

The Monsters of Dunderly

DUNDERLY-KART

TOPPEN

HOLA

AKEBAKKE

HYTTA

UTEDO

HEISEN

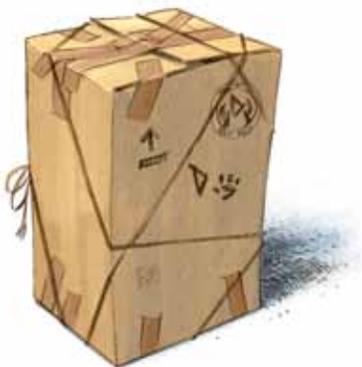
MONSTERBALL

STIEN TIL
MENNESKENE



The Monsters of **Dunderly**

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Translation by www.wordy.no

GAN Aschehoug



High up in the mountains

Far away from people and high up in the mountains, near the edge of a steep cliff, there is an old mountain cabin.

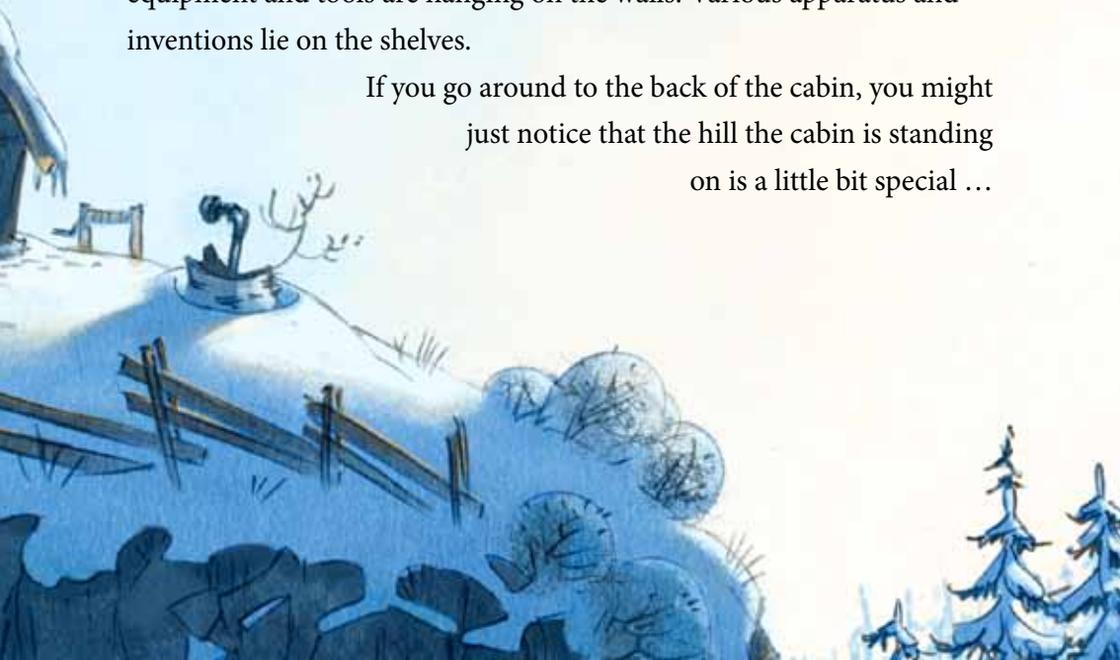
The cabin is quiet now in the morning light. Smoke coils out of the chimney. A snowman stands in the garden, leaning forward slightly, as if sleeping.

There's only one way to get up here, and that's by using the specially-made lift, which has to be started with a lever at the top. And so, not many people have ever been up here.

But now you're here ...

Be completely quiet. Creep towards the cabin, and peek in through the window. The room inside looks more like a workshop than a living room. Under the window is a carpenter's bench, and all kinds of strange equipment and tools are hanging on the walls. Various apparatus and inventions lie on the shelves.

If you go around to the back of the cabin, you might just notice that the hill the cabin is standing on is a little bit special ...





Not many people have seen this hill either, with its eye-shaped mounds and gaping mouth. In fact, there haven't been any people here for years.

Monsters, on the other hand? Well, there are loads of them.

That snowman in the garden, for example. Right now, he's asleep, but when he wakes up, he'll walk around the garden rapping and throwing snowballs. He calls himself The Abominable Snowman, but everyone else calls him Flakey.

And he's not the only monster up here either ...

Inside Dunderly



Come inside the cabin!

Step into a little entranceway. In front of you is the door that leads to the workshop, but that's not where you're going. Right now you're standing on a piece of old carpet, but pull that away, because under it is a hatch. When you lift up the hatch you'll see a slide that goes down underground.

Come on, slide down!

You tumble around once and land with a bump in a soft sofa.

You are inside the monsters secret home – Dunderly! Things here are a bit of a mess: on the sofa there are pillows with monster eyes and monster mouths lying higgledy-piggledy. Drawing things and paper are on the table, games and instruments lie strewn all over the floor...

The fireplace looks like a raging monster's mouth; some wood is still glowing in the hearth. In a hole in the earth behind the sofa a ladder leads back up to the workshop.

At the other end of the lounge is a stage with some instruments: an accordion; a drum set made of oil barrels and kitchen pots; and a small electric guitar made from an egg slicer. Beyond the fireplace some stairs lead down to the kitchen. The dining table on the stairs is where the monsters normally sit to gobble down breakfast, dinner and supper. Through the big windows at the end of the kitchen you can see out over Lake Dunderly, and there's a door out leading out onto a jetty.







Would you like to see who lives here? Go back up into the lounge again and keep going, past the stage, right back inside the hill, into the bedroom.

The one lying in the top hammock, under the eye-shaped window with a view of Lake Dunderly, is Modika. She's sleeping with a cheeky smile on her face. Maybe she's dreaming about ludibunder and dangerous adventures. In a bag over her bed, the monsterball Turbo is snoring.

Samantha sleeps in the bunk diagonally across from Modika. She might be dreaming up new inventions to make in the workshop up in the cabin. A rocket-powered sledge, for example. Or an automatic snowball thrower?

In the crib under Modika's bed lies little Moy with her large eye closed. She's sleeping with her mouth open, and she makes a little whistling noise as she breathes out. The green giant lying on the floor underneath her is Buster. He's snoring like an old chainsaw, with long heavy breaths.

In the horn on the wall Old-man Darius is grumbling in his sleep. He's probably dreaming about the olden days when he was in his prime as an active monsterball. Back then he was known as Daring Darius and was famous for being the loudest monsterball in the Northern Hemisphere.

And the one sleeping in the hammock up in the tower is Lexington, or Lex, as everyone calls him. He's sleeping among the things he loves best in the whole world – books.

They're fast asleep, all these monsters. Snoring in chorus and dreaming their wonderful dreams. It's safe up here on the mountain, far away from people. Humans are so scared of monsters. If they see a monster they scream and pass out, or run like madmen and lock themselves indoors. And they call the Monster Patrol. And then there's trouble.

But up here in Dunderly they can live in peace. Here they can be as monstrous as they want.

Well – okay, they don't get to live completely in peace. Because right now a sound is ringing out in the distance – a sound that's about to wake Modika and the other monsters ...

Are you coming?

Morning in Dunderly



Modika wakes to that soft and gentle little ringing noise.
Could that be ... ?

Yes, now she hears it again, loud and clear: it's the bell!

In a split second she's wide awake and leaps up with a YES!

From the bag over her bed she whips out Turbo. Even though he's a little bit groggy, she throws him straight up in the air.

He groans reluctantly, but a few throws later his eyes are wide with joy. Like all monsterballs he loves speed and movement more than anything.

Modika flips out of the bunk and lands on a springy mattress.

– Come on monsters, up and at 'em! she shouts.

In her crib Moy reaches a paw out into the air. Modika throws Turbo to her.

– No! Turbo protests.

Moy catches Turbo in her mouth and begins to chew on him. Lucky for Turbo that she only has one tooth – for now.

Samantha has begun to move. Yawning, she stretches up to a rope above the bed. She pulls it, and the whole bed tips over so that Samantha is dumped onto the floor.

– Hard landing! she mumbles and picks herself up. – I'll have to modify some of the pillows ... Oh dearie me!

Buster is still snoring, it seems as though he hasn't heard anything.

– The bell is ringing, Buster! shouts Modika, but he doesn't react.
Modika goes into Lex's tower. He's lying heavy and still in his hammock.

– Rise and shine! she calls.

– The bell is ringing!

The hammock starts swaying just a tiny bit.

– M-m, Lex grunts. –
I’m just going to ... read a bit.

Modika has to laugh. He must not have heard her. There’s no way Lex ever manages to read once the bell has rung.

– The bell is ringing! she shouts more loudly.

Now there’s a ripple in the hammock. Lex is trying to wriggle out, but he misses his step on the ladder and has to regain his balance.

– Now?! he asks, and begins to climb down the ladder.

Samantha calls out from inside the living room:

– I’ll fetch Johnny Human!

She hurries up the ladder to the workshop in the cabin.

Modika looks at Buster. He snorts and sleeps. Moy’s crib hangs right over him. Moy reaches her paw out again, lifting a drool-soaked Turbo into the air. – Help! shouts Turbo.

Moy, yes ...

Modika goes to the crib and takes Turbo from Moy. She puts him in his monsterball bag and hangs it around her neck. She whispers her plan in Moy’s ear, who gurgles gleefully. Moy is always up for Modika-stuff!

Modika lifts Moy down to Buster. Moy grabs Busters tusks and rubs her snout under his eyes; he’s so ticklish there. Buster twists and kicks his legs, he howls with laughter.



– Okay, okay! he shouts in between fits of laughter. – I’m awake!

Have mercy!

But Moy doesn’t show any mercy, so Modika has to yank Moy loose.

Buster draws himself up to Modika with bristling eyebrows.

– Are you responsible for this?

– Yepp! giggles Modika. Before she has a chance to say anything about the bell, Buster is up and coming right for her. Modika knows what’s coming next and quickly sets Moy down on the floor. Buster wraps his paws around Modika’s feet and lifts her up. Modika squirms and waves her arms, and makes as much fuss as possible, Buster tramps through the cabin and out onto the jetty. Buster steps into the cold winter air and throws Modika out.



Oh, how she flies! The wind rushes past her ears, the huge blue sky hovers above her. With a squeal of glee she lands on her back in a lovely big snowdrift.

– That’s your payback! calls Buster from the jetty.

– Hey, Buster? hollers Modika and gets up, brushing snow from her fur.

– Yes? answers Buster.

– You hear that sound?

Buster twitches his ears. Suddenly they point straight to the cliff. The bell rings again. This time it sounds irritated and impatient. As if whoever is ringing it is about to give up and go away ...

– Woah, Modika! Buster splutters. – It’s the post!

The post arrives



Modika is fast on her paws, and she's not the only one.

Samantha comes careening passed on her jet-powered skis. On her back she carries the wobbly wax doll Johnny Human. Buster comes stomping alongside with Moy on his shoulders. Flakey shrugs through the snow as if he's couldn't care less. – Yeah, whatever. he says.

That's how you have to speak, when you call yourself The Abonimable Snowman. But when he comes to the cliff, there's no hiding the fact that he's just as excited as everyone else.

– Is it big? he asks.

Everyone is curious, even Lex, who is standing in the doorway to the cabin with binoculars pressed to his eyes. He's afraid of catching a cold. And someone has to watch the hut. Plus it's quite steep near the edge.

Buster waves the flock back from the edge, for safety's sake. Even though everybody knows it, he reminds them again: The postman down there loading the day's post onto the lifting platform, is a human.

– Ooh, says Moy, but she is smiling so widely that it seems as if the top of her head might fall backwards.

– They're not dangerous, Samantha says, but Modika knows that they're not exactly good either, these humans. There's a reason why the monsters live in a cabin high up in the mountains and not in town with the humans.

Buster takes Johnny Human from Samantha and goes forward to the edge. He holds the wax dummy out and waves its arms, so that the postman will think there are people living up here. But Buster hasn't



noticed that Modika has crept between his legs and is on her way to the edge ...

The lift wire goes taunt, and everyone holds their breath. They hear two knocks, that's the signal. Buster pulls the lever that starts the lift. It's only now he realises that Modika is kneeling right on the edge of the cliff with her bum in the air and head out over the edge.

– Modika! he snaps strictly.

But Modika has just seen something completely terrible. A human is sitting on the lift! A lanky-looking guy with a red uniform cap that glows like a warning. The postman!

– Crap! Modika says.

Modika only ever uses that word when there's a crisis. A proper crisis.

– A human! she shouts.

Terror grips the monsters. They bump into each other in panic and don't know what to do. Which is silly, because they have emergency plans for situations just like this.

– Why is he coming up? asks Samantha. – The postmen don't normally do that!

Modika is the first to regain her senses. She grabs hold of Johnny Human and drags him towards the cabin. The others get into gear as well and run in the same direction. Everyone apart from Flakey, who Buster tips over.

Hey man! protests Flakey, but Buster has started running backwards, rolling Flakey along behind them, so that all of their monster tracks get covered over. Flakey gets both dizzy and sick, and snow sticks to his body as he rolls, making him bigger and bigger.

Modika dashes into the cabin. The hatch is open, and Lex has long since thrown himself down the slide. She hops over the hatch, and begins to fasten Johnny Human into his puppet harness, which hangs from the roof. Behind her she can hear Moy bounce in and happily slide down. Samantha hurries in with the jet skis on her feet, switches the engines off and hurls them into the workshop.

Buster has rolled all the paw prints flat, and sets Flakey the right way up again. Flakey has gotten so fat from the snow that he only just manages to stay upright.

– Stay as still as ice! Buster tells him.

– Yo! Flakey replies. – I'll chill out here, me.

Buster staggers in and slams the door shut behind him. There's a clunk sound from the lift. It's arrived!

Flakey shivers. What if he can't keep still?!

The post must be delivered

Modika and Samantha get Johnny Human in place and hurry into the workshop. They lock the door between the workshop and the entranceway and get ready. Samantha gets the steering ropes in her hands and Modika has the speaking and listening tubes within reach.

From here they can see Johnny Human well, he's hanging in the control harness out in the entranceway. But they can't see more than that.



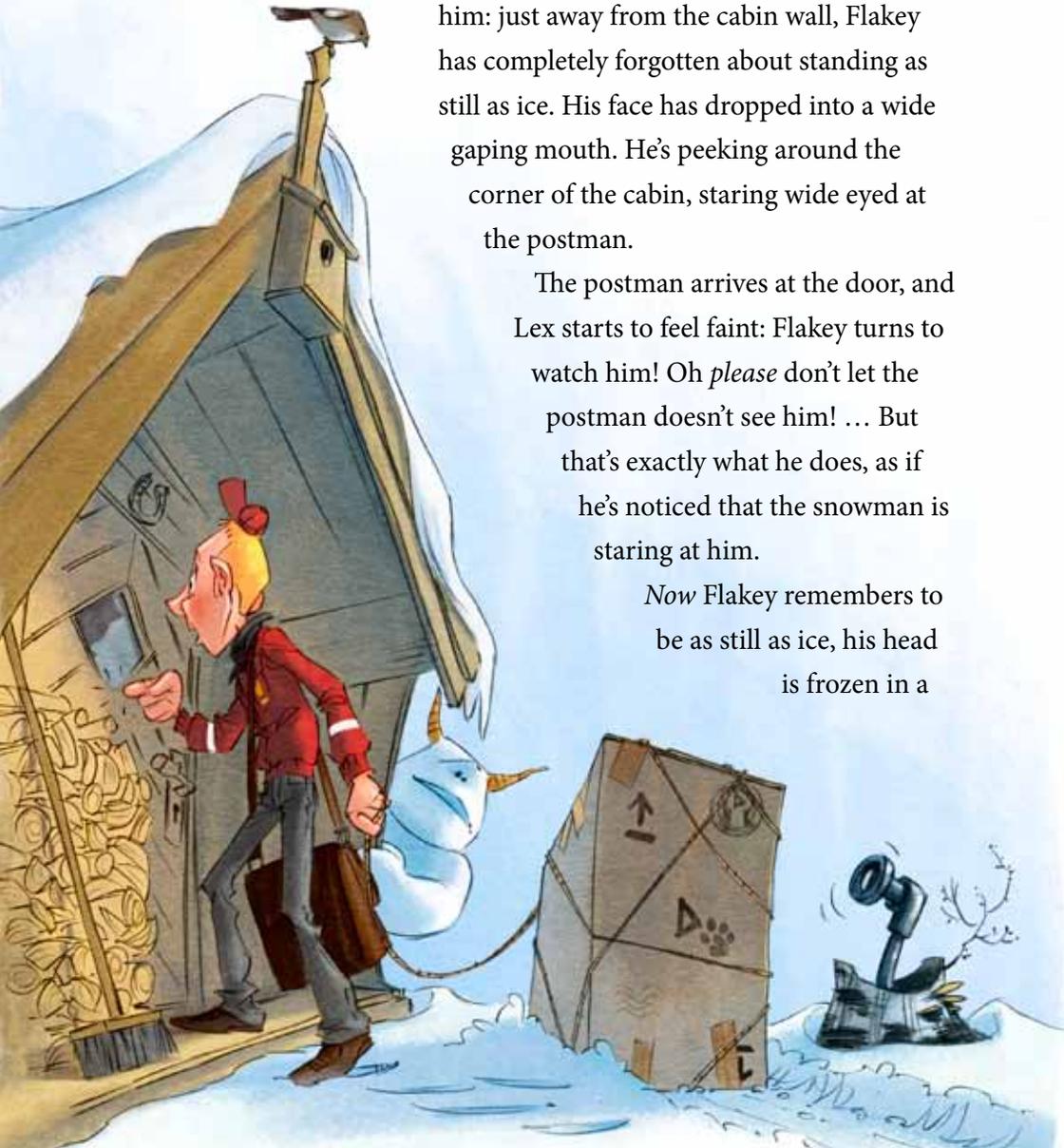
But down in the living room Lex is following the action through the periscope. Using it, he can see everything that happens on the lawn. The tall thin postman drags the package behind him in the snow.

Lex reports on what's happening to Modika through a speaking tube:
– Help! The human's coming!

Lex is shaking so much that Buster has to lay a reassuring paw on his back. And that helps. Buster always helps. But in the periscope Lex sees something that turns his legs to jelly underneath him: just away from the cabin wall, Flakey has completely forgotten about standing as still as ice. His face has dropped into a wide gaping mouth. He's peeking around the corner of the cabin, staring wide eyed at the postman.

The postman arrives at the door, and Lex starts to feel faint: Flakey turns to watch him! Oh *please* don't let the postman doesn't see him! ... But that's exactly what he does, as if he's noticed that the snowman is staring at him.

Now Flakey remembers to be as still as ice, his head is frozen in a



twisted, odd angle. The postman stares at the him intensely. Lex feels his heart pounding in his chest.

Eventually the postman turns away and climbs up the steps. He knocks on the door.

– Come in! shouts Modika from inside the workshop. She’s been practising her human

accent. But she’s still worried it’s too high and monster-ish.

Through the hole she sees the door slowly open. The postman peers in. He screws his eyes up slightly when he sees Johnny Human. Modika has told Samantha again and again. There’s something just not-quite-human about that puppet.

Samantha quickly pulls the right rope, and Johnny Human waves a hand.

– Top of the morning to you! says Modika into the microphone that is connected to a speaker in the mouth of the puppet.

– I ...

The postman’s voice is a bit squeaky, but he clears his throat and sounds a little bit tougher. – I need a signature.

He holds out a clipboard with a sheet on it, and Johnny Human waves his arms around as if trying to bash the postman right in the face. The postman lifts up the clipboard to protect himself, and one of Johnny’s hands gets stuck on it, as if he’s grabbed hold of it.

The postman turns around and tramps back down the steps to get the package. Modika doesn’t hesitate. Quick as a flash she unlocks the door and dashes out. While the postman bends over to lift the package, she takes the pen and scrawls some letters on the receipt. Just as quickly, she flies back into her position.

Modika presses her eye to the peephole. The postman has heaved the package into the entranceway and is staring suspiciously at Johnny Human.

– I’ve signed the receipt! says Modika through the microphone.

Samantha tugs a couple of ropes and Johnny Human waves the hand with the clipboard.

The postman takes the clipboard and then peers at Johnny Human from head to toe. Modika holds her breath, let's hope he doesn't catch sight of the ropes!

The postman stares long and hard at Johnny Human's face.

– You don't need to come up next time, says Modika through the microphone, and now her voice has gone all high and ragged. She tries again in the smoothest and most human-like voice she can manage:

– From now on it's fine if you just leave packages and post in the lift.

The postman takes a step forward, bringing his face right up to Johnny Human's.

Crap, thinks Modika. He does suspect something!

But suddenly it's as if the postman has lost his nerve. – Bye then! he squeaks and hurries out. He slams the door shut behind him.

Through the periscope Lex sees the postman throw a quick glance at Flakey as he hurries down the stairs ... but Flakey is gone!

Lex is as confused as the postman – where has Flakey gotten to?

The postman stares in confusion at the place where Flakey had stood. He looks around. To the right, to the left. Lex pulls the periscope down so that the postman won't see it.

Modika and Samantha each sit with an ear pressed to the door, trying to work out what's happening. They hear running steps in the snow. And then: the lift bell is ringing.

Down in the living room Lex carefully raises up the periscope again, and swings it towards the lift: Yup, the lift is on its way down now.

– The human's gone! he whispers into the speaking tube.

– Woo hoo! celebrates Modika and turns to Samantha. But Samantha has a wrinkled brow and a worried look.

– We fooled him! says Modika, trying to cheer Samantha up.

Samantha sighs. – Johnny Human needs some modifications, she says.

– Modika-cations? Modika jokes.

Normally Samantha finds Modika's jokes funny, but instead her face is stern. Modika takes one of her hands and pulls her along. – Now we can open the package!

The monsters gather in the kitchen, in a ring around the package. Lex keeps his distance, on the stairs, just in case.

Flakey is outside, pressing his face up against the window. He was so scared by the postman that he ran and hid behind the outhouse. Now he's acting tough again.

– Oh man, did you see that? he swaggers.
– The human was so scared he nearly wet himself!

Lex hasn't told the others that Flakey ran off. Lex just gives Flakey a knowing look to show him that *he* knows what Flakey did.

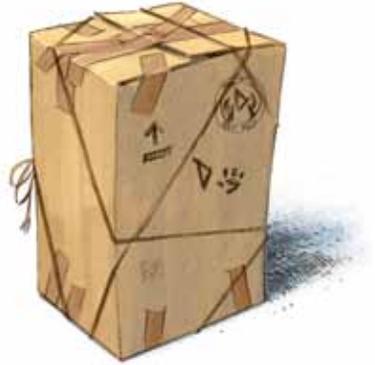
Old-man Darius grumbles from his horn on the wall. – I can't see a thing!

The wrinkly old monsterball is both hard of hearing and half-blind, so Buster lifts the horn down from the wall and holds Old-man Darius up over the package. Modika lifts Moy up on her shoulders, so that everyone is in.

– Is everybody ready? she asks.

– Yes! shout all the monsters impatiently.

Modika nods to Buster, who uses his sharp claws to cut the rope holding the lid in place. She moves forwards to lift the lid off, when suddenly the whole box starts to rock from side to side. It tips over and crashes to the floor, knocking the top off – and out shoots a furry blur in a blaze of speed.





The monster in the box



He is mainly blue with a little bit of green, that's as much as Modika can see. He shoots out of the box so that all of the newspapers that were lying in the bottom fly up. He races up the stairs, into the living room, onto the sofa – pillows are knocked everywhere! He dashes onto the stage, drums wildly on the saucepan drum kit, and then dashes into the bedroom. From where Modika and the others are standing they can't see what he's doing. But they hear loud shouting and the springs squeaking on the bouncy mattress. His shouting seems quieter – he's moved into the tower now. They hear thump after thump echoing out.

– My books! gasps Lex.

The newcomer comes surfing out of the tower on an atlas. He clambers up into the chandelier and swings forwards and backwards faster and faster until he falls like a stone – right onto the dining table.

– Kuala Lumpur! he shouts and begins to stamp on the table with something that looks like tap-dancing.

Modika, Buster and the others gather a little closer to the table to get a better look. Lex dives under the table. That's probably the safest place, he thinks.

The newcomer both tiptoes and stamps to the end of the table, snatches the horn from Buster, puts it to his mouth and blows.

– Stop that at once! complains Old-man Darius.

Abruptly he stops the trumpeting and throws the horn away. Old-man Darius rolls out of the horn and away over the floor, complaining

loudly all the way. – Kids nowadays! It wasn't like this in my time!

The newcomer waves his claws in the air and shows his teeth:

– NEH NAH NEH NAH NEEH NAAAAH!

And then he just stands there still.

– Ha! he says breathlessly. Now you're going to ground me! And send me to my room without any supper! Well I'm not gonna!

The monsters stand around looking at him with wide eyes. Modika lays her head to one side and smiles cheekily.

– Let's mash him! she says. – Monstermash!

– Yeah! shout the others.

The newcomer is terrified and tries to make a run for it, but Buster gets a hold of his tail, pulls him back and places him on the floor.

They all pile on top of him, one by one. Modika, Buster, Moy and Smanatha. Yes, even Lex ventures out from under the table and lies carefully on top of all the other monsters. From the jetty doors Flakey makes a snowball from his tummy and throws it at them, so that he's a part of it as well.

Underneath it all, under a pile of paws and tails and fur, the newcomer tries to kick and wriggle loose. But he's completely stuck. He begins to panic. Are they going to mash him flat or what?

Then he realises that the others in the pile are laughing. And it's a giggly, happy laughter, the kind that makes your whole body shakes so it tickles. He feels a paw brush his back, and someone's foot rub against his foot.

From between a pair of orange legs, Modika sticks her head out and smiles so that her crooked teeth are glistening.

– Modika here! she says. – And you are?

– B-b-bulder, says the newcomer.

– Welcome to Dunderly! says Modika she squeezes herself forwards and rubs her cheek against his. Bulder suddenly feels all soft and funny inside.



After the monstermash, they take turns to introduce themselves with curtsies and nods and bows.

– Can't you think of some more ludibunder? asks Modika?

– Ludibunder!?! asks Bulder, confused.

– Don't you know what ludibunder is? asks Modika with open mouth. The monsters look at each other in surprise.

– And yet you're so good at it! says Buster.

Modika nods in agreement. – I'd have thought your name was Bulder Ludibunderson, being as good at ludibunder as you are!

Bulder has never heard of ludibunder before. But it sounds like something he might like.

– Uh ... was that ludibunder I was doing before? he guesses.

Modika nods enthusiastically.

– Okay, says Bulder. – Ludibunder it is!

And he's not kidding. They bounce on the jumping mattress.

They have a pillow fight in the bunk beds. They turn the sofa in the living room into a fort. They have a fencing competition using ladles from the kitchen as swords and they play hide and seek.

When it's Bulder's turn to seek, he runs through the whole cabin and into every single room without finding so much as a monsterball. He's out of ideas. He's been everywhere, he's looked under the duvets and in the drawers and cupboards, but he hasn't found a single monster!

Bulder ends up in the bedroom, where he stands and looks at himself in the mirror while he tries to work out where they might have gone. Suddenly he hears a little chuckle from the mirror. It's as if his own reflection is laughing at him!

– Sssh! whispers another voice, that he thinks sounds like Modika. But the voice is so quiet he can't be quite sure. Maybe he just imagined it?

Bulder grabs the mirror, just to check what's behind it, to be absolutely sure. But when he pulls on the mirror, a whole door opens up! And inside, in a little room with shelves with cans and bottles of juice on them, the whole gang are sitting on a bench. They fall about laughing.

– We got you good! laughs Modika.

The monsters crawl out of the hiding place. – This is the sssh-room, explains Modika. – In case any humans get into Dunderly.

Bulder is terrified at even the thought of it.

– But no humans will ever come into Dunderly! says Buster firmly.

Bulder would rather not think about that at all.

– Now let's do something else! he shouts. – Mount Everest!

The bookshelves in Lex's tower are Mount Everest, and Bulder is leading the expedition to climb right to the summit. In the middle of the expedition Lex goes and sits on the edge of the stage. There he stays,

completely alone, but patient and still. At least, until Modika happens to catch sight of him, on the way down from Mount Everest.

– Lex wants some attention! she shouts.

The monsters gather around the edge of the stage. Only Bulder remains in the tower. He hangs from the one of the shelves and tries to see what's happening, without stopping his ludibunder.

– It's just ... Lex begins, and coughs a bit nervously. –Now that we have Bulder to stay ...

He glances over at Bulder who's hanging upside down in the opening to the tower.

– or to *hang*, Lex corrects himself. – I just wanted to take the time to say how much I appreciate the way you all took me in, when I was new here in Dunderly.

– Yay! Modika cheers, and the other monsters clap.

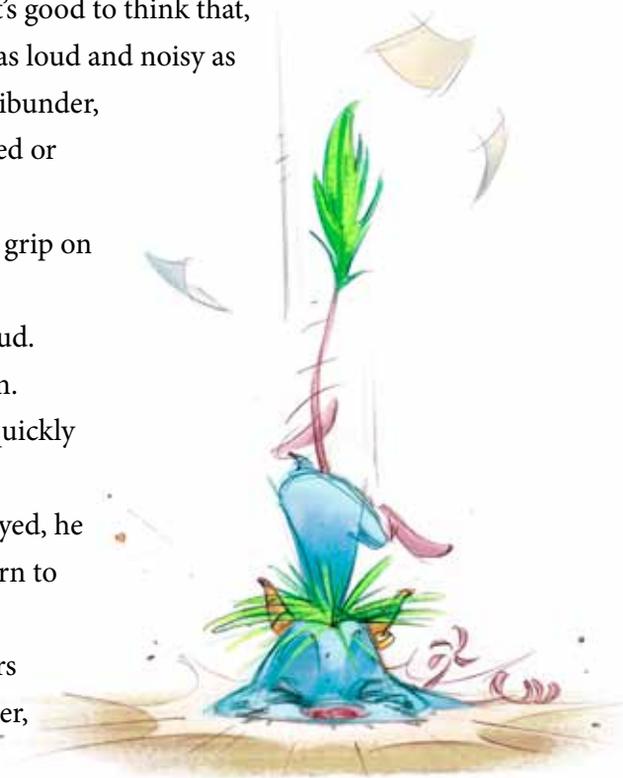
– On a day like this one, it's good to think that, here in Dunderly, we can be as loud and noisy as we want and have all this ludibunder, without humans getting scared or angry.

Suddenly Bulder loses his grip on the roof, and fall to the floor with a thud. Everybody turns towards him.

– Ow! he whimpers, but quickly adds: - It didn't hurt!

Lex is getting a little annoyed, he coughs impatiently. It's *his* turn to have some attention.

– After all, not all monsters are allowed to have ludibunder, he says in a loud strict voice.



Bulder squints his eyes and stretches his neck to see Lex properly. The others also turn towards Lex.

– In human towns the world over our fellow monsters are forced to live in cupboards, drawers and under beds, says Lex. – Terrified that even quiet and gentle ludibunder will give them away.

Bulder nods enthusiastically. – Yes, exactly!

Lex clears his throat again. His voice gets powerful and emotional: – because that's when the Monster Patrol comes.

Everyone is completely quiet, so quiet that they can all hear Bulder swallow.

Lex is a little shaky on his feet. Modika and the others look at him with large, sad eyes. Was this his doing? Did he make them so unhappy?

– But now is not the time to think about such terrible things, Lex says more quickly. – We have a new monster among us. So today is a day of celebration, a day for partying and ludibunder.

With that, the monsters go wild. Paws come together in loud applause, there're whistles and shouting. And the one shouting loudest of them all is Bulder. – Woo-hoo-yah! What a speech! he hollers as he bounces from foot to foot.

Modika heads over to the jetty doors and throws them wide open.

– Are you coming out, Bulder? she yells.

From the clothes chest she fetches her hat and gloves, and finds some old things that will fit Bulder.

Bulder comes to the doorway and looks out over the snow-covered hills and the frozen lake. His eyes glisten like snowflakes.

– You mean, we can go *outside* too!?! Bulder says with awe, and steps carefully out onto the jetty.

– Only if you want to though, says Lex from the kitchen.

Modika tries to jam a hat over Bulder's head, but he jerks away – and zooms outside.