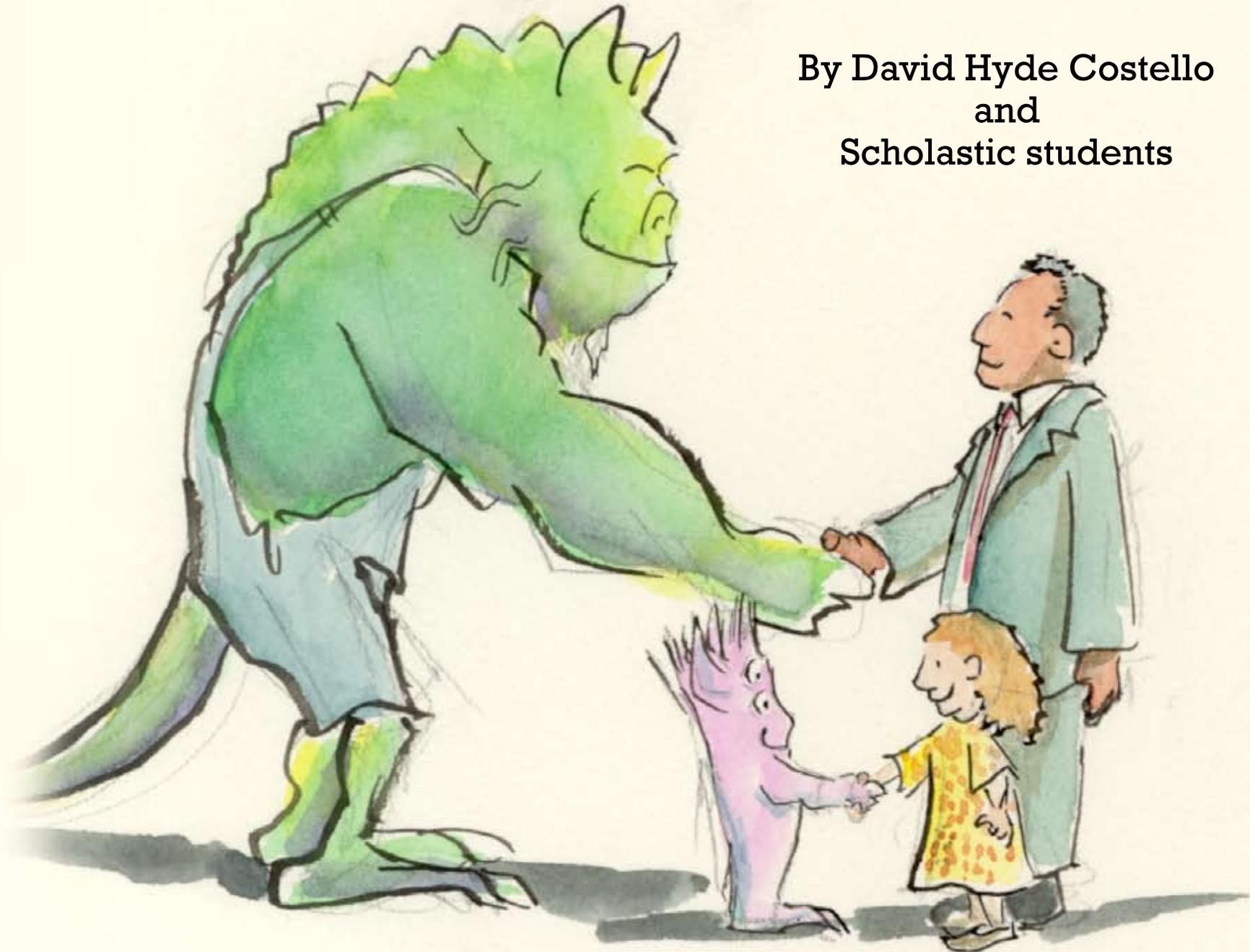


Mr. Allgunky and the Missing Monster

By David Hyde Costello
and
Scholastic students



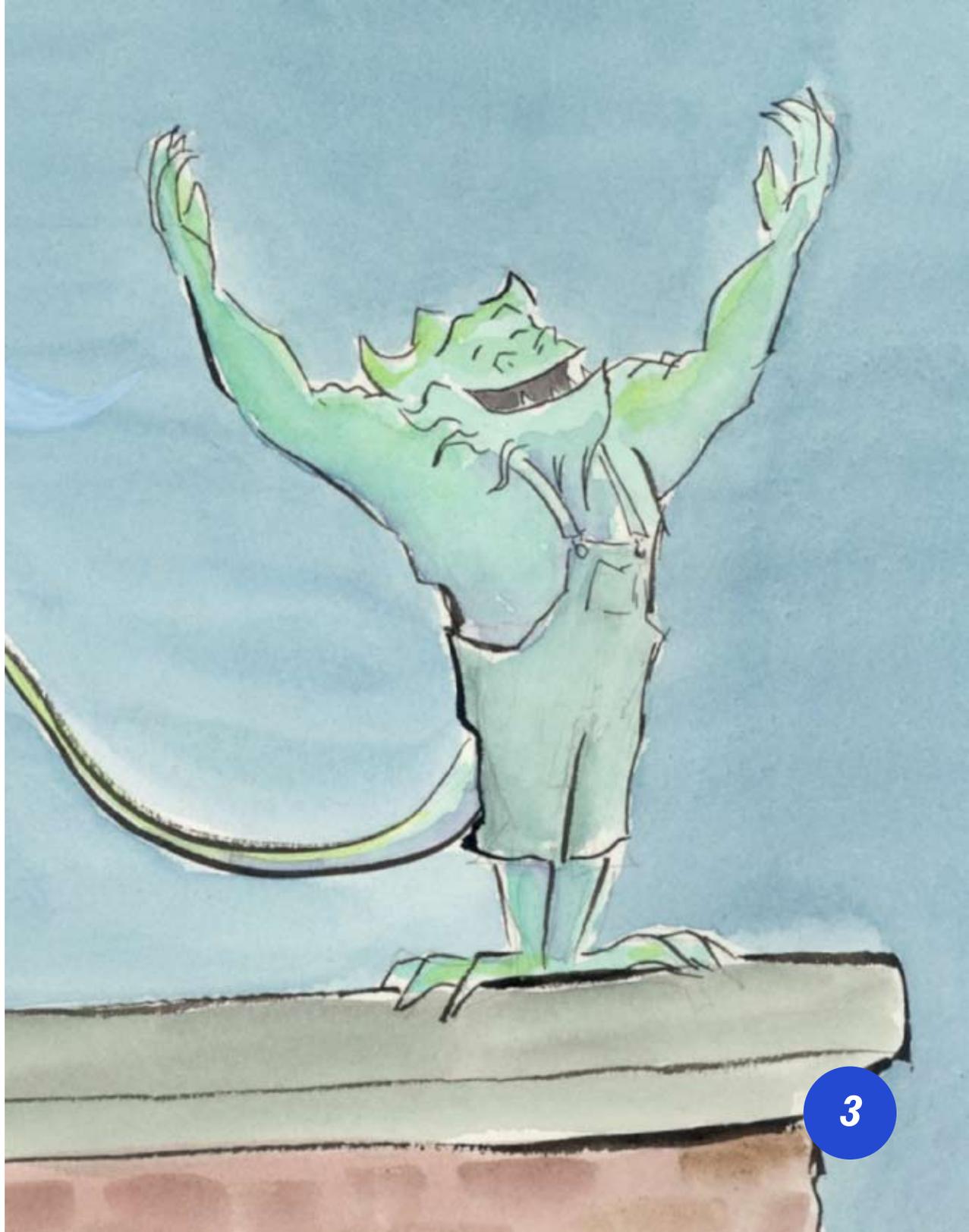
Mr. Allgunky was the school janitor. He never said much, but the school was always spic and span and everyone knew that if you needed a light bulb changed or help lifting some heavy boxes, Mr. Allgunky would be there with a smile.





He liked being helpful to the teachers and students, but when everyone went home and the moon rose over the school, Mr. Allgunky could become his true self.

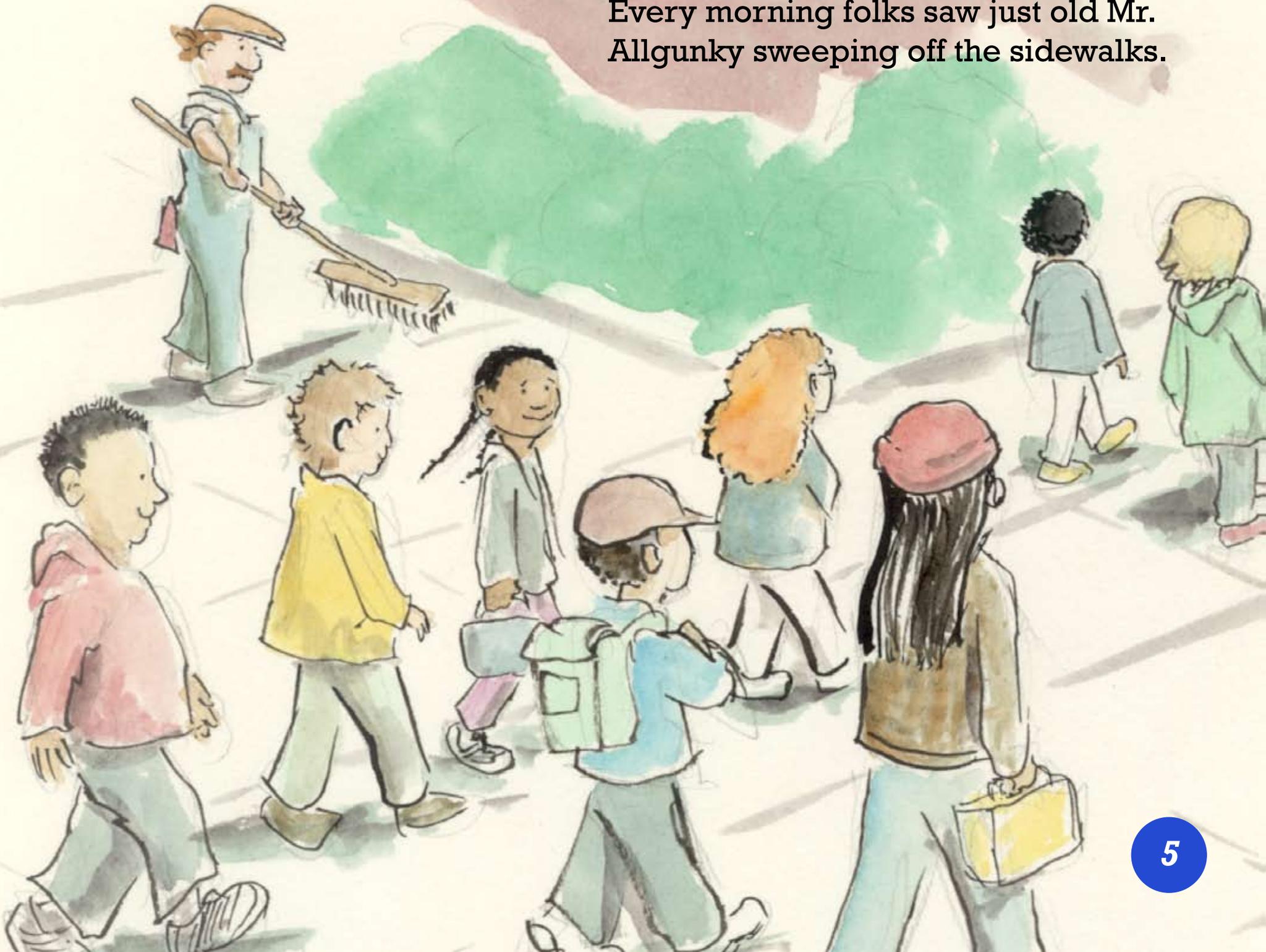
And how he loved to be a monster! He could swing on the gymnasium climbing rope. He could jump all around the playground. He could bellow out his monster songs to the moon



There was just one problem.
He was lonely.



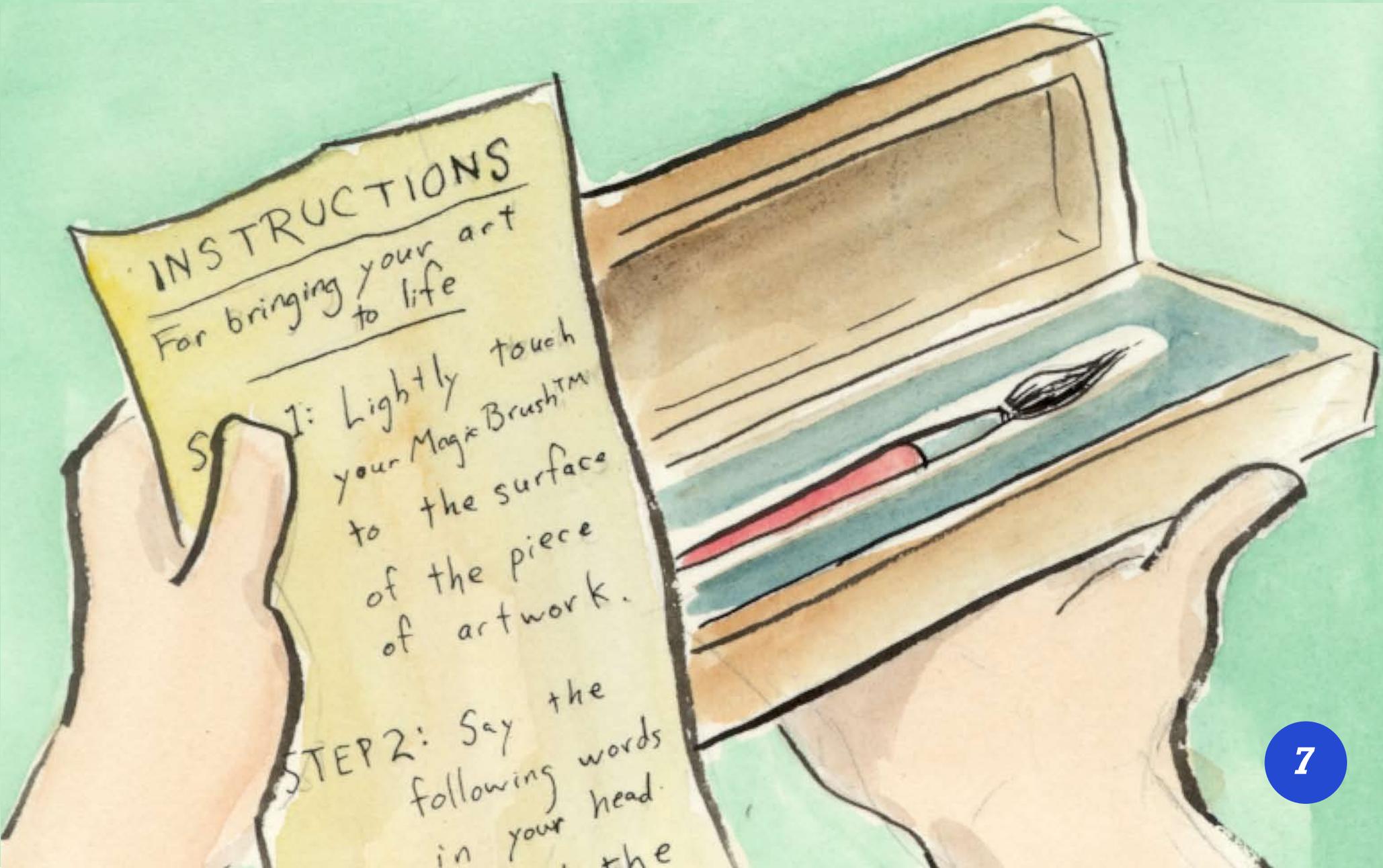
Every morning folks saw just old Mr.
Allgunky sweeping off the sidewalks.



One day while Mr. Allgunky was taking in an exhibit of student artwork, one series of pictures caught his eye.



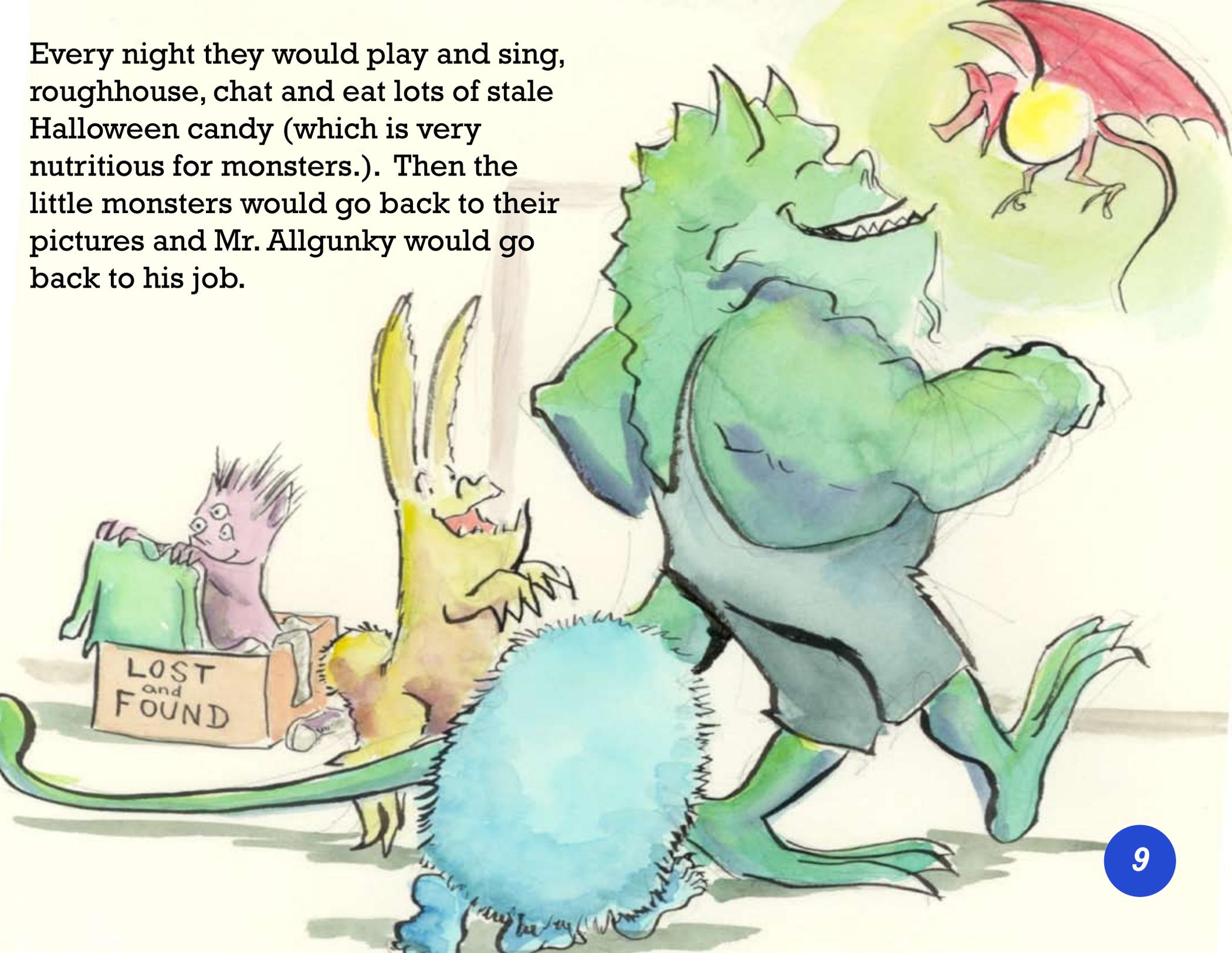
He hurried to his room in the school basement and found a very special box he had had for many years. Monsters often acquire a bit of magic in their travels. Several years ago Mr. Allgunky had won a magic paintbrush in a monster arm wrestling tournament.



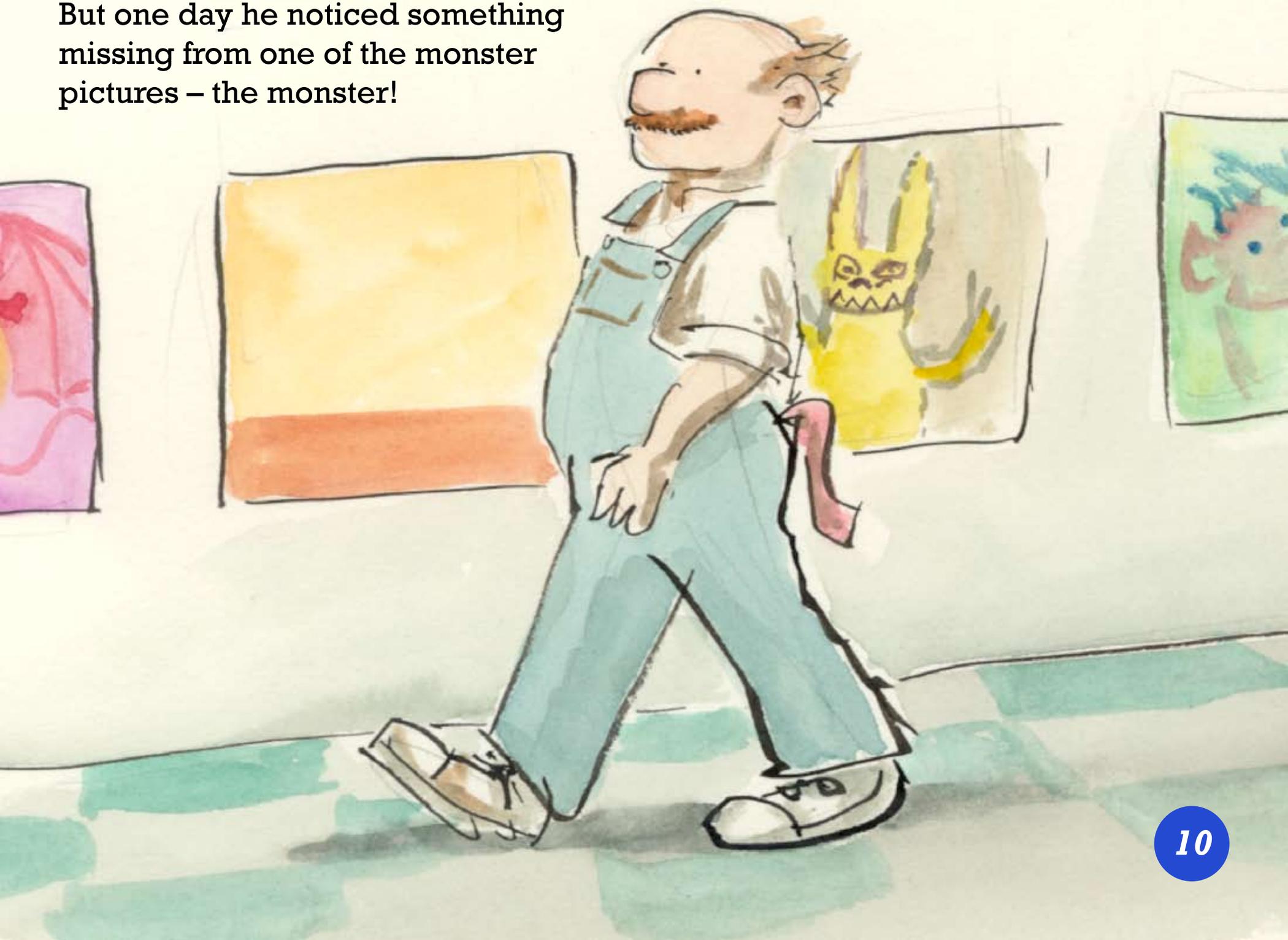
That night he touched the brush to the children's art. It worked!



Every night they would play and sing, roughhouse, chat and eat lots of stale Halloween candy (which is very nutritious for monsters.). Then the little monsters would go back to their pictures and Mr. Allgunky would go back to his job.



But one day he noticed something missing from one of the monster pictures – the monster!



This could be a big problem.



The teachers didn't seem to notice anything amiss at first. But eventually, with the help of some observant children, everyone caught on.



This was going to be tricky to explain, but maybe the truth was best.



Maybe not.



The teachers were terrified at first.
But eventually, with the help of some
brave and sensible children, they
settled down.





Recess was even more fun than usual that day.



But a school isn't really the best environment for monsters. The teachers and Mr. Allgunky were perplexed and troubled at first, but with the help of some level-headed and clever children they came up with a great idea.





The kids could just make more pictures of places for the monsters to live, food for the monsters to eat and anything else a monster could want.

Now when everyone goes home and the moon rises over the school, Mr. All-gunky visits the monsters in their pictures.



In the morning he goes back to work.



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