

I spun round with a gasp. Mum and Dad were standing right behind me. It was like they'd both appeared out of nowhere. Both of them were staring at me with those strange smiles and unblinking eyes.

"Err ... I was just getting ready for school tomorrow!" I said.

Dad smiled. "You do not have to worry about school, Ash. From now on, you and Tabitha are never going to school again!"

I gasped. "W-what?!"

Mum and Dad stepped towards me. I tried to step back, but I had already reached the wall.

"Isn't that great?" said Mum. "No more homework. No more Barry Sandwich. All you have to do is play computer games forever. And ever. And ever ..."

Mum's voice was getting faster. Her eyes had started glowing red, too!

"AND EVER ... AND EVER ..."

"Mum! Dad! Ash! What's going on?"

Tabby had run downstairs. Mum and Dad swung round, their eyes glowing. I knew I had to do something, fast. I grabbed the soup zapper and aimed it at Mum and Dad.

"STAND BACK, TABBY!"

Tabby didn't need telling twice. She leaped out of the way just as I pressed the button. A splurge of rock-hard soup landed all over Mum and Dad's feet, sticking them to the floor.

"Ash!" said Tabby. "Why are you firing soup at Mum and Dad?"

"THEY'RE NOT MUM AND DAD!" I cried, pointing at them. "Look!"



Mum and Dad were still stuck in place, but now they were waving their arms above their heads. Smoke was coming out of their ears, and sparks were flying out of their mouths!

“ERROR ... DOES NOT COMPUTE ...”  
said Dad.

“DESTROY ... ALL ... EARTHLINGS!”  
said Mum.

Then, just like that, they flopped over at the waist and fell silent. Tabby and I stared at them in shock.

**BAM!** The front door slammed open and Emmy leaped inside.

“Oh, thank goodness!” she cried. “I thought the robots had already got you!”

“Robots?” said Tabby in disbelief.

Emmy lifted up Mum’s head and stared at her eyes. Now they were blank, like broken screens.



“Just as I thought,” she said. “They’ve both been turned into robots. That solid soup must have blocked their circuits just in time.” She grabbed our hands. “Come on. We have to get out of here before the others find them!”

I felt like my head was going to explode.

“Others? What others?”

Emmy looked me square in the eye.

“Who do you think, Ash? The *aliens!* The ones that have invaded Finney Island and are trying to take over the world!”

# 5 EVIL INVASION

At first, I thought Emmy was playing a joke on me.

“Emmy, for absolutely the last time – there’s no such thing as aliens!” I shouted.

She laughed. “Oh yeah? Then how do you explain THIS?!”

She pulled us outside and pointed down the street. It was the first time I had stepped outside for days. I gasped. Every single adult was wearing bright green jumpsuits and smiling that same strange smile, just like Mum and Dad. My neighbours, the old couple who ran the shop, even Police Officer Patel ... Not a single one of them was blinking.