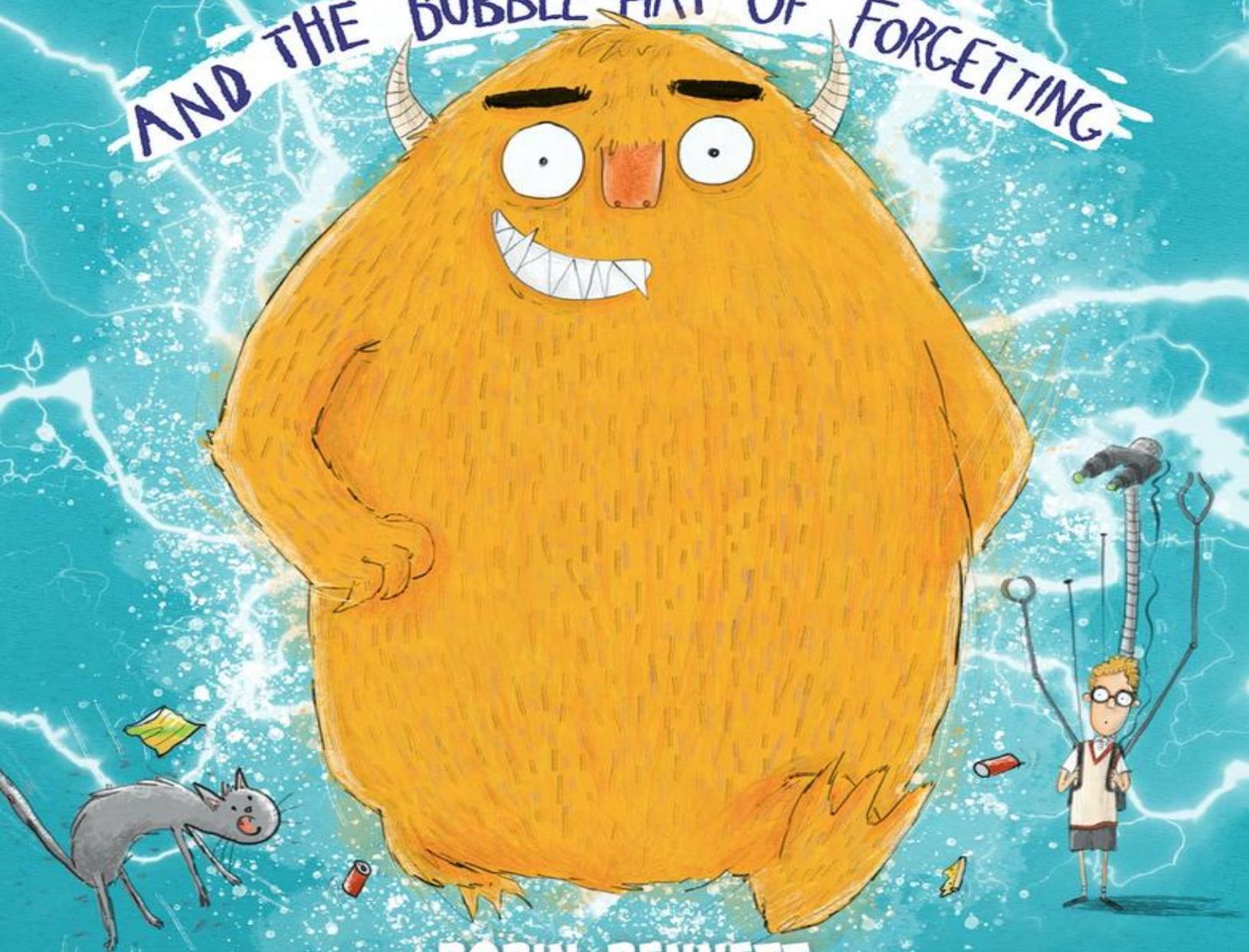


'BONKERS FROM START TO FINISH' PHILIP ARDAGH

MONSTER MAX

AND THE BOBBLE HAT OF FORGETTING



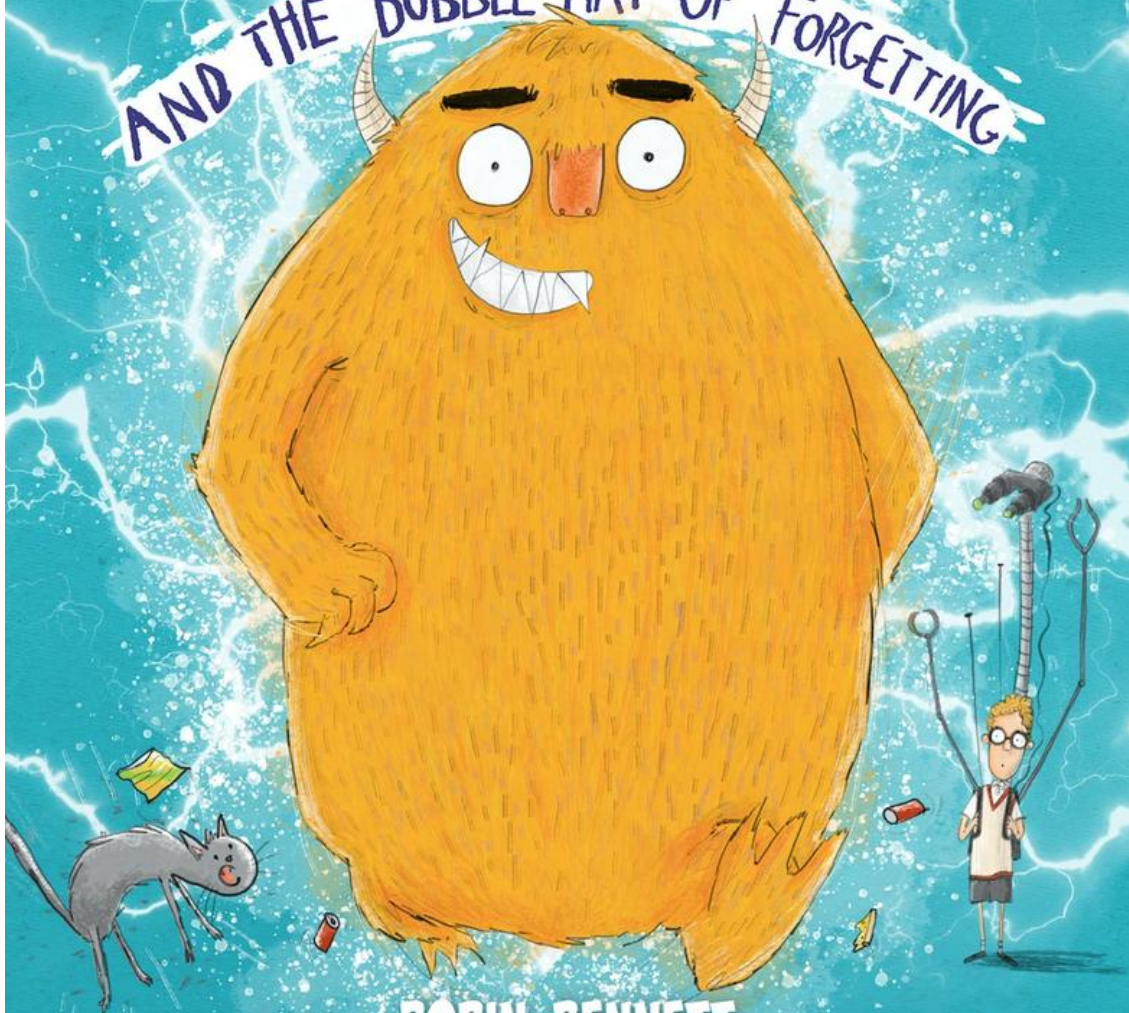
ROBIN BENNETT

ILLUSTRATED BY TOM TINN-DISBURY

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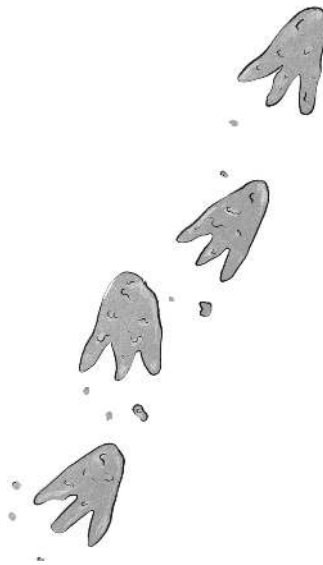
**ILLUSTRATED BY
TOM TINN-DISBURY**



Dedication

For our three monsters:
Jude, Victor and Hortense
RB

For Toby, a Monster Max in the making
T T-D



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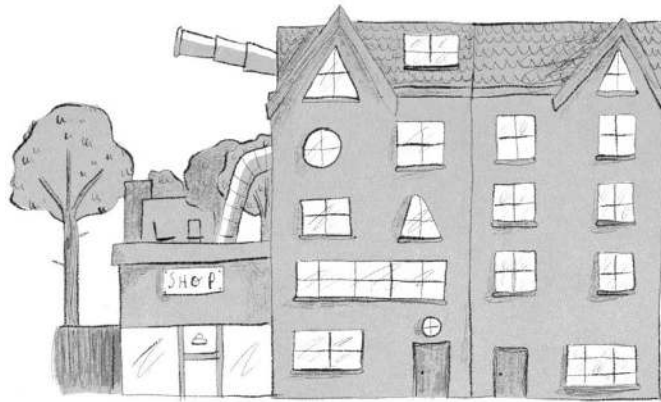
MEET MAX

This is Max.

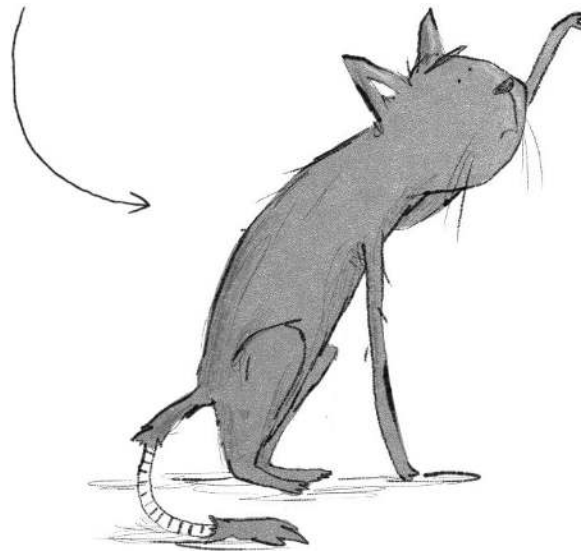


Everything normal here.
Nothing weird about Max.

Max lives with his parents, David and Sally Forbes, who own a normal terraced house, on an ordinary street in a quiet (and very respectable) town.



This is Max's cat, Frankenstein.



And here's another picture, taken of Max and Frankenstein just last week.



OK, so there's something going on here.

You see, Max is sometimes a boy, who does all the boy things: like go to school, occasionally remember to do his homework, pretend to brush his teeth ... BUT sometimes he is a monster who does all the monster things: like jump out of unlikely places, roar loudly, eat whole dustbins.

When he is a monster, Max sometimes forgets that Frankenstein is his best friend and wonders instead what cat tastes like...

Horrible - luckily.



‘You have to stop turning yourself into a big hairy monster,’ said Max’s dad, one morning at breakfast. ‘There’s a report in the paper. People are *saying* things.’

‘I can’t help it,’ said Max pouring himself some cereal.

[*Important Note:* This is not completely true. Max is very special: he can turn himself into a monster whenever he wants - he just has to **BURP**. And he can turn himself back into a small, grubby boy again just by **SNEEZING**. He has taught himself how, but (as you will find out) sometimes he burps by mistake and Max is allergic to flowers, which make him sneeze, so when he turns back into a boy again, it is hardly ever the right moment.]

‘Then you’ll have to work something out,’ his dad continued. ‘It says here that last night something that may have been a *bloodcurdling monster*:

- scared several old ladies at bus stops all over Oxford
- and climbed a tall statue in the park and shouted ‘Bum!’

Luckily, the paper says it was probably someone in a costume ... although a Mrs Mudford-Sock of Mamble Drive is sure it was next door's poodle. But you can't keep becoming a monster and scaring people.'

'I read a book, too.'

'Well, reading books is good,' Max's dad admitted. 'Well done.'

'See? You should look on the bright side more often, Dad,' said Max.

'Hmm. Anyway,' said his dad, 'you need an M.O....'

'Half a *Moo*? Like if your cow's in a hurry?'

'No: a modus operandi. It's a purpose. Whenever you turn into a monster you think of something good to do...'
Max's dad held up a picture in the paper. It showed a picture of the local chip van upside down in a duck pond. 'Instead of this.'

'I think that was Frankenstein...'

'No, it wasn't,' said Max's dad.

That evening, while he was watching TV, Max *did* think about things. It was fun turning himself into a Hairy Beast. He could run like the wind, he was super strong, he could climb up buildings and eat anything ... except Frankenstein. Best of all, no one could tell him what to do.

He went to the kitchen via the hidden staircase in his room and picked up the newspaper that was lying on the table. Broken lampposts, smashed windows, metal statues of important people bent to look like they were picking their nose...

It was strange. Max couldn't remember doing any of it, but he was the only invincible monster in his town, so it must have been him, surely?

His dad was right, he needed to be more responsible. Besides anything else, he did not want to get his parents