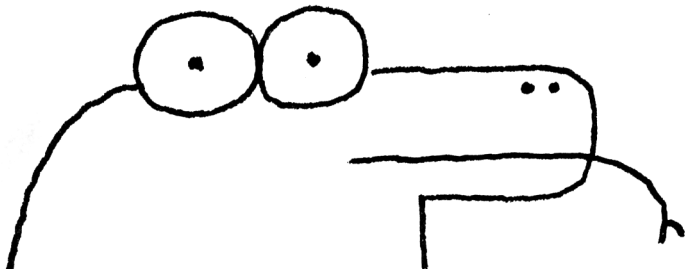
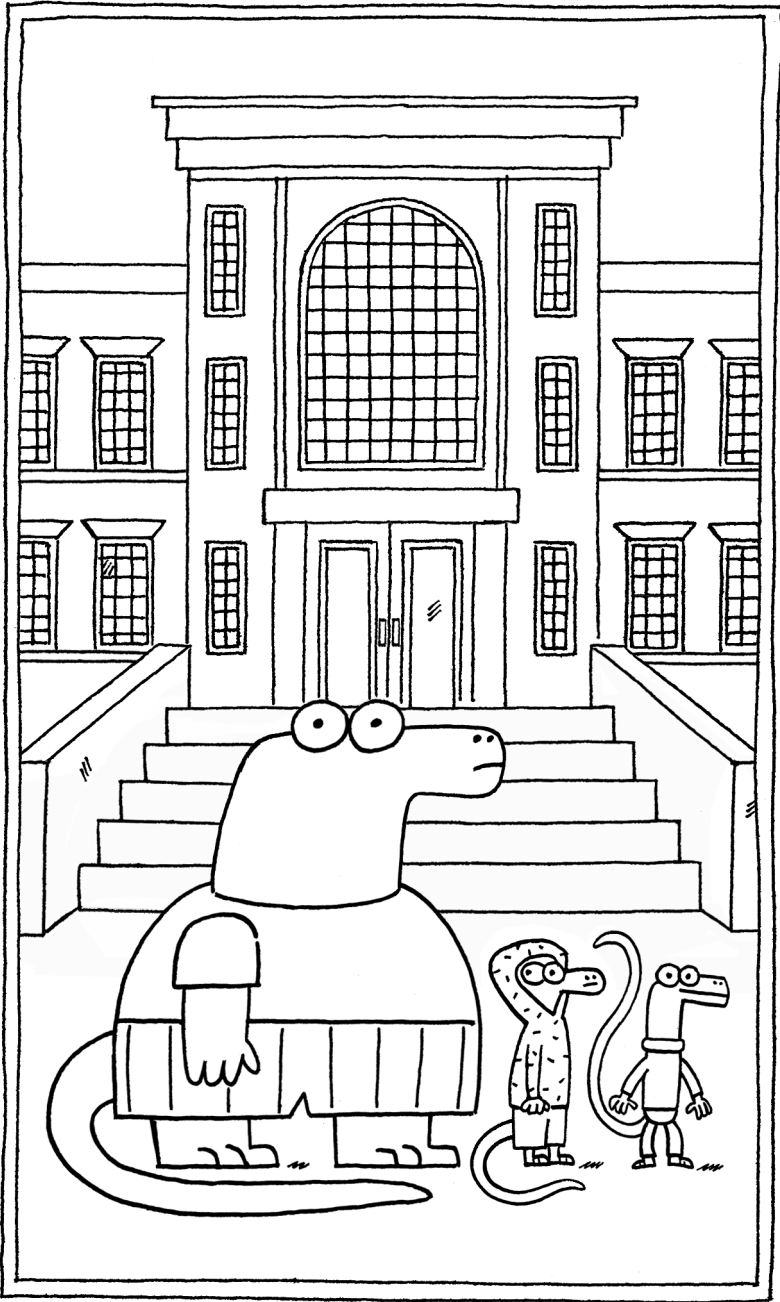


CHRONICLES  
OF A  
LIZARD  
NOBODY





**CHRONICLES OF A**  
**LIZARD**  
**NOBODY**

**PATRICK**  
**NESS**

**ILLUSTRATED BY**  
**TIM MILLER**

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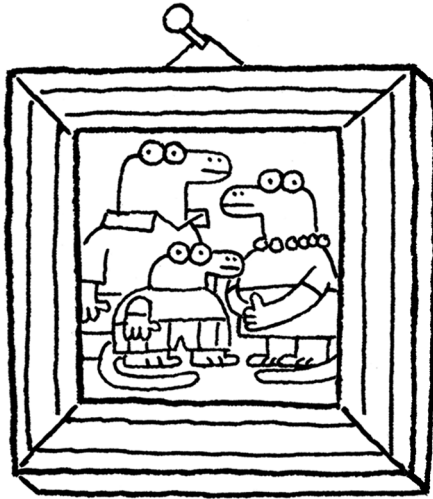
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For Shamim and Hanan,  
Beloved friends, film-makers,  
mothers to godsons



# 1

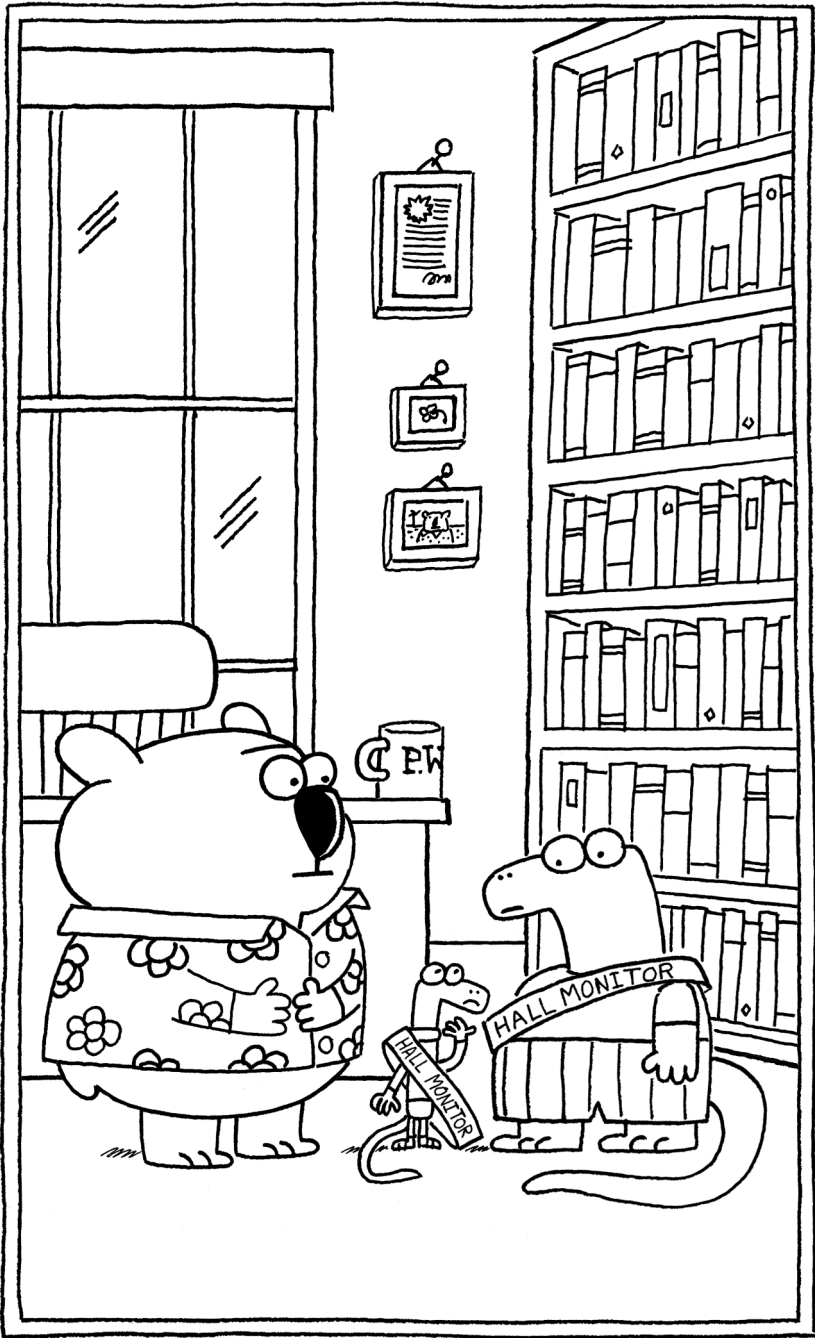
## HALL MONITORS

“I’m making you both Hall Monitors,” Principal Wombat said, though she quickly added, “This isn’t because you’re monitor lizards.”

Zeke couldn’t help himself. “But all the other Hall Monitors have been—”

“Coincidence,” Principal Wombat interrupted. “You’ll make sure other students aren’t in the hallways when they shouldn’t be. Which is why we *coincidentally* call it monitoring.” She looked slightly flustered, but what did it matter if a Principal was flustered? What sort of kid was going to point this out?

“You look flustered,” said Daniel. Zeke elbowed him in the side. “Ow!”





“It’s all pretty easy,” Principal Wombat continued, as if Daniel hadn’t said anything. “If you see someone out of class when you’re monitoring, you ask them for their hall pass. If they have one, all is well. If they don’t, you send them to me. Any questions?”

“I have a question,” Daniel said. “Is it true you can use your butt as armour?”

“Yes,” said Principal Wombat. “It’s a wombat thing. Anything else?”

“What if they don’t have a hall pass and they don’t want to go see you?” Zeke asked.

“Then you take down their name, and you tell me they didn’t want to go.”

Zeke thought about this. “This isn’t going to make us very popular.”

“But you’ll be serving the school.” Principal Wombat smiled. “And you’ll be making me happy.”

“Well, I mean, that’s a nice thing,” Zeke said, “but I can’t help but think it’s still something

to do with us being monitor lizards, me and Daniel.”

Daniel nodded in agreement, then said, “Getting back to the butt. Is it made of steel? Like a tank?”

Principal Wombat shook her head. “Just bone. If we’re under threat, we go head-first into a hole in the ground, and our backside protects us from predators.”

“Cool,” Daniel said, appreciatively.

“Because Alicia is a monitor lizard, too,” Zeke said, referring to the only other Hall Monitor currently in school.

“Another coincidence. Besides, I thought you’d be happy to be Hall Monitors with your friend.”

“Just because we’re lizards doesn’t mean we’re automatically friends.”

Principal Wombat looked surprised. “You’re not friends with Alicia?”

“Of course we’re friends with Alicia,” Zeke said, “but not just because she’s another lizard.”

“Oh, good,” Principal Wombat said, relieved. “I do like my students to get along. Now, you’ll perform your duties in the morning after first bell and before and after lunch. You’ll get special permission to be late to your own classrooms! And” – she looked really excited now – “you get sashes!”

She held out two red sashes. Daniel and Zeke just stared at them. She tossed them across the desk with her furry, stumpy arms, basically throwing them over Zeke and Daniel’s heads. The one for Daniel came all the way down to his knees, but Zeke’s barely went past his shoulders.

Zeke fingered the plastic material and noticed it was slightly stained.

Daniel looked up at Principal Wombat. “Can we get butt armour instead?”

## 2

# MONITORING THE HALLS

“I still think it’s because we’re monitor lizards,” Zeke said, standing in the hallway before lunch with Daniel and Alicia, all three in their grubby, red sashes of various fits.

“What’s because we’re monitor lizards?” Alicia asked, absent-mindedly chewing her gum.

“That Principal Wombat made us all Hall Monitors.”

“Nah, that’s just coincidence.” She moved her gum from one cheek to another. “So, it’s not the big kids you have to worry about,” she said. “It’s the little ones. They’re either crying about something or they think you’re their mum.”

Alicia stared down the hallway as she said

this, so Zeke wasn't sure if he was supposed to respond or not. Alicia was always like this, never quite looking you in the eye, possibly never even listening to you, almost certainly thinking about something else. Zeke and Daniel had known her since nursery school, when they were teeny, tiny lizards, no bigger than newts, forty per cent tail and fifty per cent eyes. They'd shared an incubator – it was just a white towel under a light bulb – but once you shared an incubator with a lizard, that lizard stayed your friend.

“Do we get to blow them up if they don’t have their hall pass?” Daniel asked, hopefully.

“Yes,” Alicia said.

“No!” Zeke said. “Principal Wombat said to send them to her if they don’t have a pass.”

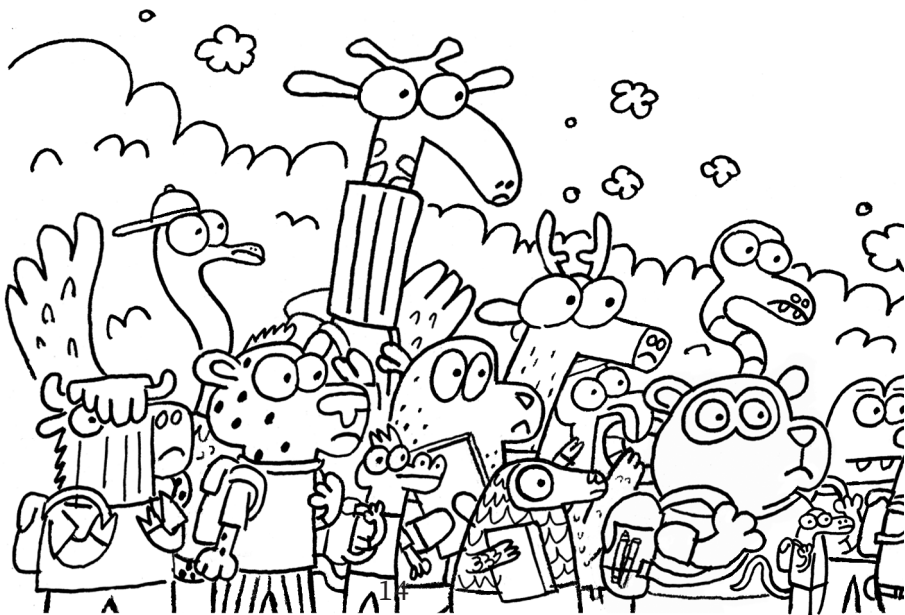
“And *she* blows them up,” said Alicia.

“No, she doesn’t.”

“We don’t know that,” Daniel argued. “I think she does. With her butt.”

“Her armoured butt,” agreed Alicia.

“There’s no blowing up—”



“Here they come,” Alicia said, still staring down the hall.

Zeke and Daniel looked where she was staring. The hall was quiet. No doors opened.

“What?” Zeke asked, but then the lunch bell rang, every door opened, and they were suddenly stones in a river of their classmates.

“HALL PASS!” Daniel yelled at the top of his lungs. A small gazelle dropped her pencil case and started crying. “HALL PASS!” Daniel screamed at her.



“They don’t need their hall passes until the bell rings again and everyone’s supposed to be in the cafeteria,” Zeke said, helping up the gazelle, who took her pencil case from him, then bucked him in the knee and ran off. “Hey!” Zeke yelled after her.

“What did I tell you?” Alicia said. “It’s the little ones you have to watch out for.”

Zeke pulled up the leg of his shorts to make sure his knee and France were okay.

“You all right?” he asked his knee.

“*Zut alors!*” said a small voice. But this was what France always said when they got bumped, so he let his shorts leg go and readjusted his sash<sup>1</sup>.

The lizards waited as their schoolmates filed in to lunch. The other pupils mostly ignored

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*1 Do not worry, reader. We will get to the story of France and Zeke’s knee. It’s what scientists call “a doozy”.*





them, as they had ever since the lizards started being bused in from – if Zeke was being honest or someone else wasn't being polite – the poorer area of town as part of a programme in the school district to get different types of students mixing together. Being ignored suited the lizards fine, usually. At this school, that included the three monitors, plus a group of geckos who played in the school marching band, and a Komodo dragon with terrible breath who everyone – mammal, bird and lizard alike – avoided. “Gosh, poor Beth,” Zeke said, thinking about her. She was technically a monitor lizard herself, but Komodos were a whole other thing. They ate rotting flesh, for example, and that was always difficult to watch at lunchtime.

Daniel and Alicia were clouded monitors, while Zeke was a peach-throated monitor. His throat was indeed peach-coloured. Clouded monitors (who weren't actually clouded but covered in little yellow spots) were supposed to be

bigger than peach-throated monitors, but here Zeke was, hulking over the other two like a resentful big brother who had to babysit.

He didn't resent them, though. I mean, look at them. Daniel with his inappropriate questions and his ADHD. Alicia who could literally not move for an entire lesson, even when the teacher was waving a pencil in front of her eyes. He didn't resent them.

He did kind of resent the school, though.

He looked up as a trio of giraffes wandered by, ducking their heads under the hallway lamps; and there was the jaguar who sang in the school choir but who was too shy to talk to anyone in class; and there was a whole herd of elk, all legs and wobbles and attitude. They mostly played lacrosse, the elk, a game that would pretty much instantly kill any monitor lizard who tried to join in.

It's not like Zeke and the others were picked on especially by all these others, or bullied. At least not any more or less than the other students. But

they did stick out a little here. Was it because they were a little less well-off than their classmates? Or was it the cold-blooded thing? No one ever said straight out, so Zeke had to guess. And frankly, Zeke could guess a lot of really terrible things if no one told him the truth.

“When do we get to yell at people, though?” Daniel asked Zeke and Alicia, a little crestfallen, as everyone just kept walking by.

“That’s not why we were picked for this,” Zeke said, sternly.

“Yeah, it is,” Alicia said. “Doesn’t mean you have to do it, though.”

“We weren’t picked to yell—”

“Mammals are afraid of being yelled at by reptiles.” Alicia shrugged. “Facts are facts.”

“That’s not true.”

“That’s totally true,” Daniel said.

Alicia still didn’t look at them.

“They always think we’re hissing or biting or screaming.”



“Or about to start,” Daniel added.

“Principal Wombat is just deploying her resources like any good General would,” Alicia said.

“She’s not a General,” Zeke said. “She’s a Principal.”

“Titles make no difference to a soldier,” Alicia said.

“What does that even *mean*?” Zeke asked.

“War is the way of the world,” Alicia said.

“Yeah,” Daniel agreed.

“You don’t even know what you’re agreeing to!” Zeke yelled. “We’re Hall Monitors, not soldiers, and we weren’t chosen because we could yell—”

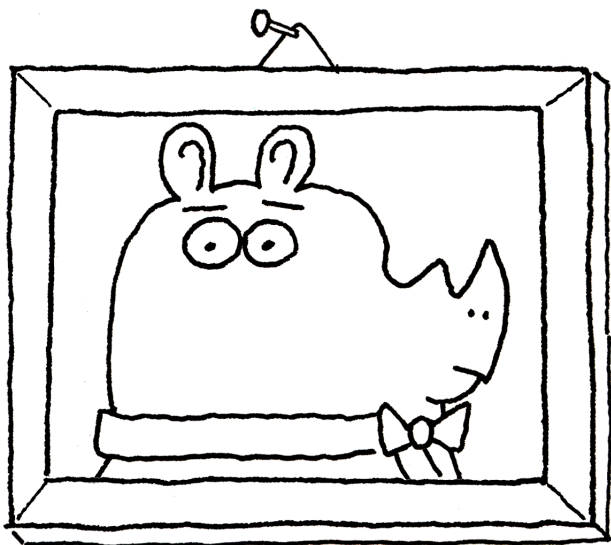
“You’re doing a pretty good job right now.”

“We were picked because—”


“Yes,” said a voice, booming from the end of the hallway, which had emptied almost completely while the lizards were arguing. “Why *were* you picked?”

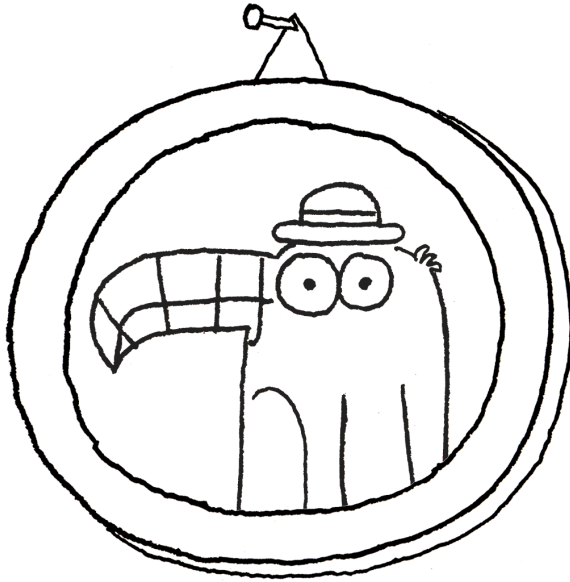
Zeke, Daniel and Alicia turned towards the voice, each of them rising slightly on their back feet without really noticing, giving the monitor lizard signal for threat.

Because coming down the hallway, a sneer on his stupid face, flanked by his stupid lackeys, was Pelicarnassus.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Patrick Ness is the award-winning and bestselling author of the Chaos Walking trilogy, which inspired a major film. He is also the author of critically acclaimed novels *A Monster Calls*, *More Than This*, *Release*, *The Rest of Us Just Live Here*, *And the Ocean Was Our Sky* and *Burn*. He has won every major prize in children's fiction, including the Carnegie Medal twice, and he won an Olivier Award for the stage production of *A Monster Calls*. He has also written the screenplay for the film version of *A Monster Calls* and *Class*, the BBC Doctor Who drama.  @patricknessbooks



## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Tim Miller is the author-illustrator of *Moo Moo in a Tutu*, *What's Cooking, Moo Moo?*, *Tiny Kitty*, *Big City*, and *Izzy Paints*. He is also the illustrator of *Horse Meets Dog* by Elliott Kalan, *Snappy the Alligator (Did Not Ask to Be in This Book)* and *Snappy the Alligator And His Best Friend Forever! (Probably)* by Julie Falatko, *Margarash* by Mark Riddle, and the middle grade series *Hamstersaurus Rex* by Tom O'Donnell. He lives in New Jersey with his wife and three rescue cats.

