

WHACK THE ALIEN GAME!  
PUSH OVER THE ALIEN TO WIN  
A PRIZE:  
A FREE GLASS OF FRUIT JUICE

"Here is your juice," said the teacher, handing me a cup.

"Er ... thanks," I said, scurrying outside.

Emmy's voice crackled through my headset again.

"For heaven's sake, Ash, we're supposed to be blending in! You look like a nervous wreck. Act like you're having a good time!"

"I'll try," I groaned.

I tried dancing for a bit, but it was hard to appear relaxed when I felt so nervous. The aliens could start changing the children into robots at any moment! I looked all around me. Surely there had to be some kind of sign or clue to show where the machine was?

But once I started dancing, I really did begin to enjoy myself. The party was actually quite fun. Emmy's music was getting louder and the children were dancing faster and faster.

Then, just as I went to take a sip of my fruit juice, I heard an ear-splitting scream from a stall beside me. I gasped – that had to be where the machine was! I dropped my cup and tore through the door.

"STOP WHAT YOU'RE DOING,  
ALIEN-INVADING SCUM!" I cried.

I stopped. There was no robot-making machine in this booth, either. Instead, there were lots of children wearing blindfolds and playing with bowls of jelly. The sign behind them read:

DARE YOU FEEL  
WHAT'S INSIDE THE BOX?  
WILL IT BE ALIEN BRAINS, ALIEN  
TOENAILS OR ALIEN EYEBALLS?

“Eeeeeek!” cried one of the blindfolded children, feeling a bowl of cold spaghetti.

“This must be alien guts!”

I groaned. I’d made another mistake.

“Ash!” came Tabby’s voice inside my headset. “Where are you?”

I ran out again, my eyes searching every inch of the hall. “I’m by the dance floor. Where are you? Have you found the machine yet?”

“No! Barry and his gang got past me, and he’s ...”

I charged straight into someone, spilling their purple fruit juice all over them. They fell back, knocking into the person behind them and spilling their cup, too. My stomach dropped. It was Barry Sandwich and his gang!

“My costume!” cried Barry, dripping wet and furious.

“GET HIM!” shouted Clarissa, Lee and Jaya at the same time.

I charged across the dance floor to get away. This was getting worse and worse!

“Ash!” came Emmy’s voice. “I’ve just seen an enormous machine behind a curtain at the end of the hall!”

I looked around. Sure enough, on the other side of the hall was a huge, grey box, almost hidden behind colourful streamers. Children were queuing up to step inside it.

“It must be the robot-making machine! You have to turn it off!” Emmy cried.

There was no time to lose. I spun on my heels and charged back to the other end of the hall. I threw myself to the floor and slid right through Barry’s legs. Getting up, I ran to where the massive machine was plugged into the wall – and grabbed the giant plug with both hands.

I heaved it out of the wall with all my might.

The flashing lights on the grey box stopped instantly, and it made a noise like a computer shutting down. All the children standing beside it groaned at me.

“What did you do that for?” one said. “Now the ride’s broken!”

I blinked. “Ride?”

A door in the side of the box opened, and a group of angry children glared out at me. They were all strapped into seats and facing a screen at the front. On the screen it said:

**SPACE ROCKET SIMULATOR**  
**EXPLORE THE GALAXY IN STUNNING 3D!**  
**POWER HAS BEEN TURNED OFF.**  
**NO REFUNDS.**

I groaned with frustration. It felt like I was never going to find the robot-making machine!