



Bug Club

This is your free
sample of **Rocket Ronnie**.



Rocket Ronnie

AND THE VORTEX OF DOOM

WILL RONNIE
ESCAPE THE
VORTEX?



Written by
Daniel Postgate
Illustrated by
Pet Gotohda

Rocket Ronnie

AND THE VORTEX OF DOOM

Chapter 1

The Guardians Make Contact

3

Chapter 2

*Rocket Ronnie – Defender of
the Human Race*

12

Chapter 3

The Arrival of Vortex

22

Chapter 4

Blasters on Full Power!

36

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Published by Pearson Education Limited, Edinburgh Gate, Harlow, Essex, CM20 2JE
Registered company number: 872828

www.pearsonschools.co.uk

Text © Daniel Postgate 2011

Designed by Bigtop

Original illustrations © Pearson Education 2011

Illustrated by Pet Gotohda

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First published 2011

15 14 13 12 11

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 0 435 91475 2

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Printed and bound at Ashford Colour Press

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the children and teachers of Bangor Central Integrated Primary School, NI; Bishop Henderson C of E Primary School, Somerset; Brookside Community Primary School, Somerset; Cheddington Combined School, Buckinghamshire; Cofton Primary School, Birmingham; Dair House Independent School, Buckinghamshire; Deal Parochial School, Kent; Newbold Riverside Primary School, Rugby and Windmill Primary School, Oxford for their invaluable help in the development and trialling of the Bug Club resources.

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Chapter 1

The Guardians Make Contact



One afternoon, a girl named Veronica Witworth was making her way home from school. She was looking forward to playing her new computer game, *Asteroid Mayhem*, when something very strange happened. Something that would change her life forever.

Veronica had turned off the main street and was heading down an alley that led to the road where she lived. Suddenly a cloudy white light rose up in front of her like glowing smoke from an invisible bonfire. The light twisted and billowed around until it took the form of three shimmering figures in hooded robes. Veronica could hardly believe her eyes! She opened her mouth to speak but nothing came out. She was speechless.

One of the mysterious figures then spoke in a deep, slow voice.

“We are the Guardians. We are an alien race from far across the galaxy – a race far more advanced than your own.



The human race and this planet you call Earth are in danger from malicious alien forces. It is our job to help protect the human race so you can eventually join the Galactic Alliance and play an important part in bringing safety to everyone in the galaxy. That time has not yet come. Meanwhile, we need your help, Veronica Witworth.”

Veronica managed to find her voice again. “W-w-what?” she stammered in disbelief.

“I said: We are the Guardians. We are an alien –”

“Yeah, OK, I get that bit,” Veronica interrupted, “but why me? Why do you need *my* help?”

“We have been watching you and thousands of others like you. We needed to choose someone – just one human to help us in our task. We narrowed our choice down to just a few, and then, ultimately, we chose you,” replied the figure, almost in a whisper, as if the dangerous forces might be listening in on their conversation.



“Oh, a bit like those talent shows on the telly?” suggested Veronica.

“Well, maybe, but I’m too busy to watch telly, especially Earth telly,” muttered the figure. “Anyway, as I was saying, your computer game skills are excellent. You are thoughtful and imaginative. With your skills and our mind-bogglingly advanced technology, we can become a powerful force to protect your Planet Earth. So ... will you help us, Veronica Witworth?”

Veronica thought long and hard. She had never been asked to become the protector of the human race before, so she had to think carefully. What the Guardians were suggesting sounded dangerous, but it also sounded full of fun and adventure ... really, it wasn’t a difficult decision to make.

“Okay, I’ll do it!” she said finally.

“Good answer!” exclaimed the figure.

“We will now prepare you for your task!”

Veronica felt something smooth in the palm of her hand and looked down to see that she was now holding a tiny, shiny phone which seemed to have appeared from nowhere.

“This is your contact console. You must keep it with you at all times so we are able to contact you whenever it is necessary. Now, please press the red button on the keypad.”



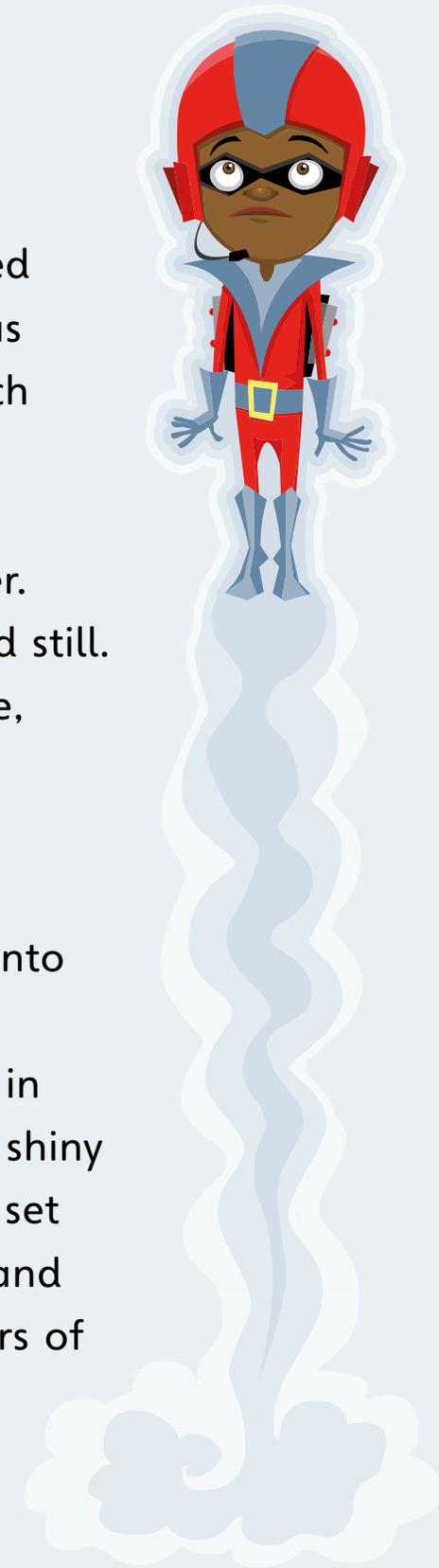
Veronica did as she was asked. Her whole body started to tingle and fizz, and she felt strangely cold, as if she had been suddenly plunged into a vat of sparkling water.



Then she felt as if she was shooting upwards at tremendous speed. She tried to cry out but her voice was lost in the terrific roar which engulfed her.

She shut her eyes tightly and waited for it to be over. Suddenly, all was silent and still.

Veronica opened one eye, then the other. She was standing in the centre of a large, round room with an oval window looking out onto the stars and a small blue and green planet swathed in cloud. The room itself was shiny and white with little lights set into its walls that glowed and twinkled with all the colours of the rainbow.



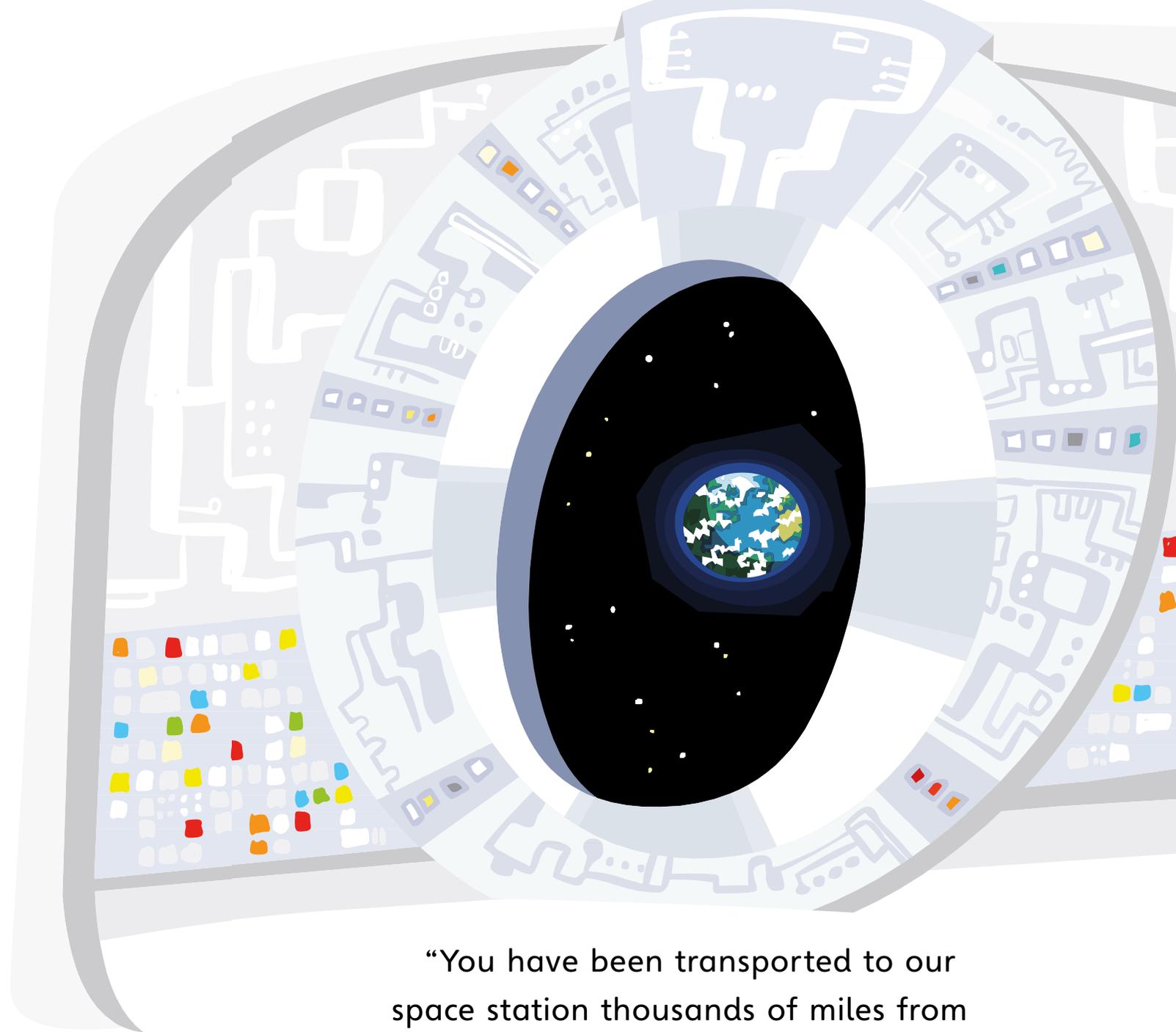
Chapter 2

Rocket Ronnie – Defender of the Human Race



“Galloping galaxies!” Veronica exclaimed, gazing around in bewilderment.

“Where am I?”



“You have been transported to our space station thousands of miles from Earth,” echoed the voice of the Guardian. “This will be your headquarters. It is from here that you will go off on your missions into outer space.”

“Outer space!” Veronica yelled. “How can I go off into ... Jumping Jupiter!” Veronica had just noticed what she was wearing.



She slapped her hands on either side of the big plastic ball which engulfed her head.

“I’ve got a helmet on!” she shouted. “A space helmet!” Then she caught sight of her reflection in the oval window. She was in a red and grey space suit with grey gloves and boots, and it had a really chunky belt. She turned round to see some sort of power-pack on her back.

“Wow!” she whooped in excitement. “This is really cool!”



“You are no longer the schoolgirl Veronica Witworth,” boomed the Guardian dramatically. “You are now Rocket Ronnie – Defender of the Human Race!”

“Oh yeah!” exclaimed Rocket Ronnie, punching the air with a gloved fist.

“Now it is time for me to leave,” said the Guardian solemnly. “Goodbye, Rocket Ronnie. Defend your planet well. The people of Earth depend on you. And good luck!” The last words from the Guardian echoed around the room and then were gone.

“Hold on!” gasped Rocket Ronnie, suddenly feeling a bit frightened. “Come back! You can’t just leave me here alone!”

“*You are not alone,*” said a voice ... a new voice. It was smooth, calm and female.



Call me MAVIS.

“Who said that?” said Rocket Ronnie looking round the empty space station.

“*Me. I am your computerised Message And Vital Information Service – but you can call me MAVIS for short.*”

The new voice seemed to be coming from inside Rocket Ronnie’s helmet.

“*I am an on-board computer, always ready to have a word in your ear when necessary.*”

“You sound like my mum,” grinned Rocket Ronnie. “She’s always having a word in my ear.”

Rocket Ronnie was pleased and relieved to meet MAVIS – a talking computer was better company than no one at all. Then she heard a bleeping sound. She turned and nearly collided with something bobbing and hovering in the air. It was a smooth, silver globe, about the size of a bowling ball.

A little hole appeared in the ball and a metal stalk with a glowing orange ball on the end came out of it. It looked Rocket

Ronnie up and down and then let out a low whistle.

“This is your Special Investigation Device,” said MAVIS. *“You can call him SID. He will help you on your missions.”*



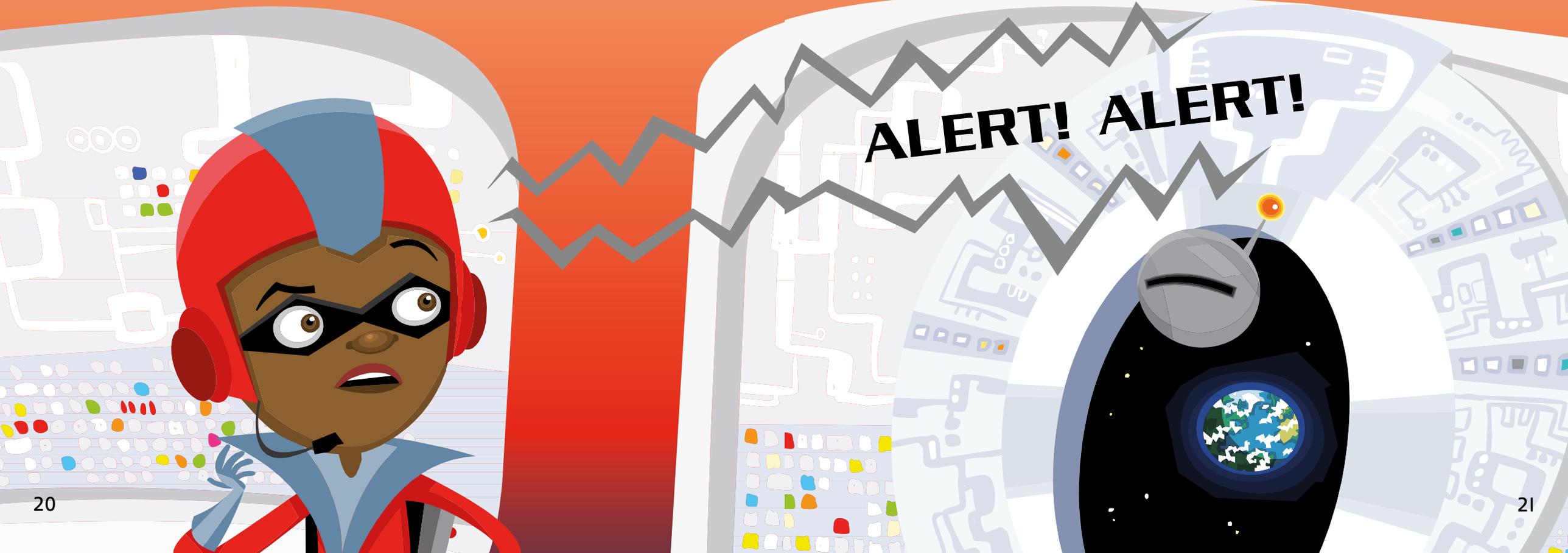
Rocket Ronnie shook her head and laughed. “A talking computer and a bleeping ball. The kids at school are never, ever going believe this!”

“Nor should you tell them,” said MAVIS gravely. *“What happens out here in space is absolutely top secret. No one from the human race must ever know. Not even your friends at school. Do you understand?”*

Rocket Ronnie nodded seriously. “Message received and understood,” she said.

Just at that moment, an alarm sounded and the whole room glowed red.

“Alert! Alert!” said MAVIS, still in her cool, calm voice. *“Our sensors indicate a dangerous alien heading straight for Planet Earth. Rocket Ronnie, it seems you have arrived just in time.”*



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