



# MONSTER

## by Lorraine Gregory



Monster sits alone in the endless dark, worrying. It has been so long since the woman came with any food. Monster misses the food but not the woman. Not her words.

For days Monster has been forced to eat the grain from the sack in the corner instead. It is hard and dry and makes Monster's belly cramp but it's better than nothing at all.

Soon though, even the grain will be gone.

Monster thinks about the door at the top of the stairs: about leaving, but the fear is too strong.

Years ago, when this deep dark place first became its home, Monster tried to open the door and Monster was taught a lesson.

Now Monster will not try the door again.

Monster has almost forgotten what light is.

So when it comes, through a tiny hole where the earth has crumbled away, it hurts. Monster covers its eyes. But not for long. The light is too enticing. It reveals colours Monster barely remembers; brown on the floor, grey on the walls and... green?

What is green doing here, in the dark, in the cold?

The Green is so tiny, just a shoot, so Monster reaches out carefully with one big monster finger and gasps at the silky smoothness of the Tiny Green thrusting through the earth.

Why did it grow *here*?

Something so wonderful, so special, should be outside where everyone can see it.

Not down here.

The dark is for monsters.

The world outside does not want monsters in it, the woman had said, so Monster must stay hidden down here all alone.

But the monster's heart says Tiny Green belongs outside! Tiny Green is brave and strong and deserves to be where the sky is blue and the sun shines yellow and the wind blows gently.

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Monster scoops Tiny Green into its hand and walks up the stairs, heart thudding with fear but determined to be just as brave.

But...there are no shouts waiting upstairs.

No angry hands.

No sign of life at all.

Monster walks quickly to the next door, pulls it open and stands there, gasping and gaping at the enormous green and the big blue outside.

It fills Monster with wild fizzing joy.

But Tiny Green is still waiting in its hand so Monster hurries outdoors to make a hole in the damp earth. Tiny Green can grow properly here with the warm sun and the soft rain to feed it.

Monster wishes he could stay out here with Tiny Green.

But the world does not want monsters in it.

"Hello!" A strange, small human calls, waving from beyond the fence.

Monster almost runs away. But a little bit of brave still lingers in Monster's heart.

It helps Monster wave back.

The Small smiles and Monster smiles.

The Small laughs and Monster laughs.

Maybe, Monster thinks, there *could* be monsters in the outside after all, living where the sky is blue and the sun shines yellow and the wind blows gently.



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