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We know books

Now we're racing against time to learn how to save our world—and get back home alive. No easy task, because I'm currently locked in a fight to the death with a ruthless mad-scientist monster . . .



JACK SULLIVAN.

That's my name.

Don't wear it out.

And now . . . on with the show!



STAY WITH ME, JACK! <sob> Don't go towards the light!

I'm OK, Glob—

I AM TOO YOUNG FOR YOU TO DIE!

THE LAST KIDS ON EARTH

and the DESTRUCTOR'S LAIR



Book ten. That's a lot of adventuring.

So... where is this "Destructor's lair" you speak of, Mr. Subtitle?

Gotta find it, Jack. That's what this tenth book is about.

Probably.

Duh.

MAX BRALLIER & DOUGLAS HOLGATE





chapter one

When I pictured myself leading an army of the undead, this is not exactly what I had in mind. This is . . . bugs.

Monster bugs, sure. *Zombie* monster bugs. Strayfurs, technically. Like mutant hornets, built in a laboratory, with whirling rotor blades sprouting from their backs.

They're from the monster dimension. I am currently *in* that monster dimension. Me, my best friend Quint Baker, my monster buddy Globlet—we're all here, on a quest to learn how to save *our* dimension. And that quest has brought us to this moment.

Two seconds ago, *this* happened: using my newly improved zombie-commanding abilities, I sent a whole swarm of zombified strayfurs rocketing towards Wracksaw, a villain *most vile* . . .



And right now, the horde *slams* into Wracksaw! He's instantly blanketed in buzzing monsters.

"Beat it! Off! Get away! I COMMAND YOU!" Wracksaw howls, his armacles swinging wildly, smacking at the storm of strayfurs. "I created you! I made you the destructive darlings that you are now! How dare you turn on me?"

They turned on him because I *made* them turn on him. Sure, Wracksaw built these birdlike weapons—but he never figured on some dumb kid from another dimension hijacking them.

I march forward, one *very strange arm* extended. The Cosmic Hand—*my* hand, only enhanced with monster energy—has again become a strange, fleshy version of the Slicer, my tried-and-true weapon. My mind flips through a mental catalogue of commands—each one visible in front of me like some high-tech AR interface. Each tiny icon—or *mind-doodle*, as I named them (because I'm bad at naming things)—represents an action I can order the strayfurs to perform.



“Poke! Pummel! Pester! Energy needles!” I shout while mentally sending the commands at my zombified army and also really wishing *energy needles* began with a *p*.



The strayfurs follow my directions—swooping, slicing, firing energy-blasts from their stubby stinger-tails. Flashes of red ripple across Wracksaw’s flesh. He slither-staggers back, trying to keep the giant bugs at bay.

Wracksaw's body heaves, bobbing weakly on his leg-tentacles. He reminds me of a wrestler who's been body-slammed *hard* and is *oh-so-close* to going down.

Then—for a quick instant amid the flying wings and talons—Wracksaw's eyes lock onto mine . . .

I UNDERESTIMATED YOU, JACK SULLIVAN. YOU ARE STRONGER THAN I REALISED. HOWEVER—



“—you have still not seen me at full-strength,” Wracksaw growls, snapping two of his armacles like whips and sending strayfurs scattering. “And you have yet to fully witness the power of my . . . UPGRADES!”

“Oh c’mon, again with the upgrades?” I groan. I should have known that Wracksaw, the mad scientist, couldn’t make it through a battle without bragging about all his disturbingly deadly body modifications.

With a horrible squelch, one of his fleshy armacles begins to change. Metal spikes bulge beneath his skin, then—*RIP!*—burst through.

“A fearsome fusion of metal and flesh,” Wracksaw announces, then snaps the new weapon towards me—fast as a line drive!

The armacle punches into a snack stand, then goes anaconda, squeezing the stand like a soda can. There’s a deafening *CRUNCH* as the stand is wrenched free from its foundation. Wracksaw lifts it into the air, holding it over me like some giant hammer. And that would make me, well, a nail . . .



I scan the strayfurs, thinking quick. Need to end this fight before Wracksaw uses that snack stand to play Whac-A-Mole on my head—

Bingo.

"Talon Tornado!" I shout, zipping the command to the strayfurs. At once, they form one huge, swirling cyclone. Wracksaw is encircled by a high-speed blur of snapping undead.



Every turn of the swirling strayfur storm sends Wracksaw staggering, his spike-studded armacle swaying wildly, until—

SNAP!

Wracksaw's battle-bruised armacle snaps in two. The snack stand drops, landing on one of the many statues and monuments lining the street.

Wracksaw's face is twisted up with rage. His whole body pulses—flashing a deep, dark purple.

"I'll see you again, Jack Sullivan . . ." he snarls, then—

SCHLOP-BOOM!

I throw up a hand to shield myself as a massive eruption of gunk and goo fills the space where Wracksaw was just standing. The explosion hangs in the air, slowly expanding outward like cracks on a sheet of ice.

Suddenly, a loud cheer rings out. I turn, gasping, and see my buddies coming towards me. Quint, Globlet, and Stargrove.



"Inside out? No . . ." I say. I pause. "I don't think I turned him inside out. Did I?"

"I've seen at least nineteen different jerks turned inside out in my time," Globlet says. "And that sure looks like the aftermath of jerk turned inside out."

"These are not guts," Quint says, examining the strange, purple liquid. It hangs in the air in a way that liquid is *not* supposed to do. "It's like . . . ink."

The ink fades away. And there's no Wracksaw hiding behind it. He's gone, like some lousy magician vanished in a puff of smoke.

"Jack, you scared him off!" Quint exclaims. "Sent him scurrying back to . . . wherever he hangs out, usually."

"Oh c'mon!" I groan in frustration. "We were right there. On the brink of victory! Like Mario, about to make the big leap to the flag at the end of the level. And then . . . he just scurries?"

Still . . . he's not *here* anymore, and that's better than nothing. It's like the universe has given us a hall pass—a little break from the never-ending cosmic gut-punches.