

"Emmy, for the last time, there's no such thing as aliens," I said.

"Ha! A likely story," said Emmy. "Those lights were from an alien spaceship, mark my words!"

"Where are they going to invade on Finney Island – the post office?" I said, rolling my eyes.

Tabby patted Emmy on the back.

"Don't listen to Ash, Emmy. He's just in a bad mood because he has to go back to school next week, and he's scared of Barry Sandwich!"

I blushed. Barry "Knuckle" Sandwich was the school bully, and he hated my guts. His gang probably couldn't wait to make my life miserable again when we went back to school.

"What?! Some bully is pushing my Ash around?" Emmy cried, waving her soup zapper. "Let me at him!"



"Thanks, Emmy," I said. "But I can sort it out myself."

I tried to sound brave, but I didn't really feel it. The truth was, I wished that aliens really WOULD invade Finney Island so I wouldn't have to go back to school next week.

"Right!" said Emmy. "Time for you two to go to bed. Would you like me to tuck you in with my new invention, the TUCK-O-MATIC 3000?"

"No!" Tabby and I screamed, racing inside.

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PECULIAR PARENTS

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

I leaped out of bed the next morning and got dressed. I was just about to grab my clipboard when suddenly ... I smelled something.

Food. Someone was cooking breakfast! But instead of burned toast and exploded porridge, it smelled *delicious*.

I couldn't believe my eyes when I pushed open the kitchen door. All of the soup from Emmy's soup zapper had been chipped away. Every surface was spotless and sparkling new. A delicious breakfast of eggs, beans and toast was waiting for me on the table.

"Good morning, son."

I looked up. Mum and Dad were standing by the table, smiling at me. They looked different, too. Dad had shaved. Mum had a new hairstyle. They were both wearing brand-new green jumpsuits in a futuristic fabric. I'd never seen them looking so smart! I rubbed my eyes. Was I dreaming?

Tabitha ran through the kitchen door and stared in amazement. "Mum and Dad! What happened to *you*?"



“Nothing,” said Dad. “We made some delicious breakfast food. Would you like some?”

I suddenly remembered something. “We have to get Tabby to swimming club before—”

“No swimming club today,” said Mum.

“Instead, we have bought you both presents for being such good children.”

Before Tabby or I could say a word, Mum and Dad thrust boxes into our hands.

I was speechless. They had bought us each a GAMER-X CUBE, the world’s newest (and most expensive) games console!

“Wow! Thanks, Mum and Dad!” I said.

“You are welcome,” said Dad. “Why not go upstairs and start playing? Your mother and I have lots of cleaning to do.”

I didn’t need telling twice. I played my new GAMER-X CUBE for hours and hours. The only time I saw Mum and Dad was