



**ZEPHYR**

an imprint of Head of Zeus



# Chapter One

Where we meet  
Skittle, one of the  
young Tindims of  
Rubbish Island, and  
her furry, purry  
pet, Pinch.



hello!

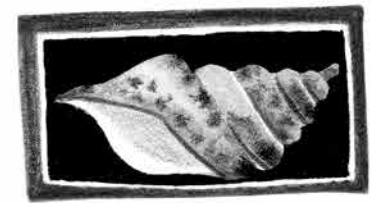
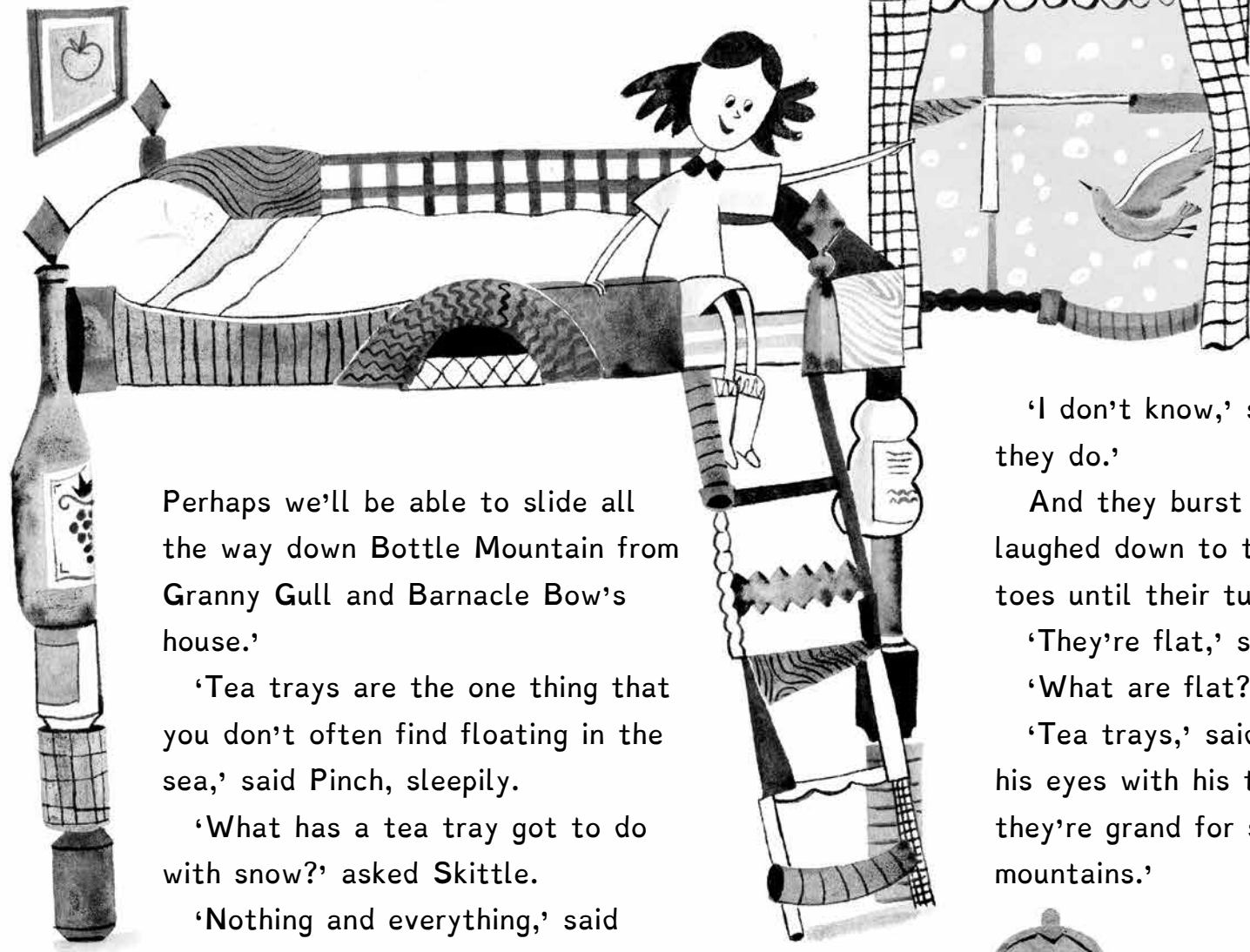


Skittle climbed out of bed, pulled back the curtains and couldn't believe what she saw. She had wished for snow for ages, and here it was. Big, thick snowflakes – lots of them. Rubbish Island, she thought, must have sailed into icy waters by mistake. She hadn't seen snow for so long she was worried it might have gone away.

‘Wake up, Pinch,’ she said.

Pinch was curled in an old jewellery box, his long, furry tail wrapped round him.

‘It's Tunaday,’ said Skittle, which is what Tindims call Tuesday. ‘And look – it's snowing. Really huge flakes. That means Rubbish Island will turn white.’



‘Why?’  
asked Skittle.

‘I don’t know,’ said Pinch. ‘But  
they do.’

And they burst out laughing. They  
laughed down to the tips of their  
toes until their tummies jelly-jiggled.

‘They’re flat,’ said Pinch.

‘What are flat?’ said Skittle.

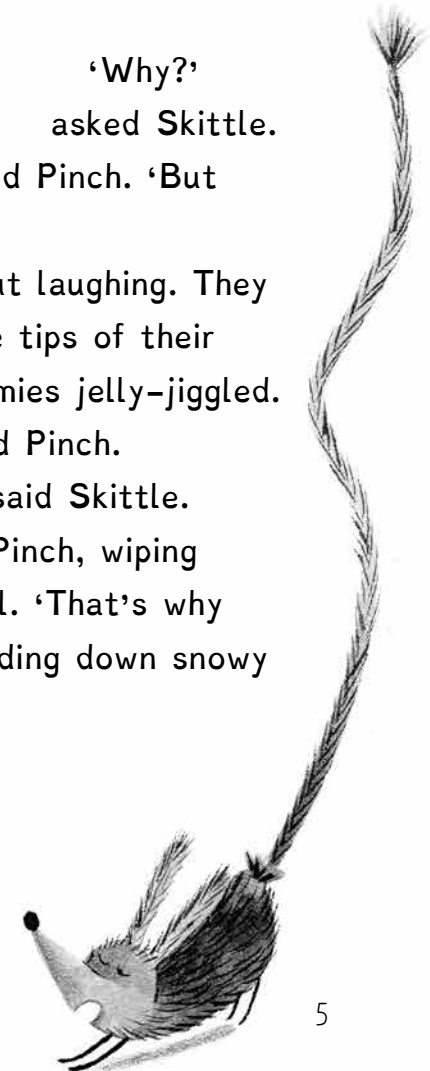
‘Tea trays,’ said Pinch, wiping  
his eyes with his tail. ‘That’s why  
they’re grand for sliding down snowy  
mountains.’

Perhaps we’ll be able to slide all  
the way down Bottle Mountain from  
Granny Gull and Barnacle Bow’s  
house.’

‘Tea trays are the one thing that  
you don’t often find floating in the  
sea,’ said Pinch, sleepily.

‘What has a tea tray got to do  
with snow?’ asked Skittle.

‘Nothing and everything,’ said  
Pinch. ‘The Long Legs put things on  
them. Like cakes.’







Skittle put on her red-and-white checked dress. She did up her useful belt, in which she kept a helpful hook and her best pencil.

Tindims are much smaller than humans, who they call the Long Legs. Human children they call the Little Long Legs.

She helped Pinch do up the buttons on his waistcoat. Paws and buttons don't mix.

Last of all, Skittle collected her toothbrush. The Long Legs use toothbrushes to brush their teeth, but Tindims have many more uses for them, such as polishing and scrubbing and other things that end in **ING**. She decided to leave it at home as this was a snowy sort of day, not an **ING** sort of day.





When they were quite ready, Skittle said, 'Do you know it's only two days until the Brightsea Festival?'

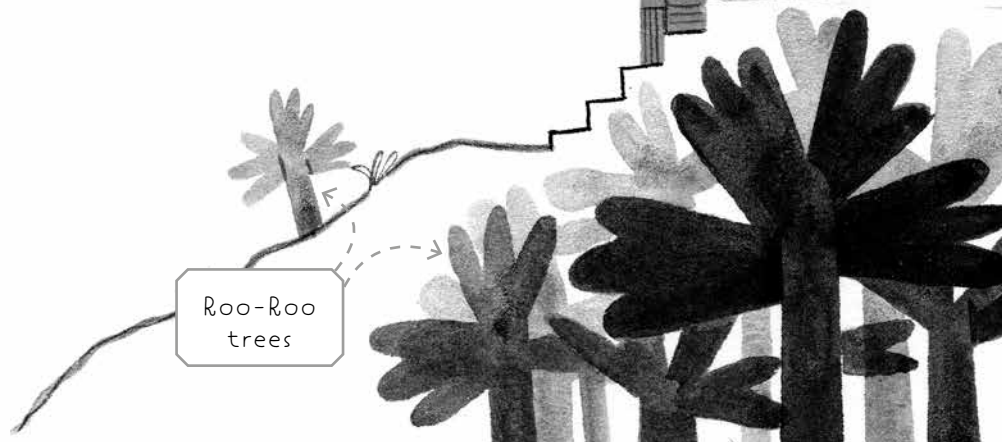
And with that happy thought they set off up the staircase to the kitchen.

As they went, they sang a Tindim song.

*Oh, the sun is shining  
on the sea.  
What rubbish will the tide  
bring me?*



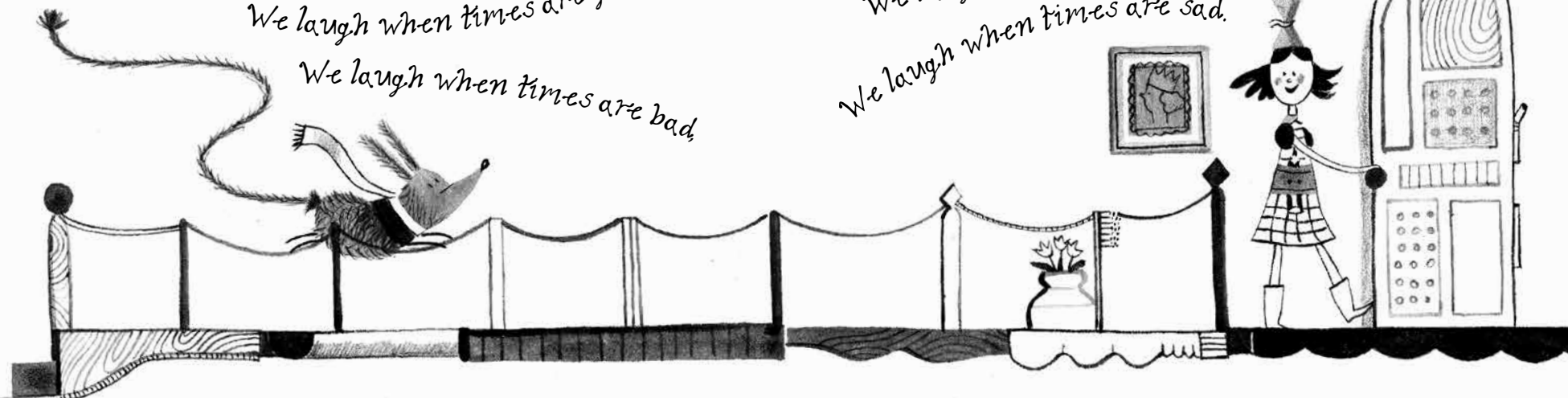
Skittle's house was at the top of Rubbish Island. If she stood outside, she could see the whole island. On one side, the Lake of Still Water and the Roo-Roo Tree Wood. And the craggy edges of the island, right round to Turtle Bay. On the other side, all she could see was Bottle Mountain.



Roo-Roo  
trees

*We find most things funny,  
We laugh when times are good,  
We laugh when times are bad.*

*We laugh when it is sunny,  
We laugh when times are sad.*



The house itself was higgledy-piggledy. Skittle's bedroom was downstairs and the kitchen was upstairs. Pinch was counting his steps and stopped on the seventh stair. This was handy as he couldn't count past ten. He had left something important behind. He unrolled his tail all the way back to the bedroom and picked up his scarf. With one twitch he wrapped it three times around his neck.

They sang as they went up the stairs.

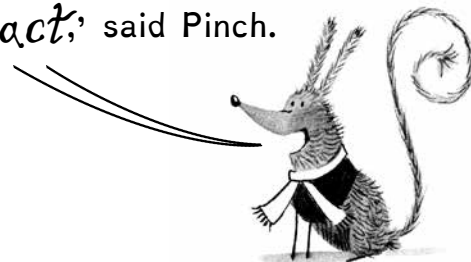
Skittle stopped at the kitchen door.

She thought for a moment. 'Perhaps we should have sung *we don't laugh when times are bad or sad?*'

'That doesn't sound so good,' said Pinch. 'But I agree, it's all right to feel sad.'

'Yes,' said Skittle. 'But we're not sad today, not with the snow. Today is a day for laughter.'

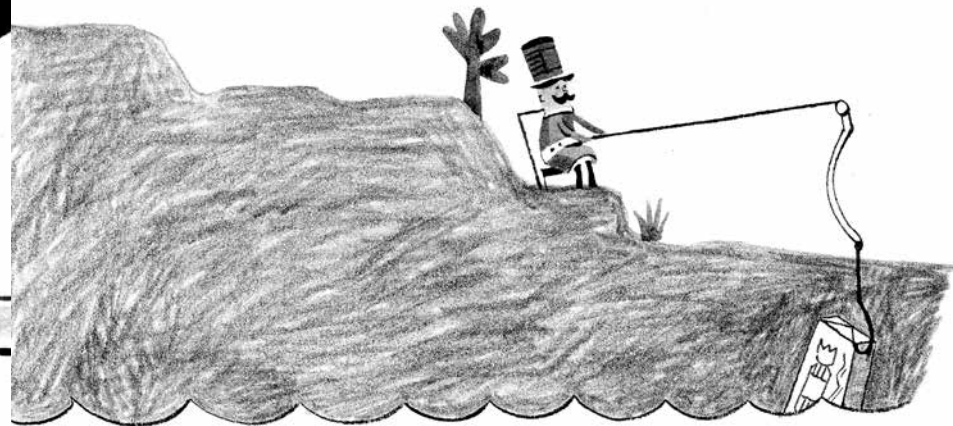
*'That's a fact,'* said Pinch.





## Chapter Two

In which we meet Skittle's mum, Admiral Bonnet, and her dad, Captain Spoons. And we learn that Tindims are top recyclers.



Not long ago, Captain Spoons, Skittle's dad, had fished a large plastic bag out of the sea. Inside were five soggy boxes with the word **CRACKERS** on the lid. Admiral Bonnet, Skittle's mum, had no idea what **CRACKERS** meant, but she liked the colourful paper hats inside. As with all wet things, they had to be dried. Only then would the Tindims know if they were useful. Some things just stay a mess, but luckily not the paper hats.

'It shows us,' said Admiral Bonnet, 'that the Long Legs are a strange bunch.'



Skittle's mum and dad had used the paper hats to wallpaper the kitchen and it looked most jolly. Captain Spoons had made a light from the plastic trinkets they'd found in the crackers and hung it above the kitchen table. Their table was made from driftwood and their chairs from plastic cups.



'Good neeptide, you two,' said Captain Spoons. That's the Tindim way of saying good morning.

Captain Spoons was in charge of the frying pan. He tossed a pancake into the air. Skittle grabbed a plate and caught the pancake just in time.





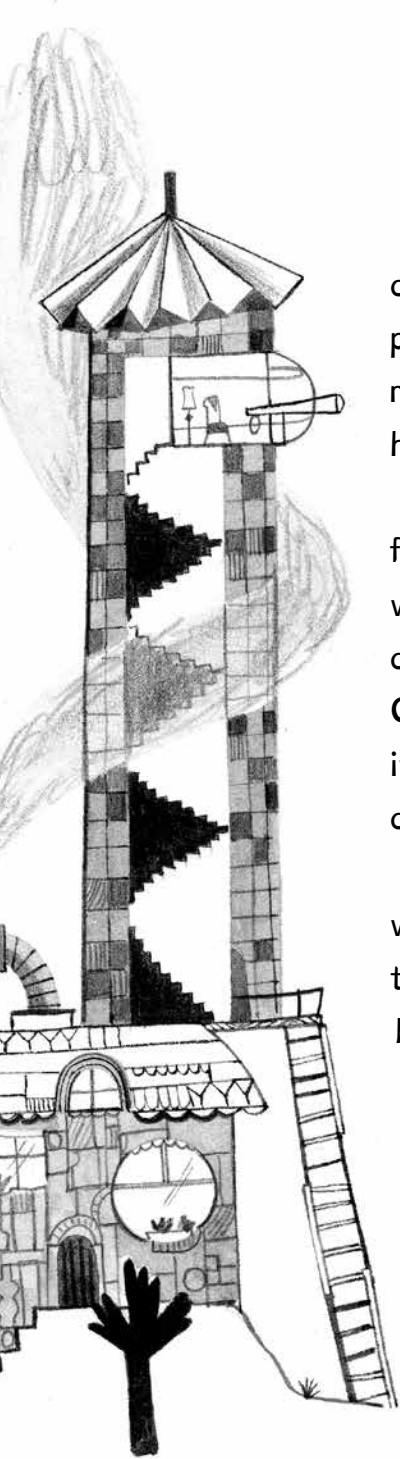
The Tindims were recyclers. In fact, they were recyclers well before the word had even found a plastic bag to crawl out of. They'd been around as long as the Vikings. That's a very long time indeed. The Vikings, being hairy and furious, had sea battles. It was from a piece of a longboat shipwreck that the Tindims began to build Rubbish Island. Then came sailors and pirates, and galleons with tall sails and treasure chests. They'd left lots floating about for the Tindims to keep building with.

The Long Legs didn't know about the Tindims. Years passed and times changed.



Instead of glass and wood, along came plastic in different shapes and sizes. The Tindims began to realise that everything they thought was useful was rubbish to the Long Legs. For a long time, that didn't matter. They carried on recycling. Their motto was 'Rubbish today is treasure tomorrow'. But now with the sea full of plastic bottles the Tindims wondered if they could still be called treasure.





The Tindims made a pile of plastic bottles. The pile became a mound, the mound became a hill, the hill became a mountain!

Their island had always floated, bobbing in the waves, and it was the job of Admiral Bonnet and Captain Spoons to steer it safely through the oceans.

Captain Spoons' wheelhouse was at the top of a tower that he'd built onto their house. He reached it by way of the kitchen and a twisty-turny staircase. From there, he made sure



the island didn't bump into rocks, cruise liners or Long Leg divers. A thin tube near the captain's chair went all the way down through the island to the engine room. Captain Spoons was able to talk to Spokes in the engine room. But right now, there was no point in pulling up the anchor and starting the engine because of Bottle Mountain.



Captain Spoons said, 'We shouldn't be in a snowstorm.'

'We should leave tomorrow if we're to find some sunshine for the Brightsea Festival,' said Admiral Bonnet.

'Yes,' said Skittle. 'The sacks will be handed out then.'

That is the part the Tindims most looked forward to. On the neeptide

of Brightsea Eve each Tindim is given a sack full of things that had been fished out of the sea. It is up to each Tindim to use what they find in the sack to make fish costumes. The Tindim with the emptiest sack is crowned the winner.

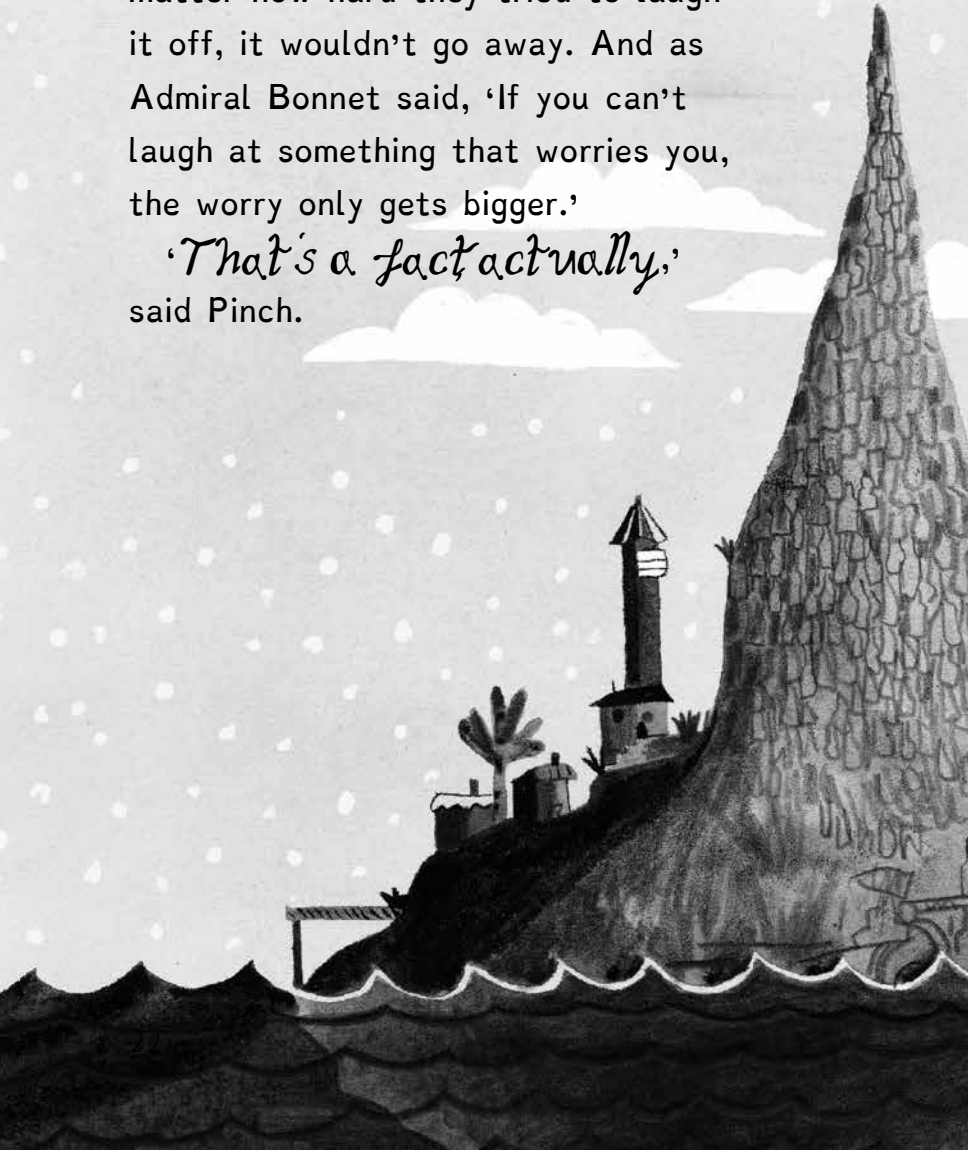
'But the problem is Bottle Mountain - it's blocking our view of the sea,' said Captain Spoons. 'It's impossible to see where we're going.'





It was a problem that cast a long shadow over the little Tindims. No matter how hard they tried to laugh it off, it wouldn't go away. And as Admiral Bonnet said, 'If you can't laugh at something that worries you, the worry only gets bigger.'

*'That's a fact actually,'*  
said Pinch.



## Chapter Three

Where we discover  
there are too  
many plastic  
bottles, even for  
the Tindims.

