

The background is a complex abstract composition. It features a dark gray grid pattern overlaid with various geometric shapes. There are large light gray circles, smaller dark gray circles, and several rectangles of different shades of gray and black. Some rectangles have horizontal lines, resembling a barcode or a ruler. In the corners, there are circular elements containing the numbers 3 and 4, with horizontal lines below them. The overall effect is a high-contrast, geometric, and somewhat chaotic visual field.

PLEASE STAND BY

THIS PROGRAMME IS
BROUGHT TO YOU BY



FUNGLE-SKUNKEN OTTER REPELLENT

"Get that thing AWAY from me!"™





Earth.

Cute, isn't it?

WHO would want to ruin something
soooooo *perfect*?

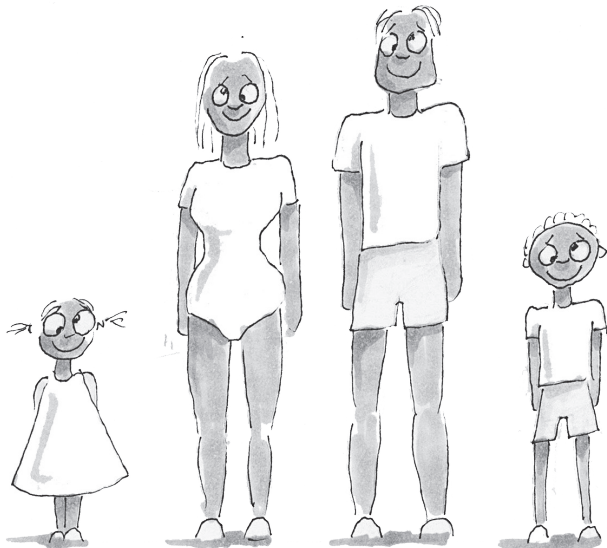
WHO?!

EVERYONE!

That's right, folks!
Those crazy little critters down there

HUMANS!

have been tearing the place apart!



**And
YOU!
KNOW!
WHYYYYYYYY!!!!!!**

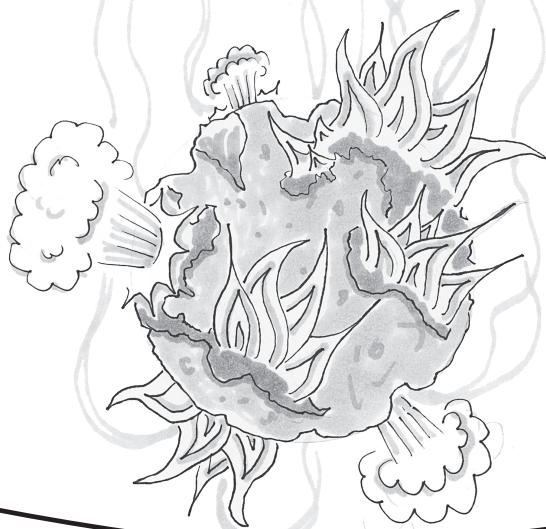
TONIGHT!

***NOW IN ITS
260 MILLIONTH
SEASON!***

***THE MOST BELOVED SHOW IN
INTERGALACTIC
TV HISTORY!***

IT'S TIME ONCE AGAIN TO WATCH YOUR
FAVOURITE PLAYERS MAKE THOSE
GOOFY HUMANS

**DESTROY
THEIR HOME!!!!**



OH YEAH!

It's time for . . .



YOU KNOW THE RULES!

Each Player has millions
of teensy-weensy
AVATARS
down on Earth called . . .



PETS!



THE HUMANS

think they are in charge
of their pets!

**But weeeeeeeeeee
know better,
don't we?**

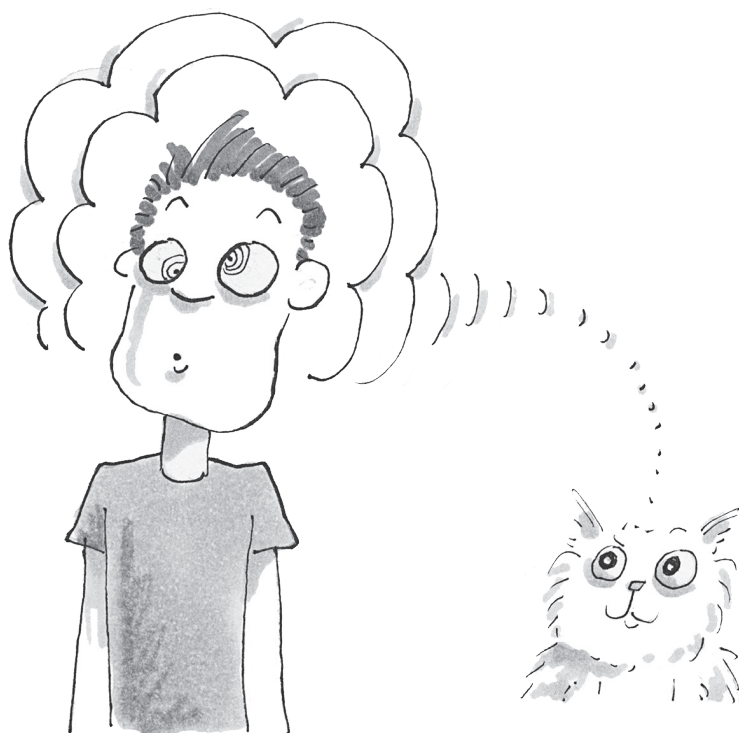


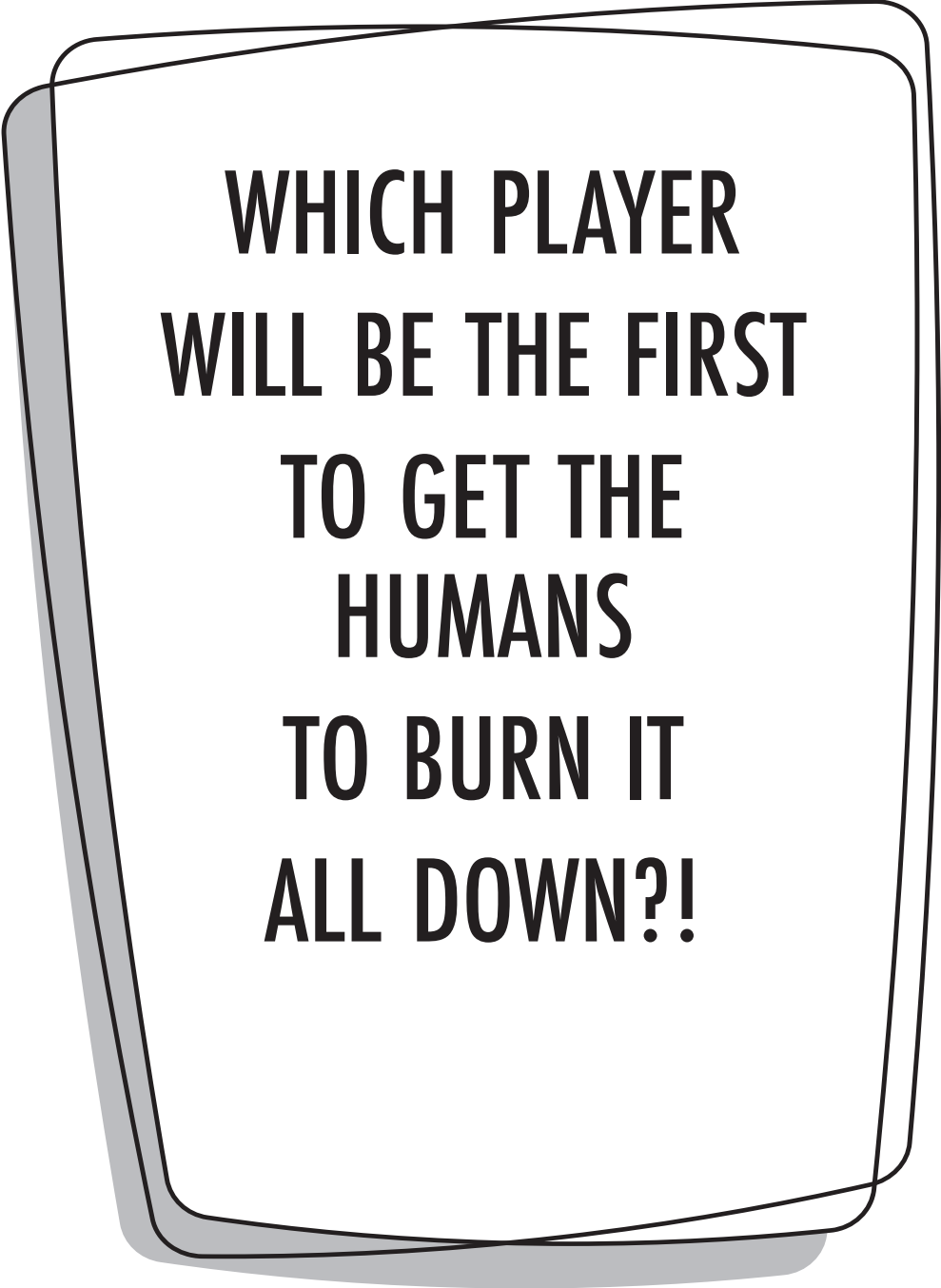
**THE PLAYERS
CONTROL THE PETS**

~ AND ~

**THE PETS CONTROL
THE HUMANS!**

AND THEY MAKE THOSE HUMANS
DO THE ***DARNDDEST THINGS*** . . .





**WHICH PLAYER
WILL BE THE FIRST
TO GET THE
HUMANS
TO BURN IT
ALL DOWN?!**

WHO WILL WIN THIS

GAME!

OF!

PETS!



PLAYER 1



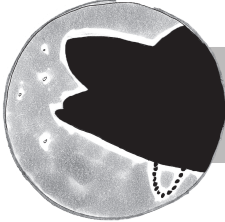
PLAYER 2



PLAYER 3



PLAYER 4



PLAYER 5



PLAYER 6



PLAYER 7



PLAYER 8

PART ONE

A BOY NEEDS A PET

CHAPTER ONE

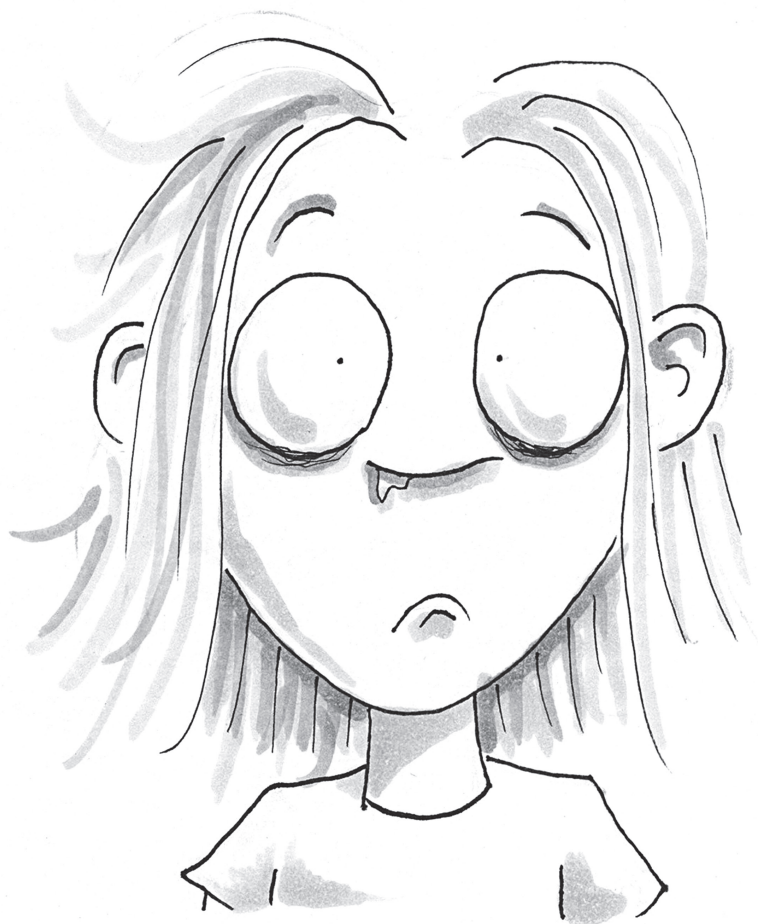


**GLAAAAARRRGGH
AAAAH-CHOOOOOOO!**

“Dang, boy! I have a heart condition. Give a gal some warning if you’re gonna do that . . .”

Griff blinked his way back from his catastrophic sneeze.

“I’m sorry, ma’am . . . allergies . . .”



“Allergies? Allergies to what?”

“Nuts, dust, pollen, lactose, gluten, fava beans and anything with fur,” said Griff instantly.



“Well, son, *you* are in the wrong store. How ’bout I rustle together a nut burger with cheese and we’ll see if we can’t kill you?”

This sounded kind of insensitive to Griff, but he kept that to himself. Something told him The Pet Shop Lady was a little saltier than he was used to dealing with, and he was reasonably sure he was now out of his depth.

Just be polite, he thought to himself. *You can do this . . .*

“Look, whaddya want, kid?” growled The Pet Shop Lady, flexing her startlingly jacked biceps. The flex did not go unnoticed by Griff, who panicked and lost his train of thought.



“Sorry . . . I . . .”

“Spit it out, *Captain Invincible*, before you breathe in a guinea pig hair and drop dead on my rug.”

“I . . .”

“WHADDYA WANT?!”

“A PET!” blurted Griff, a lot louder than he’d intended.

The Pet Shop Lady looked at him, hard.

She said nothing but drummed out a little rhythm on the rims of her wheelchair with her beefy fingers. Griff held his breath as the dull, metallic *takkita takkita takkita* filled the world.

Finally, after a very long pause, The Pet Shop Lady spoke.

“No fur?”

Griff nodded.

She held her gaze. Griff attempted a smile but aborted the mission halfway through. He felt another sneeze building.

“Follow me,” she growled, and suddenly heaved her battered chair in Griff’s direction before executing a deft right turn. A wheel lightly clipped one of his big toes, but he fought the urge to yelp and simply followed her down a narrow aisle lined with neatly maintained cages full of guinea pigs and hamsters. Trailing behind,

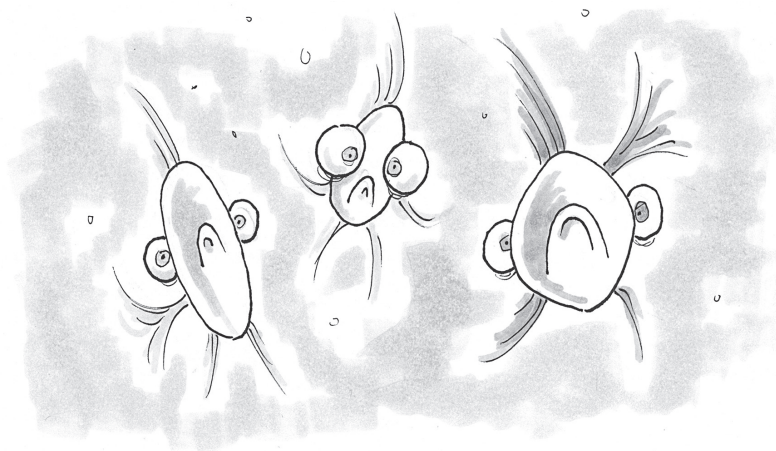
earnestly focused now on *not sneezing*, he noticed a cloth badge sewn into the vinyl back support of her chair. It read A PROUD WOMAN OF THE US MARINE CORPS. Griff was quietly relieved he'd kept the toe incident to himself.

Be cool, he thought, *just be...*

But as they rounded a corner, past a tall row of dog food, Griff froze.

Somewhere, seemingly far off in the distance, he heard The Pet Shop Lady say, "*Well, here they are...*" but she was drowned out by the sound of his own heart, pounding in his ears.

Fish.



Griff didn't like fish. He wasn't sure why, but they really creeped him out. Like, *really* creeped him out.

"*You okay, kid . . . ?*" said the faraway voice.

"Oh . . . absolutely," Griff replied brightly.

He was unconscious before he hit the floor.

