

Chapter 3

Send in the clowns

Jack and Wanda burst into the Big Top.

They saw a big rocketship in the middle of the circus ring.

“Wow, that thing looks real,” said Jack.

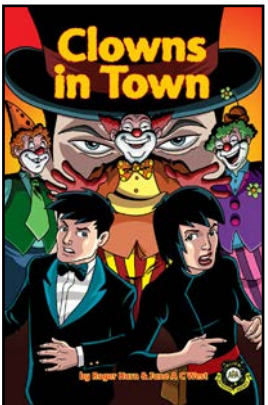
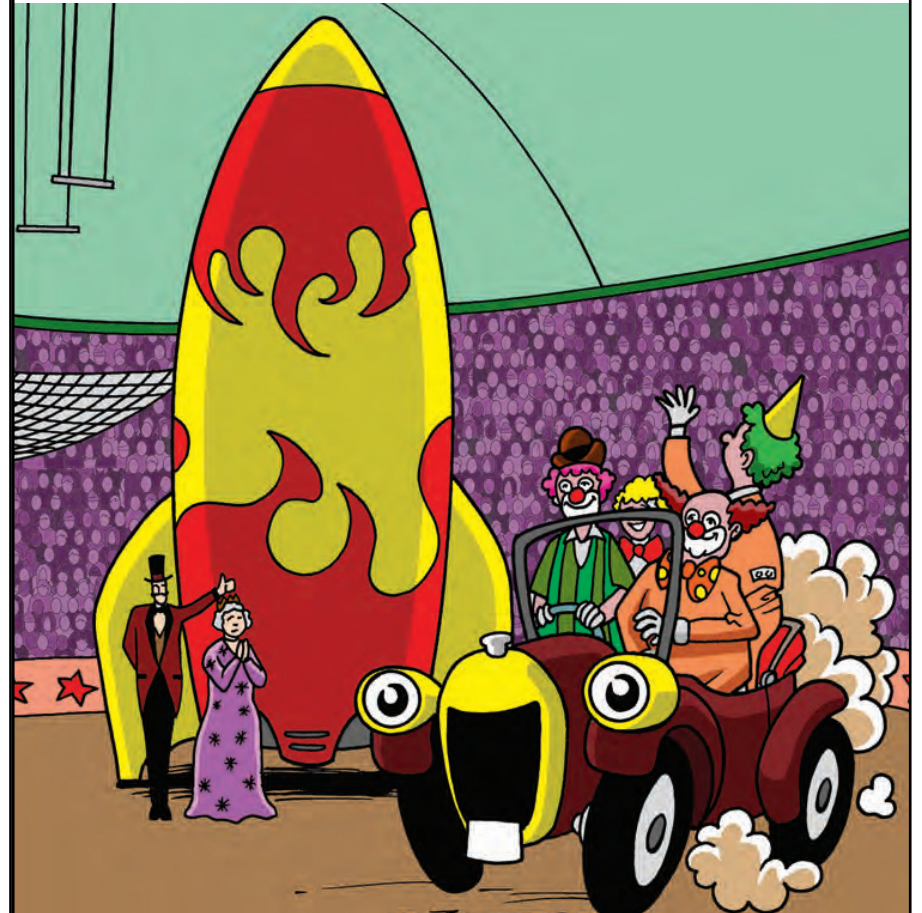
“Duh,” said Wanda. “That’s because it is real! The bad guys are going to use it to make their escape.”

The Ringmaster and the Queen were standing next to the rocket. The crowd watched them from their seats.

The Ringmaster held up his hands.

Everyone went quiet. “Your Majesty,” he said in a very loud voice, “I give you the Crazy Clowns!”

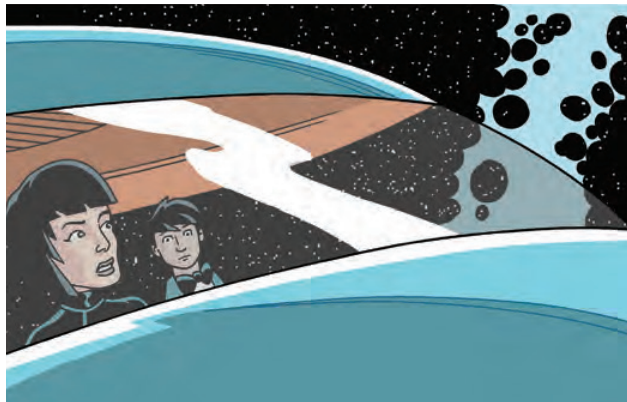
Music played over the sound system and four clowns erupted into the ring.



Wanda sighed. “The Icyclons are a deadly, snow-based life form,” she said. “Not something you make for fun in your back garden.”

Jack frowned. “I know that,” he muttered.

“And they’ll give you frostbite with their rows of sharp icicle teeth,” said Wanda. “These aliens aren’t cool – they are ice-cold killers!”



“Wow!” said Jack. “OK, Wanda, I get it. An Icyclon’s snow joke!”

Before she could reply, STEALTH’s voice boomed out of the ship’s speakers: “COMET ALERT! COMET ALERT!”

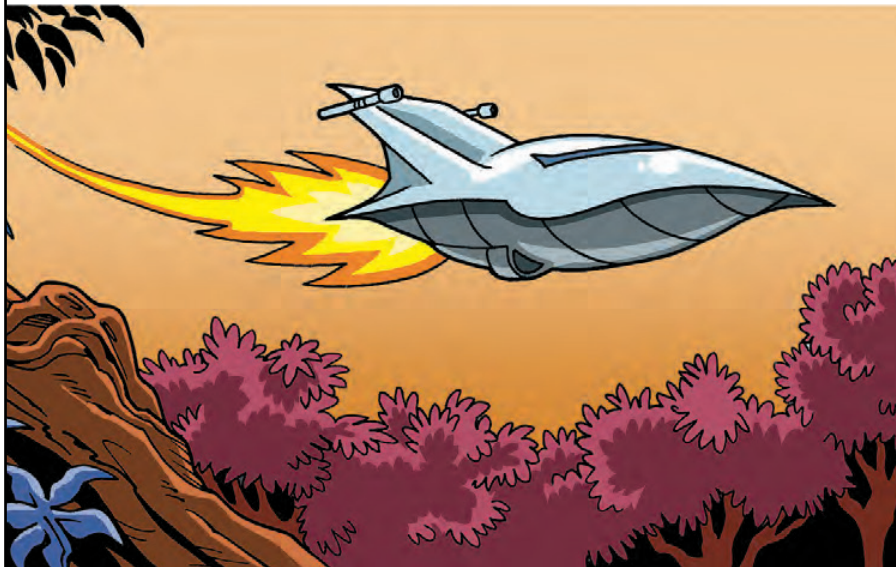


Chapter 2

Crash landing

STEALTH burst out of the planet's sky like a silver streak of lightning.

The ground rushed up to meet it. At the last second, STEALTH pulled out of its nose dive. It skimmed the tops of trees and then landed like a duck on a frozen lake.



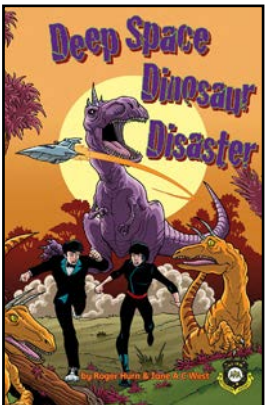
It finally skidded to a halt.

“Hey, STEALTH, that wasn’t your best ever landing,” said Jack. “In fact, it doesn’t even make the top ten.”

“Oh stop moaning, Jack,” said Wanda. “At least we’re still alive.”

“Only just,” groaned Jack as he gently rubbed a large bump on his head.

“Well, that’s good enough for me,” said Wanda. “Even if I do hurt in places where I didn’t even know I had places.”



Chapter 3

A regular page turner

“Wow! These books are cool!” said Jack.

Wanda had a whole library of books on aliens. There were Icylons from an ice planet, slime monsters from Planet Swamp and blood-sucking vampire aliens from Planet Drac.



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“I had an encyclopaedia once,” said Jack.

“What happened to it?” asked Wanda.

“I preferred walking,” he said.

Wanda rolled her eyes. Jack’s jokes didn’t get any better.

Jack picked up one of Wanda’s books. It was huge, heavy and had a lock on the front.

“This looks really old,” said Jack.

“It is,” said Wanda. “Aliens have been visiting Earth for thousands of years. It’s a popular place for family holidays.”

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Chapter 2

Pirates!

The Wolmump looked like a cross between a camel and a whale and was the size of a baby elephant.

It wagged its curly tail at Jack.

“It likes you,” said Wanda. “Love at first sight.”



“I get that a lot,” said Jack.

Wanda rolled her eyes.

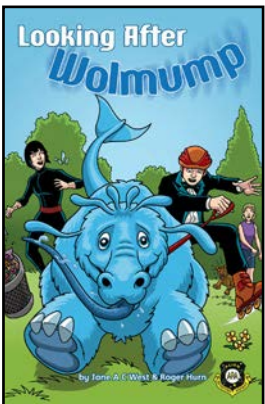
“How long do we have to look after this thing?” said Jack.

The Wolmump didn’t like being called a ‘thing’. It trod on Jack’s foot.

“Ow!” he yelled.

“Her name is Gnt,” said Wanda, grinning, “and we only have to look after her for today.”

“No problem,” said Jack, rubbing his foot.



Chapter 2

The dark side of Venus

Jack went to get his spaceship, STEALTH.

He kept it at the TV studio because everyone thought it was a pretend spaceship. Only he and Wanda knew the truth. Or so he thought.

“Come on, STEALTH,” he said. “We have a damsel in distress!”

“Less of the ‘damsel’ stuff,” said a muffled voice.

“Huh?” said Jack.

He got a small mirror out of his pocket. There was Wanda in the mirror.

“It’s hot and stuffy in your pocket,” she said.

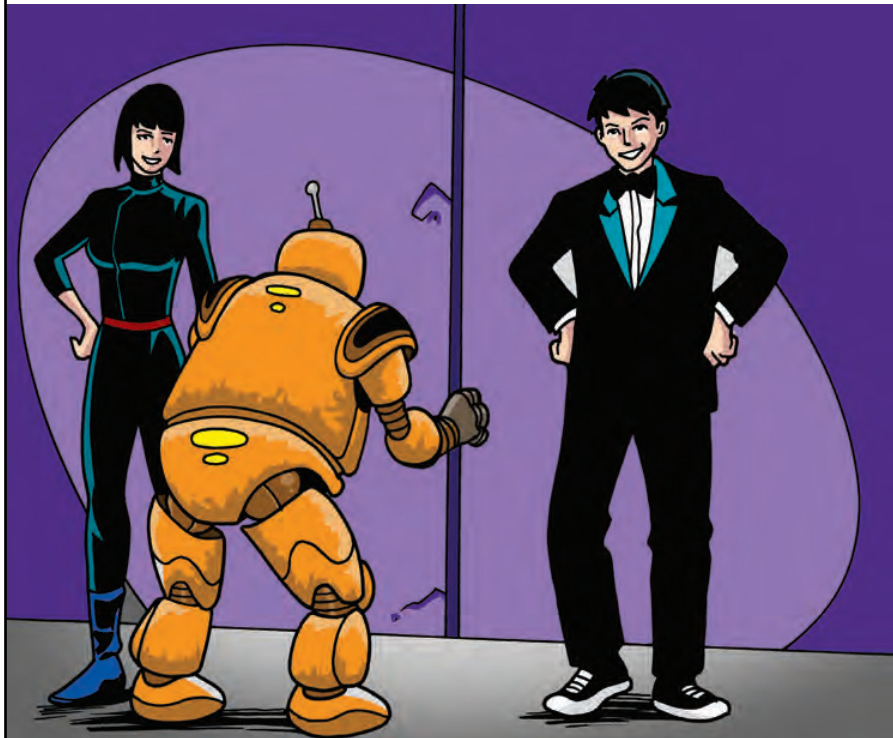
Jack rolled his eyes. “How did you get in there?”

Wanda grinned. “Every mirror you look in, you’ll see me.”



“We’d like a cab to take us to STEALTH, please,” said Jack.

TOBOR clapped his hands together. “Of course, sir,” he said. “Your wish is our command.”



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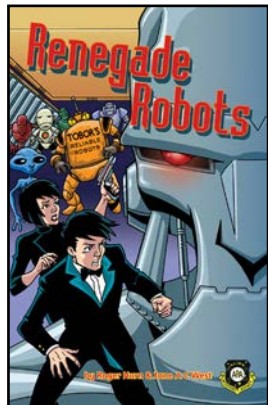
Jack grinned. “Hey,” he said. “I’ve just saved the world – again!”

Wanda frowned. “I think you mean **we** saved it, don’t you?”

Jack nodded. “I guess so.”

Wanda grinned at him. “And somehow I think you’re going to need my help next time the Earth needs saving. So maybe we should team up as the ‘Alien Detective Agency’.”

“It’s a deal,” said Jack. “But remember – I get to wear the tuxedo!”



“That’s right,” agreed Wanda. “The shadows get bigger and bigger and bigger – until they merge into the dark.”

“You mean...?” said Jack.

“Yes,” said Wanda. “We’ve got till nightfall – or Somnios will take over Earth!”



Chapter 3

Last bus from Earth

“Everyone’s leaving,” said Wanda. “All the aliens that live on Earth are getting out now. They’re scared – and I don’t blame them.”

Jack scratched his head. “How do you know?”

“I’ve just read it on the internet. All the fashion designers have left – and several reality TV shows have stopped filming. They’re all catching the last space bus from Earth.”



Chapter 3

Special FX

Wanda was worried. Zzp was up to something. Why did a Water Lord want to be on TV? They didn't even have TVs on Neptune.

"Don't worry, Wanda," said Jack. "The TV people love him – this will save my show."



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Jack was right. Zzp made a big splash. The problem was – he knew it.

Zzp demanded a bigger room than Jack's – with a large fish tank (to entertain his friends) and a paddling pool (to relax in). The director was puzzled. "That guy never takes off his costume!" he said.

"And I still haven't worked out how you do those great special FX. That costume really looks like he's made of water."

"Trade secret," said Wanda firmly.

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“No, it’s not,” said Jack. “It’s a World Cup ‘must win’ game for England. We are playing Brazil – and we’ve just scored!”

Wanda raised her eyebrows. “Really?” she said. “But the team is hopeless. They never score. When they did a training session in an infant school, the infants won three–nil!”



“I know,” said Jack. “But now we are scoring for fun.”

“I don’t like it,” said Wanda.

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“I do,” said Jack. “I think we can win the World Cup if we keep on playing like this.”

“That’s what I mean,” replied Wanda. “Something’s wrong with this team.”



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