

# THE LAST KIDS ON EARTH

and  
the  
MONSTER DIMENSION



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For Dana, Leila,  
Jim, and Doug.

Thanks, guys.

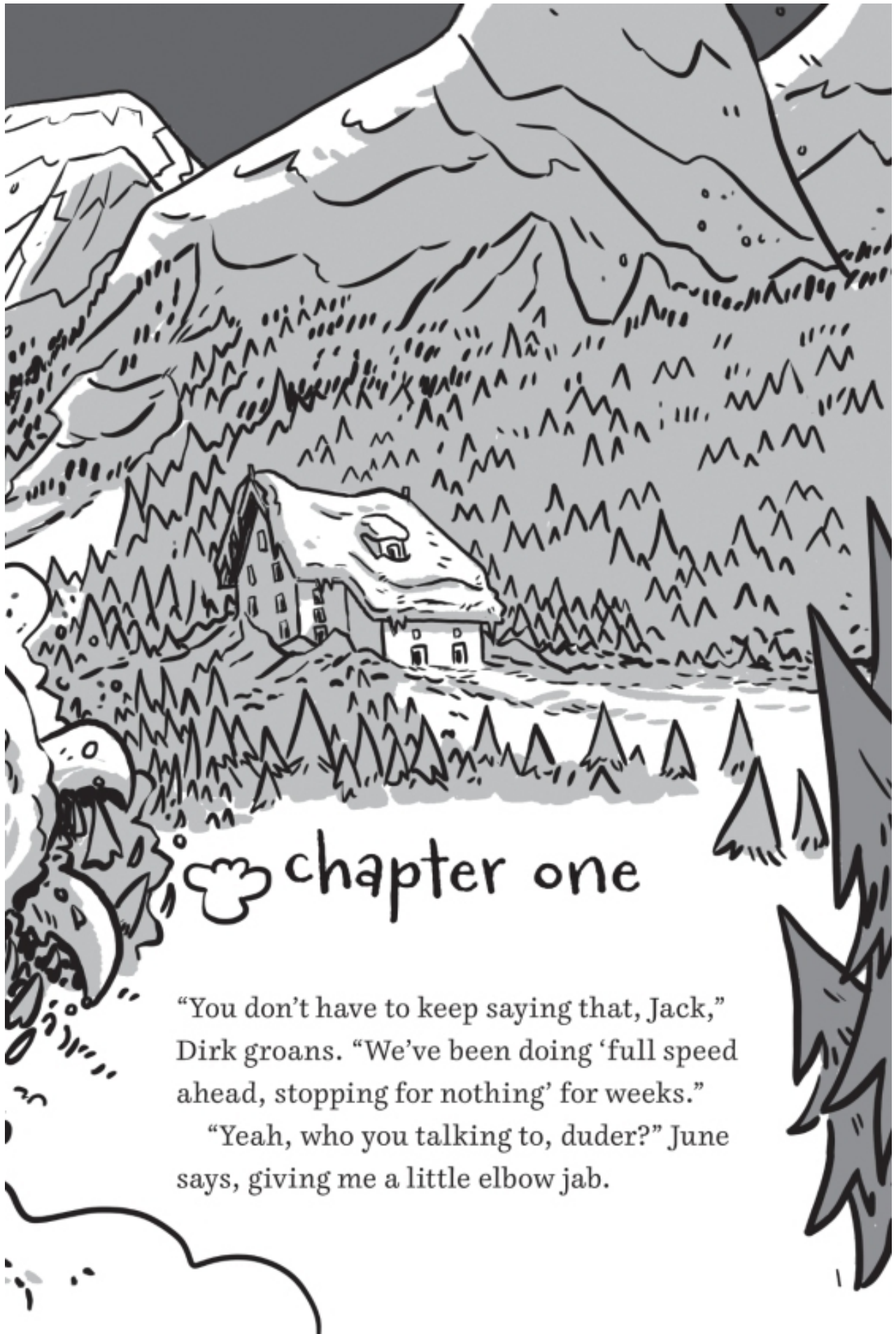
—M. B.

For Danny Glick  
and Church the cat.  
My undead companions  
during the making of  
this book.

—D. H.



Next stop:  
**THE TOWER!**  
Full speed ahead,  
stop for nothing!



## chapter one

“You don’t have to keep saying that, Jack,” Dirk groans. “We’ve been doing ‘full speed ahead, stopping for nothing’ for weeks.”

“Yeah, who you talking to, duder?” June says, giving me a little elbow jab.

I shrug. “I’m doing, like, a pirate-captain bit. Why, ya don’t like the bit?”

“Not even a bit,” June says, smirking. “And what would we possibly stop for?”

“I dunno,” I say. “Like if someone needed a bathroom break.”

“We’re riding on top of a mall containing forty-two bathrooms,” Quint points out, very reasonably. “I don’t foresee bathroom breaks being necessary.”

“Exactly,” June says. “We don’t need to stop for anything! There is literally nothing in the entire world that would cause us to—”



We're hurled into our makeshift captain's wheel as the Mallusk screeches to a halt. Imagine a dog sprinting full speed, then suddenly, and with great surprise, reaching the end of its leash. Except in our case, the "dog" is a thirty-nine-ton monster carrying the world's largest shopping mall on its back.

It takes us a moment to gather our senses.

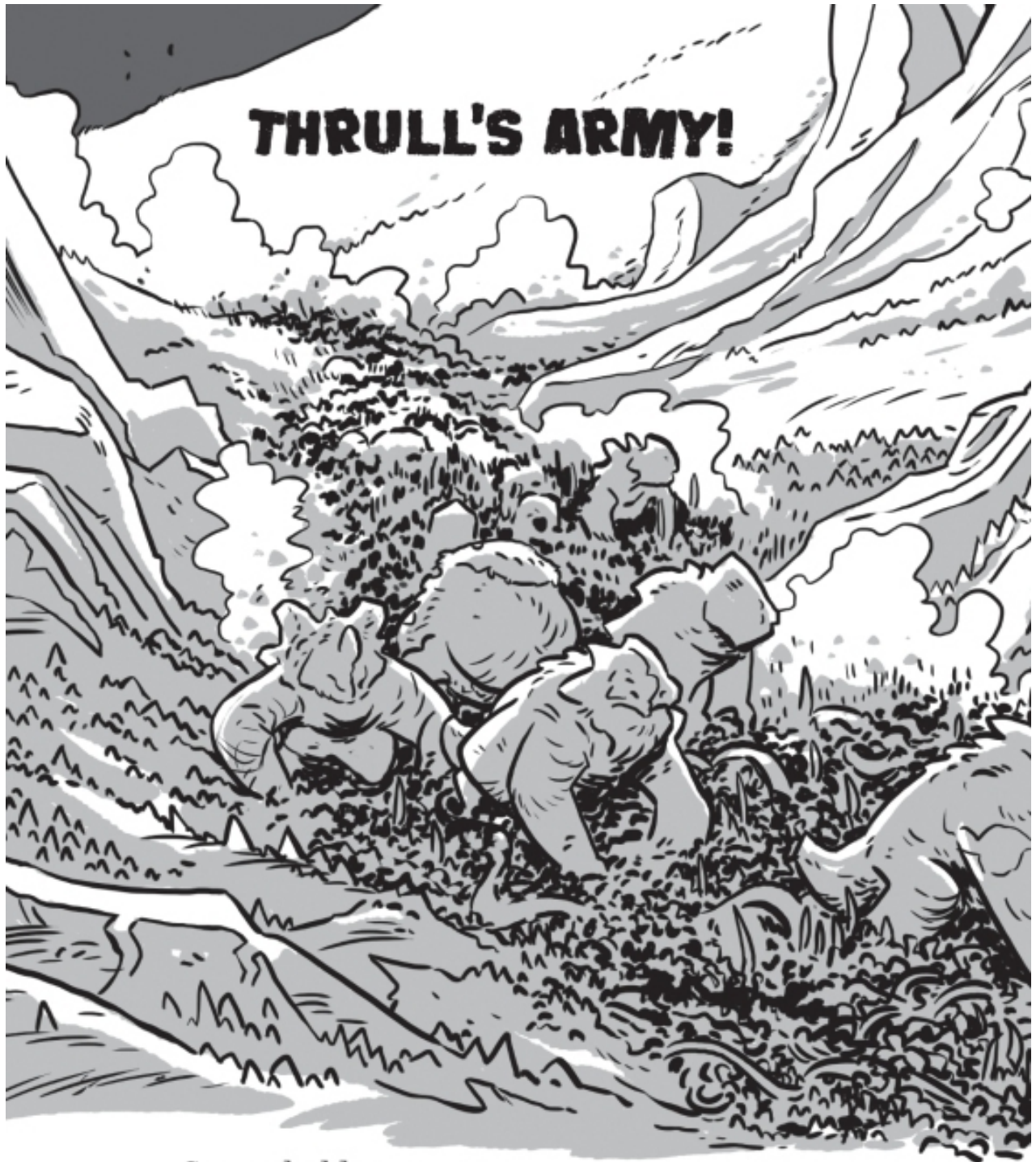
"What happened?" June groans, rubbing at her head.

"Squirrel in the road?" I suggest.

We slowly get to our feet. A tremendous thicket of trees lies ahead of us. Through them, in the far-off distance, we see the reason for the Mallusk's abrupt halt.

An incomprehensibly massive *army* blocks our path forward. An army of skeleton soldiers and evil monsters, called by their master, Thrull. Summoned to the same place we're going: the Tower.





Sorry, hold up, pause.

We need to play a little game of catch-up.  
I gotta fill you in on the big important stuff.

First off, the Tower. It's bad news. Once it's complete, it will bring Rezzöch the Ancient, Destructor of Worlds, into our dimension.





And Rezzöch will do the thing he does so well it's actually part of his name: **DESTRUCT THE WORLD**. Which basically means devour every living thing on our planet. He's got a big appetite, apparently.

The Tower is Thrull's big project. It was nearly complete, but then he hit a snag. Thrull was missing a crucial piece of information—information that could be gleaned only from the Tower Schematics. And the schematics weren't, like, scribbled on a scrap of paper. They were inside the brain of the monster Ghazt.

So, Thrull snatched Ghazt and brought him to a sentient fortress. Ruling over the fortress was the mad doctor Wracksaw, aided by his loyal Dire Nurses: Debra and Eye-Bulb.



Thrull ordered Wracksaw to open up Ghazt's brain and retrieve the schematics.

My friends and I saw our chance! We'd sneak into the fortress and blow the whole thing up, Death Star-style. Then Thrull would *never* be able to complete the Tower, and Rezzóch would *never* be able to come here. Genius!

Inside the fortress, we made some new friends: the Goon Platoon, a trio of monsters who had undergone cruel experiments and modifications at the hands (tentacles?) of Wracksaw.



Best of all, I found Rover—my monster-dog buddy—who I had feared was lost forever.

That was the good stuff. Everything else was bad.

*We failed.*

Wracksaw probed Ghazt's brain, found the Tower Schematics, and delivered them straight into Thrull's noggin . . .



Also—and this is a big one—Ghazt *died*. Ghazt was some sort of *monster god*. And when a monster god dies, a whole lot of energy is unleashed. Enough energy that the fortress actually *did* blow up, after all! But, like, a lot more *up* than we'd planned . . .

The fortress was yanked through a portal and sent back to the monster dimension. And with the fortress went Wracksaw, his minions, and our new pals the Goon Platoon . . .



My friends and I escaped, thanks to a last-minute rescue by our buddies Johnny Steve and Skaelka, aboard the Mallusk.

And Thrull escaped, too. He has everything he needs to complete the Tower and bring Rezzöch to our dimension. But if we can get there in time, maybe we can still find a way to stop it. There must be SOMETHING we can do, right?

So, we're speeding toward the Tower.

Or we were, until . . . we ran into this marching monster-army roadblock.



Apparently, yes: this is the evil-skeleton version of *Make Way for Ducklings*.

You ever try to cross the street during a parade? It's the worst, especially if you're not even there for the parade, because then it's just, like, hundreds of people enjoying the show and you're like, "I JUST WANT TO GET ACROSS THE STREET TO BUY SOME SOCKS! DOES THE SOCK STORE KNOW HOW MUCH BUSINESS THEY'RE LOSING?!"

This is like that, but, y'know—*worse*. Thrull's army seems endless.

But we have our own army! A zombie army! Or, we will . . . *if* I can command them. 'Cause back at the fortress, just before Ghazt kicked the bucket, he did *this* . . .



See me there, clinging to Ghazt's fur? I wasn't having a good time. That same energy eruption that sent the zombies toward the Tower *also* transferred the remaining bits of Ghazt's zombie-controlling powers into my Cosmic Hand. The Cosmic Hand had already been getting weirder, but it immediately got *super* grisly—



Ghazt told me, and I quote, “Now you are the general, Jack.”

And then . . . he died.

So, yeah. Lousy timing. Ghazt gave me the power to command *all the zombies*—but didn't tell me *how* to use that power. And I've never been able to control more than a few zombies at a time.

No pressure, right?



A couple of days ago, we passed a big group of zombies and I eagerly gave my gnarly, souped-up arm a spin. It was a fail . . .



So now I'm stuck with this gross-out arm that's supposed to help me lead an army of the undead—but instead just makes it super hard to get comfortable at night. And that army of the undead—it's our biggest weapon in the coming battle. I need to figure out how to get these powers to work. And soon . . .

Dirk's voice brings me back to the present evil-army situation. "So, we're stuck, huh?"

"It appears so," Quint says. He's on his toes, leaning over the railing, trying to see where this vile parade ends. There is no end in sight.

"Hey, it's cool," I say, trying *real hard* to stay upbeat. "We'll just wait for them to pass. I mean, really, how big can Thrull's army be?"

