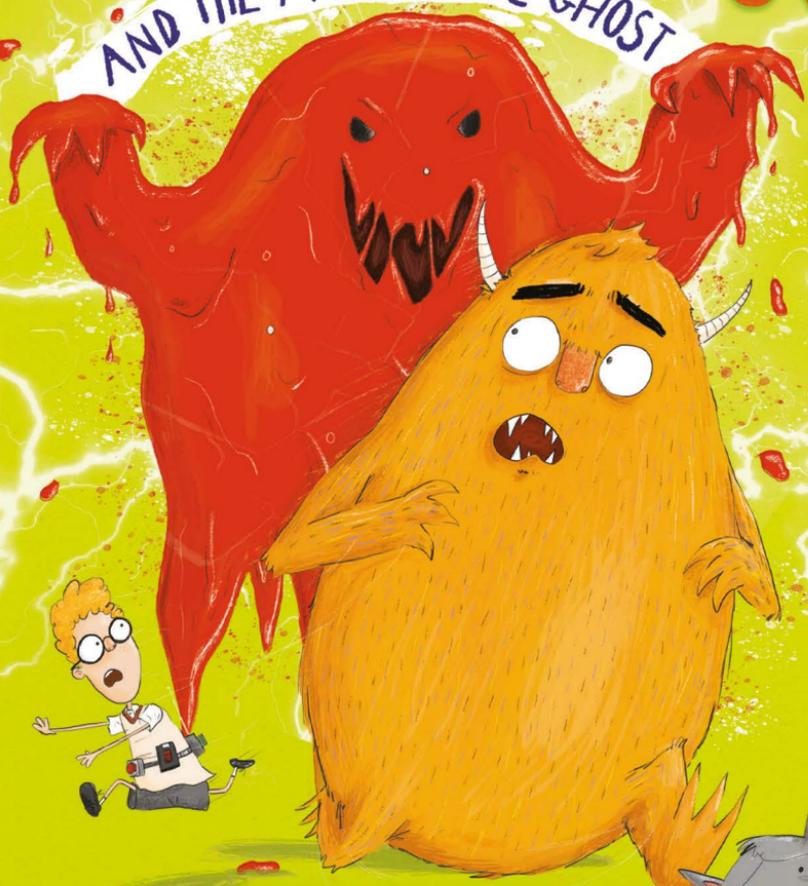




# MONSTER MAX

AND THE MARMALADE GHOST

**WARNING:**  
this book may  
be HAUNTED...



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ILLUSTRATED BY **TOM TINN-DISBURY**



**MONSTER  
MAX**  
AND THE MARMALADE GHOST

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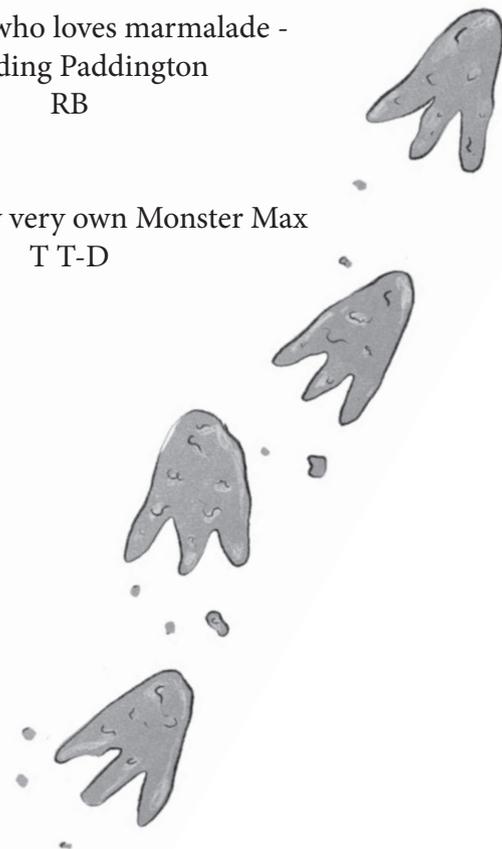
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## Dedication

To anyone who loves marmalade -  
including Paddington  
RB

For Zach, my very own Monster Max  
T T-D



## ALL ABOUT MAX



Max is a very special boy: he can turn himself into a scary monster just by **BURPING**. And he can turn himself back again by **SNEEZING**.

This is because he comes from a land called Krit. Perched on the top of a very

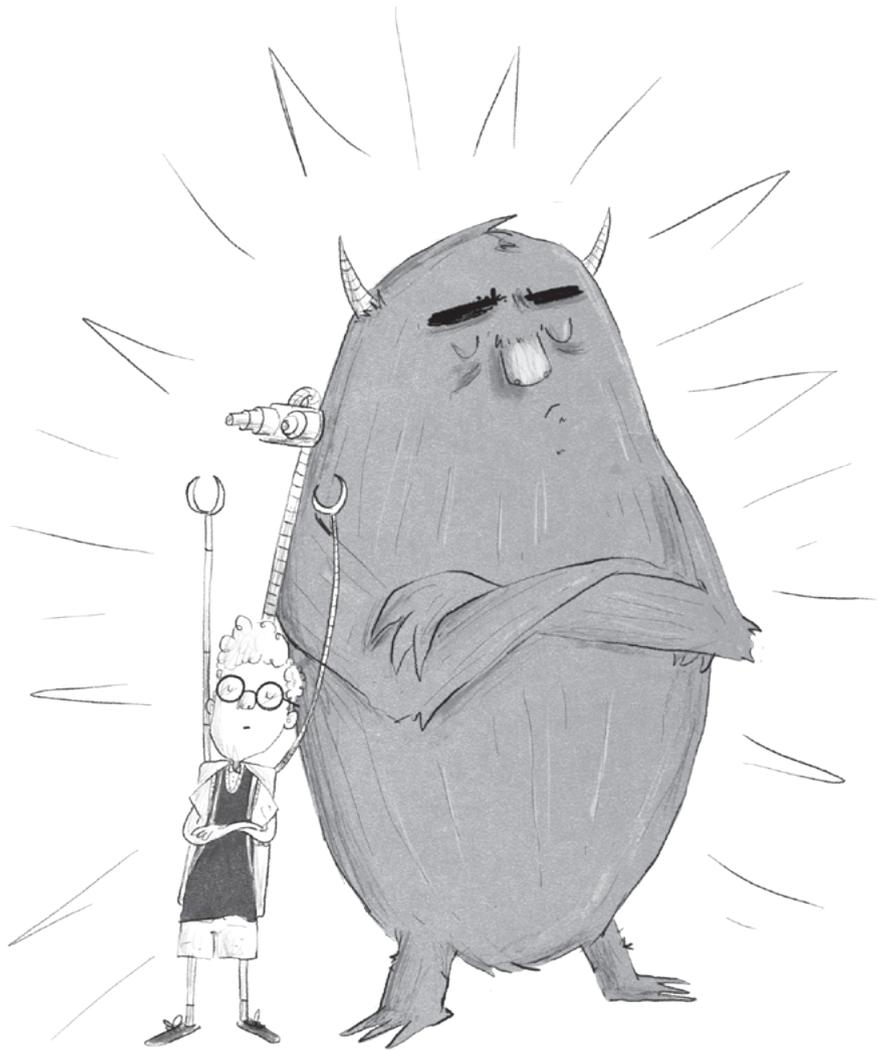
pointy mountain, it's the smallest, most hidden country in the world. Also, in Krit, being able to change into a monster, wolf, bear or bat isn't considered unusual at all. For example, Max's mum comes from Krit and she can turn into a wolf.

Sometimes, Max burps by mistake, which can be a nasty surprise if you are standing next to him in the supermarket. And flowers make Max sneeze, so he often finds himself far from home in just his pants.

These days, he's trying to be a better monster ... with mixed results.

He's even got a logo:





## HELICOPTER STRIKE ... AT NIGHT

Max and his (joint) best friend Peregrine were at Max's house playing MONSTER MAX AND THE MIGHTY PEREGRINE version I.2.

The monitor showed a cold night in dark mountains far, far away from home and the boys were on their deadliest rescue mission yet: Max's parents and his cat, Frankenstein, had been captured and taken to Krit by Fanghorn and his evil Red Eye wolves!

The game had VR and voice control, so it felt completely real. A bit too real, actually...

The boys looked out of their rescue helicopter as it screeched across the starry sky. Then they looked at each other.

‘Shouldn’t the turny thing on top be going around?’ asked Max.

‘If you mean the rotor blades? Then, “yes” would be the answer to that question,’ said Peregrine. ‘Definitely.’

‘And should the skinny bit at the back be on fire?’

‘No. Most certainly not.’

‘Well, I don’t think much of your helicopter building,’ said Max, as both boys peered down at the dark and very scary forest they were about to crash

into. ‘I thought you were meant to be a Genius Inventor and All-Round Smarty Pants.’

‘I am,’ said Peregrine huffily (as huffily as someone who is just about to be squished into the side of a tree can sound). ‘But most helicopters aren’t designed to have angry Rock Giants throw boulders at them. I can’t think of everything.’

‘I suppose you’d like me to burp,’ said Max.

‘That would be useful,’ said Peregrine.

‘Well, Ohhhh Kayyy,’ said Max, making it sound like he was doing Peregrine a massive favour.

So he burped...

There was a flash of light and the VR goggles showed Max the boy double in size and grow several very large teeth and a lot of extra hair, just as he could in real life.

‘Roar!’ said Max the monster. ‘Grat feels great,’ he continued through a mouthful of long, pointy teeth. ‘At least one of us knows grot he’s doing ... um, so grot next?’

Peregrine sighed.

‘We jump out of this thing,’ he replied, ‘before we die horribly.’

‘Gro Kay!’ said Monster Max, grinning from horn to horn ... and they jumped.

Monster Max landed with a tremendous THUMP, making the ground shake, sending up huge clouds of snow. The Hero Jump, he liked to

think of it. Then he looked up, scanning the night sky for any sign of Peregrine.

‘Aaaaarrrrggghhh!’ said Peregrine, as he fell out of the swirling black clouds.

‘Grotcha!’ said Max, catching Peregrine easily. Unfortunately, claws don’t work very well on wet rocks and his long, spiky talons, which he was using to grip the shiny, smooth ground, started to slip.

This would’ve been fine had it not been for the cliff – the great big cliff, right in front of them.

‘Weeee!’ said Monster Max.

‘I don’t think so,’ muttered Peregrine, as two large grabbers sprang out of his backpack and gripped onto a handy tree.

They stopped falling, but a deep roar (that wasn’t Max) echoed from the

craggy rocks above their heads. A very large tree flew into the air.

‘The Rock Giants are still chucking things at us!’ shouted Peregrine as the tree hurtled towards them, its roots and branches shaking in the moonlight.



It landed on Peregrine’s metal grabbers with a horrible crunching noise, instantly smashing them to pieces. Both boys started falling down the cliff again.

The Rock Giant’s large, stony head looked over the edge as they tumbled into the darkness and it waved its fists.

Max wrapped himself into a big furry ball around Peregrine, to protect him from any more flying trees and from whatever they were going to hit when they landed.

‘Ooof, ow, oooof,’ (more rocks), ‘ow, ow ow, ouch, OOOFFF!’ Max added as they finally came to a stop. ‘You alright, Grerigrine?’

‘Yes, I suppose.’ Peregrine looked a little pale but fine.

Up ahead, in the distance, looking like a very large needle, was their destination: the mysterious mountain of Krit.

‘We still have to get up there and rescue your parents from Fanghorn,’ said Peregrine. He glanced at the timer on his Fanghorn Alert Radar Tracker (FART). ‘We’ve only got two minutes and thirty-seven seconds before Fanghorn and the rest of the Red Eye wolves make them into dinner.’

‘Grat Fanghorn is grrorrible,’ said Max. ‘I think it’s time to get out of here.’

‘Quite.’ Peregrine pressed a button on the badge of the school blazer he wore even on Saturdays. Instantly Peregrine inflated, like a giant beachball with a tiny head. He started to float up.

‘Hold onto my legs!’ he shouted at Max.

They soared over the Rock Giant’s surprised head.

After a few minutes of holding onto Peregrine’s incredibly shiny shoes, Max (who wasn’t too fond of heights) finally plucked up the courage to open one eye in his VR goggles. He gasped.

Krit!

Thin, streaky clouds parted to uncover the moon. It lit up the top of the mountain and the tiny and mysterious Kingdom of Krit: a secret world, hidden by clouds and forests and magic. Home to Ice Witches, Sprites and Shape-shifters. Max’s mother’s country and also his, he supposed, although he lived in England, near Oxford.

‘There’s the castle stronghold,’ said Peregrine. ‘We’re going down.’



He started to let the air out of his suit and they drifted towards a tall, fairytale castle by a lake that reflected the stars like a mirror. ‘We need to get inside and get to the main tower – that’s where your parents and Frankenstein will be,’ said Peregrine. ‘I’ll aim for the courtyard.’

They landed with a bump as Peregrine let the last of the air out of his inflatable clothes.

‘I don’t think that’s regulation school uniform,’ said Max.

Before Peregrine could think up a suitably cutting answer, a pair of red eyes lit up in front of them. Hundreds more red eyes blinked on like lasers: all pointed in their direction. A howl came from one of the castle battlements, followed by the scraping of claws on

cobblestones as the ground shook.

‘Uh oh,’ said Peregrine.

‘Yep,’ said Max, who was far too scared to burp at the sight of hundreds of evil Red Eye wolves charging towards them.



**GAME OVER ...  
YOU LOST ... THANK  
YOU FOR PLAYING  
MONSTER MAX AND THE  
MIGHTY PEREGRINE**

They sat staring at the blank screen. Max had to admit Peregrine had created a great game, but he couldn't see how they would ever get past the wolves, even with Max's monster strength and Peregrine's inventions.

'We're never going to get into the tower. This game's impossible,' he said grumpily.

'We just need to practise,' said Peregrine. 'One day we might have to do this for real and we need to be ready.'

Max groaned: practise = boring in his view.

Just then, Max's cat and (joint) best friend, Frankenstein, strolled into the library of Max's strange and unusual house, which was ordinary on the outside and huge on the inside. The

library was where the boys had recently set up their Centre of Operations for 'Protecting and Doing Good Stuff'.

The cat yawned.

He looked at Max, then at Peregrine. Then he yawned again, as if making a point.

'Let's go out,' said Max.