. 'Don't reckon they'd be tasty after all.'

'Why not?'

'I can just tell. Hunter's instinct. Ah, you've found the pigs.'

'These are *pigs*? You told Princess Puglug pigs looked like Smallings.'

'Well they *do* – they're smooth and pink.'

Gritt came limping across the yard. His face was even more purple than Pa's. 'Oh, we must be able to catch one of *those*, Pa,' he said, looking into the pen. 'They can't run away.'

'Catching a cow would have been just as easy, Gritt,' Pa said, sharply. 'I just decided not to. Now then, the Princess wanted a pig for a pet, didn't she?'

'She didn't want an *animal,*' said Muncle. 'She wanted a Smalling, like Emily.'

'Emily?' said Gritt, looking guilty. 'You mean the Smalling I kidnap ... er ... the Smalling Titan gave the King for his Birthday supper?'

Muncle shuddered, remembering how Gritt and Titan Bulge – Mount Grumble's worst bully – had kidnapped his Smalling friend, and how the King had nearly roasted her. It was Muncle who had helped her

to escape. Nobody knew about that, though – and it had to stay that way.

'Pigs may just be animals,' said Pa, 'but don't they smell nice? Almost as nice as splats. Reminds me of your ma.'

Muncle studied the smallest pig. It *looked* nice too, with its tiny, curly tail, and little eyes that peeped out shyly from under its floppy ears. Puglug might still like it, even if it wasn't as Smallingy as she was expecting. And if she had a pig, maybe she'd forget she'd once wanted Muncle for a pet.

He scrambled over the wall and scooped up a little one, handing it out to Pa. It squealed and wriggled as Pa wrapped it up tightly in his hunting net.

'Can we take another one for supper?' said Gritt, helping Muncle back over the wall.

'No!' said Muncle. 'No, we can't eat pets. It would be like eating a dragon.'

'Then what *is* for supper? We're supposed to be hunting but we haven't caught anything yet.'

'Your ma's already making supper,' said Pa. 'Look.' He pointed to the distant top of Mount Grumble, where plumes of smoke were rising into the air. 'Everyone's got their cooking fires going. It's later than I thought. We'd better get back. Do you want to carry

Muncle or the pig, Gritt?'

'I'd rather have the pig,' said Gritt, grabbing it from Pa and setting off at top speed. He was never late for supper.

Pa swung Muncle on to his shoulders and followed Gritt up the mountain. Riding on Pa's shoulders was very uncomfortable. Pa liked jumping over boulders, and all the bouncing made Muncle feel quite sick! He clutched Pa's ears.

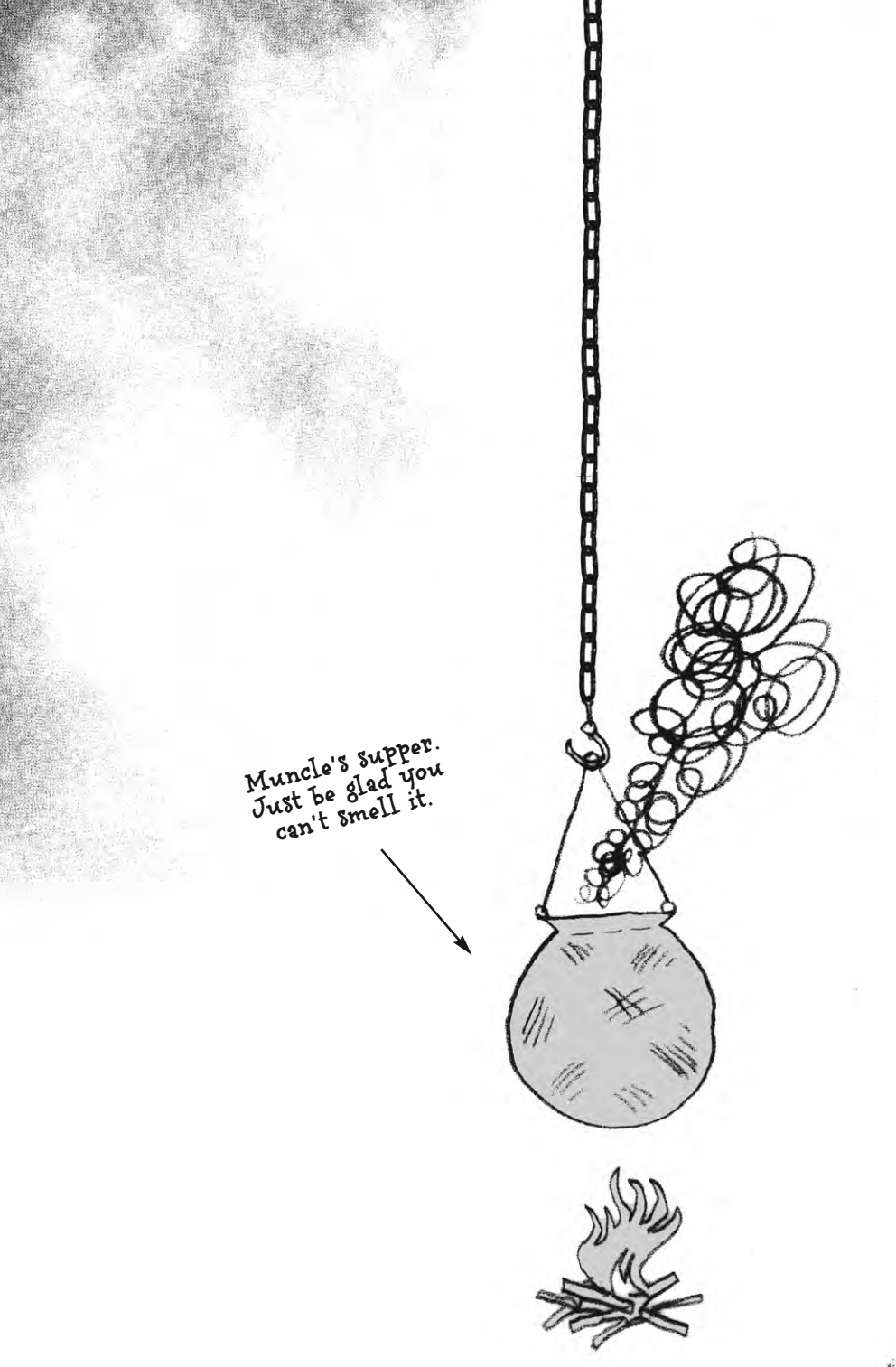
They left the farmland and started to climb Mount Grumble. Muncle looked up. A thick grey cloud sat on the mountain top. He felt a chill run up his spine, which was funny as it was quite a hot day.

'Pa,' he asked, 'is there always as much smoke as that?'

'People must be baking for the Victory Feast as well as cooking supper,' Pa puffed.

'You don't think—?' said Muncle, remembering what Emily had said about mountains that were really volcanoes.

Pa chuckled. 'No, I don't, Wise Man Muncle. *You're* the one who does the thinking round here.'


Muncle's supper. Just be glad you can't smell it.