

Space Colony

Chapter 1: Departure

As the door slammed behind them, Ethan knew they would never see Earth again. He put on a gigantic seatbelt that covered his entire body.

We will leave Earth in one minute, said the spaceship's computer, prepare for liftoff.

He checked his seatbelt to make sure it was on properly. He was excited and worried at the same time. He looked out of the window and saw the dark, polluted world that used to be Earth. It was 5986 AD and the world was now so polluted that humans couldn't live there without a spacesuit. They were slowly leaving the planet in small spaceships which would take them to bigger space stations. The space stations were going to head off into space, looking for a new Earth.

Liftoff in three... two... one... zero.

The engines roared to life and the spaceship zoomed off into space. Ethan saw the grey, foggy ground falling away from them but the view was soon obscured by big black clouds. They passed what was left of the ozone layer and left Earth's atmosphere, which was slowly escaping, behind. Soon they reached the space station and climbed on board. Ethan thought of his friends, Ralph and Tim. They were on other space stations. He would probably never see them again. He could just about see another space station, far away from them. Were they on it? He would never know.

The space station is now full, the space station's computer said, our journey will now begin.

There was a mixture of cheers and sighs from the passengers. Some of them were glad to get away from Earth. Others would miss it. Ethan rushed over to the window to see Earth getting smaller. He watched it until it was a tiny dot, then he turned away.

Chapter 2: On the space station

It was a very long journey. The space station was very big and Ethan explored the whole thing. There was nothing else to do. There was a large room with computers in it, a room filled with board games, several dining rooms and thousands of bedrooms. Some areas of the space station were restricted, like the control room and the kitchen, but he explored everywhere he could. Eventually, he got to a room at the bottom of the space station. A guard holding a space rifle stood outside.

"What's this room for?" Asked Ethan.

"Crocodiles," said the guard.

"But why do we need them?" Ethan was very curious.

"We're trying to save all the animals on earth," the guard replied, "some of the space stations have animals on them. We put all the crocodiles on this one."

Everyone report to the dining rooms for dinner, the space station's computer said.

"Have a nice day," Ethan said, walking back to the dining room. After dinner, he played a game of monopoly with three other people and checked his bank

account on a computer. None of the passengers had any cash on them but all the money had been transferred to their bank accounts. He finally went to bed at 9:45 PM. Just before bed, he had looked out of the window, but there was nothing to see except stars. Even their sun was just a tiny dot now.

Chapter 3: The boring planet

A few years later, the captain of the spaceship saw a planet that looked like it could support life. It was grey and rocky with a few rivers. It looked boring and they probably couldn't stay there forever but the passengers were getting impatient and wanted a break. The spaceship had been travelling at Warp Speed for many years. Warp Speed was a very fast way to travel. The spaceship used dark matter and wormholes to move faster than light. She pressed a button and the ship's computer started speaking.

Hello, Captain, it said, what do you want?

"Tell the passengers that we will be landing on that rocky planet over there."
The captain said.

That planet? But it's so boring!

"We won't be staying there permanently. Go and tell the passengers."

Tell them yourself.

"Tell them otherwise I'll uninstall you."

Fine, the ship's computer sighed. The captain sighed too. Artificial intelligence had its downsides.

A few minutes later, everyone on the space station was in one of the spaceships. They flew down to the planet and got out. They set up a camp using metal from Earth, which had been taken there in the spaceship. A few people released the crocodiles on another part of the planet. The captain made a speech.

"We have arrived at a planet that can support life," she said, "we are not staying here permanently but we all need a break. We have brought some crocodiles with us and they have been released here too. Feel free to walk around, but don't walk too far away from the camp."

Ethan looked at the planet around him. It looked dull and boring. It was mostly rock and the only exciting feature was a river next to the camp. Ethan saw fish in it which looked like they were made of stone. There were a few hills and mountains made of stone but he was too tired to climb one. There probably wasn't much to see anyway, just a grey, rocky landscape stretching away into the distance. He went back to camp.

Chapter 4: Naming a planet

One week later, everyone was sick of the planet. The captain decided they would move on in search of another planet. However, the crocodiles refused to go back into their spaceships.

"We'll just have to leave them here with a few people to look after them," the captain said, "everyone get on a spaceship! We're leaving!"

"Wait!" Someone shouted, "we need to name the planet!"

"You're right," the captain said, "does anyone have any ideas for a name?"

"Boringa!" Someone shouted.

"Pebbla!" Another person yelled.

"Stono!" Cried a third person.

"What about Rockatron?" Ethan suggested.

"Rockatron is a good name," the captain said, "we'll call it that."

Ethan grinned. The captain had chosen his name! He was just an ordinary person, but his name had been selected!

"Okay, let's go," said the captain.

Everyone ran into the spaceships apart from ten people who had volunteered to look after them. They blasted off and headed back to the space station, excited to find a new Earth.

Chapter 5: A new Earth

The space station moved through space at Warp Speed for a few weeks. Then they discovered three planets in the same galaxy as Rockatron that could potentially be turned into Earths. You couldn't breathe on them like on Rockatron because the air was poisonous but they would deal with that problem later. They had plenty of air in the space station, enough to last for three hundred more years. By then, they would probably have a solution. Everyone got into a spaceship and they landed on one of the planets. It looked a bit like Earth, but the plants and animals were different. As soon as they stepped out of the spaceships, the colonists discovered alien life. They

had landed in a clearing in a forest. Giant birds with one foot and four wings soared around above them. Sabre-toothed wolf-like creatures with yellow spots, three eyes and spikes on their tails chased each other. Green worms wriggled around in the purple grass at their feet. Trees with red wood, rectangular trunks and blue leaves blew in the wind. Everyone stared at the planet around them in amazement.

"What will we do now?" Someone asked.

The captain remained silent.

"What are we going to do?" He asked again.

"I don't know," the captain said.

"But you're the captain!"

"My job is to be the captain of a space station, not the leader of a civilization," the captain replied, "I wouldn't make a good leader. I'm not good at making important decisions."

"Who will be our leader then?" Someone else asked, "does anyone have any ideas what we could do next?"

"I don't know," Ethan said, "maybe we could change our DNA so we can survive on the planet."

"That's actually a good idea!" Someone exclaimed.

Everyone started talking at once. Most of them seemed to agree with the

idea.

"That's a brilliant idea," the captain said, "maybe you should be our leader."

"Me?" Ethan asked, "but I've never been the leader of anything before!"

"This is a good time to start," the captain replied.

"Okay," Ethan said, "I'll be the leader. I hope I don't mess anything up."

Everyone cheered.

"I think we should name this planet before we do anything else," Ethan said, "does anyone have any ideas?"

"You should name the planet yourself," the captain said, "you're very good at naming things. Rockatron was an awesome name!"

"Are you sure?" Ethan asked.

"YES!" Everyone yelled.

"Okay," Ethan said, "I name this planet Evolva, because we are going to evolve and change our DNA."

Everyone cheered. Ethan stood next to the spaceships, wondering where he had gotten the ability to be a leader from.

Chapter 6: Three friends, three ideas

The next day, they started to explore the planet. They watched the alien

animals eating and only picked the fruit they ate. They tried to tame some of them and were successful. Then they gathered DNA from the animals, hoping to find out how they survived on the planet. Ethan was in one of the temporary shelters that had been set up in the clearing. He was looking at a map of the forest that someone had drawn and marking good settlement spots when his Holochat rang. Holochats are little devices for speaking to people who are far away. It creates a hologram of the person you're talking to and behaves a bit like Skype. Ethan pressed a button to accept the call. It was Ryan, one of the people who had stayed on Rockatron!

"Hello," he said, "I need to speak to your leader."

"I am the leader," Ethan said, "what is it?"

"We're in trouble," Ryan said, "The only food on Rockatron seems to be fish in the rivers. They're very tasty but their skin is made of stone. We're finding it hard to cut them and the crocodiles can't eat the skin. Their teeth aren't strong enough to bite through it and I think they're starving. We don't have much to eat either."

"I'll get the captain to take some sharp knives over. Would diamond-bladed knives do the trick?"

"Yes. Thank you very much."

Ethan ran out of the room and told the captain. She had just blasted off with the knives when the Holochat rang again. Ethan sighed and pressed the button. Being a leader was hard work!

Ethan's mouth dropped. The Holochat had a split-screen. Ralph was on one

side and Tim was on the other.

"What are you doing here?" Ethan asked.

"We're the leaders of our colonies now. We're settling the other two Earth-like planets. How are you doing?" Tim asked.

"I'm fine," Ethan said, "I'm the leader of my colony too."

"What a coincidence!" Ralph exclaimed, "what's your plan?"

"We're going to change our DNA so we can survive on the planet," Ethan said, "we called our planet Evolva."

Ralph and Tim gasped.

"That's crazy!" Tim shouted, "why don't you just terraform the planet so it's like Earth? That's what we're doing. We called our planet Groundor because the ground we stand on will change when we terraform the planet."

"You'll kill all the aliens," Ethan said.

"Who cares about the aliens?" Tim asked, "the whole point of the colonies is so that humans survive. We're not supposed to go around making friends with aliens."

Ethan was shocked. He had never disagreed with his friends before. He didn't know what to say.

"Why don't you just use technology?" Ralph suggested, "we're going to use

robots, spacesuits and other technology to survive without editing our DNA. We called our planet Robotron because of the robots we will make to help us."

"Are you sure you want to have to wear a spacesuit when you go outside for the rest of your life?" Ethan asked.

"Technology has gotten us this far and it will get us even further," Ralph replied, "Besides, we are humans, not aliens. You must remember that."

There was an uncomfortable silence between the three leaders, finally broken by Ethan.

"I guess we'd better get back to work," he said, "we've all got a lot to do. Maybe we can visit each other's planets when we are settled in."

"Okay," Ralph said.

"Give us a call when you're ready," Tim said, "remember to be a human, not an alien."

Ralph and Tim hung up. Ethan sat in his chair, staring at the wall. Why didn't Ralph and Tim like his idea? Was Ralph really going to stay inside or wear a spacesuit for the rest of his life? Was Tim really going to terraform the planet, killing all the aliens, who might not be able to breathe Earth air? So much had happened in one day. Ethan was tired and a little bit angry. He went upstairs, lay on his bed and went to sleep. The bed was extremely comfortable because the stuffing was made of extra-soft wool from a sheep-like alien. A few hours later, someone knocked on the door but nobody responded. Ethan was too busy thinking about everything that had happened.

Chapter 7: The injection

Six weeks later, the captain returned. She had successfully delivered the knives with diamond blades and had returned home with strange crystals that looked like rubies. She said the people on Rockatron called it Burnernite and it could light fires. As soon as Ethan picked it up, he felt slightly warmer and much more powerful. He rubbed the Burnernite on a piece of wood, which immediately caught on fire. He put the wood on a campfire outside their settlement, which now had some permanent houses.

The next year was extremely busy. The colonists created several cities and researched the DNA they had gathered. One day, the scientists came to Ethan with some exciting news.

"We've made an injection that will alter our DNA so we can survive here," one of them said.

"Excellent," Ethan said, "I'll gather all the colonists and we'll have the injection."

Half an hour later, all the colonists had been injected.

"You won't feel the change immediately," another scientist said, "but you will slowly change until you are able to survive. Your skin will turn blue, your body will change shape and your hair and eye colour might change. Don't worry about it, you're going to be OK."

After everyone had gone back to work, Ethan went to his house and called the people on Rockatron with his Holochat. Ryan, who was now their leader, answered his call.

"Hello, Ryan! How are things going on Rockatron?" Ethan asked.

"Not too bad," Ryan said, "it's much easier to cut the fish now but the crocodiles are finding it hard to survive. They can't create shelters and they wander all over the planet, trying to find a tree to shelter them from the sun. Of course, there are none. What's it like on Evolva?"

"We discovered two other colonies and created an injection to alter our DNA," Ethan replied, "I need to get the captain to take some over to you. I don't know what to do about the crocodiles though."

"Maybe you could make an injection for the crocodiles," Ryan suggested.

"That's a great idea!" Ethan exclaimed, "I'll tell the scientists immediately! See you later!"

"See you later, alligator," Ryan replied. Then he hung up.

Ethan ran to the research lab and told them about the situation on Rockatron. The scientists now had experience with changing DNA and they came up with an injection in a few weeks. Ethan told the captain to take the injections to Rockatron.

Chapter 8: Rockodiles

Six weeks later, the captain returned again, with even more Burnernite. They had just finished unloading the gems when Ethan's Holochat rang again. He answered the call. It was Ryan!

"I've got some exciting news," Ryan said, "By the way, you look completely

different."

The injection had finished its work on the colonists of both planets, turning everyone blue and allowing them to go outside without spacesuits.

"You look different too," Ethan said, "what's the news?"

"The injection worked," Ryan said, "and it had an interesting side effect. The crocodiles are now made of rock and have diamond teeth. However, they have also become as intelligent as humans. They call themselves Rockodiles and live in groups along the rivers. They use their sharp teeth to dig burrows underground and they have a government that controls all the Rockodiles on the planet. We're now an embassy on their planet. Their eyes glow in the dark so they can see in their burrows and they say they can hold their breath for several years. It hasn't been proved yet but I think they can. They evolve and adapt extremely fast."

Ethan stared at Ryan's hologram with his mouth open, not knowing what to say.

"They can also set their tails on fire with Burnernite and it doesn't hurt them," Ryan continued, "They can shoot fireballs from their tails when they are lit and they can also use it like a rocket's engine to go to space. Their skin protects them from radiation in space so they don't need spacesuits. Most of their bodies can deflect lasers and other advanced weaponry, but their eyes, tummies and mouths are not protected. We know because someone accidentally fired a laser at one of them and it bounced off."

"Wow, that's amazing!" Ethan exclaimed.

"I know," Ryan said, "see you later." He hung up.

Ethan tried to get back to work but he couldn't concentrate. He was too busy thinking about the Rockodiles. They were intelligent aliens, but they had created them. At last, humans had created intelligent life!

Chapter 9: Groundor and Robotron

The next day, Ethan was finally ready to visit Groundor and Robotron. He called Tim and Ralph on the Holochat. They answered and looked at him in surprise and horror. Tim was dressed in clothes that looked exactly the same as on Earth and Ralph wore a modified spacesuit. He was surrounded by robots.

"What have you done?" Tim asked.

"You're an alien!" Ralph exclaimed.

"I had an injection to change my DNA," Ethan explained, "Anyway, I'm ready to see your planets."

"What did we tell you about being a human, not an alien?" Tim growled.

"You can't tell me what to do," Ethan said defiantly. He had never seen his friends like this before. If he could even call them friends now. A tension was building between them. There were three ideas about the future of humans but Ralph and Tim seemed to only want two.

"So, are we going to see each others' planets or not?" Ethan asked.

"Okay," Ralph said, but he was frowning.

"I'm in," Tim said, but his eyes narrowed.

A few hours later, the tour began. They started on Evolva, where Ethan showed the other leaders the cities they had built out of materials on the planet. They looked alien to Tim and Ralph, just like the blue-skinned people who walked around them. They saw the research lab, where scientists were experimenting with other modifications, and looked at it in disgust. Ethan showed them some tame aliens but they refused to touch them, looking at them as if they were cockroaches that had just gone down their pants.

Then they went to Robotron, where Ralph showed them modified spacesuits and robots. They didn't have cities. They were more like outposts, completely sealed up like a spaceship. Wild aliens roamed freely outside, sniffing the outposts curiously. Ethan wondered how anyone could live like that.

Finally, they went to Groundor. There were people everywhere, inside spacesuits and holding spray cans and hoses. They sprayed the alien terrain with it and it turned into something similar to Earth. Cities were everywhere, but they weren't the alien cities of Evolva. These ones looked like cities back home on Earth. As they watched, the people who were spraying passed an alien. The alien looked around in confusion as the world changed. Then it fell to the ground and stopped breathing. Earth air was poisonous to aliens, but the scientists on Evolva had made sure that the injection still allowed people to breathe Earth air normally.

"You're killing the aliens!" Ethan shouted.

"Aliens are pests. We need to terraform the planet, and if that means they

die, we won't object. Survival of the fittest," Tim replied.

"I think it's best to leave them alone," Ralph said, "don't tame them. They are ugly and weird."

"That's why we have to kill them!" Tim yelled.

"That's cruel! What did the aliens do to you to deserve this?" Ethan asked.

"Who are you to tell us how we should treat aliens? You're one yourself!" Tim exclaimed.

Ethan sighed. He wanted to keep arguing but he decided not to. He didn't want to anger the other leaders.

Chapter 10: Rockatron

The last planet they visited was Rockatron. When they got out of their spaceship, they saw some crocodiles made of rock moving towards them.

"Welcome to Rockatron," one of them said, "I am Carl, the leader of the Rockodiles. Why are you here?"

"We want to see your planet," Ethan said.

"Then follow me," Carl said, walking towards a hole in the ground near a river. Carl proved that everything Ryan had said was true. He also showed them the inside of his burrow. There were enough Rockodiles living there for it to be a city. The burrow's layout was similar to a rabbit burrow and it wasn't very exciting. It had one large room filled with Burnernite which they called their arsenal and loads of rooms for sleeping in. They all got to eat

some Rockatron fish and it was extremely tasty, but they all soon got bored.

Eventually, they left Rockatron and returned to their homes. They were all angry. Ethan was angry at Ralph and Tim because they had called him an alien and he was especially angry at Tim, who was killing aliens. Ralph and Tim were angry at Ethan because they thought he had betrayed humankind by becoming an alien. The three leaders didn't talk to anyone when they came back, they just went straight to bed. It was evening when they arrived and they were sleepy, and they also weren't in the mood to talk to anyone. They needed time to be alone and think about the events of the day.

Chapter 11: The war of Ideas

The next day, Ralph got up. His Holochat was ringing so he answered the call. It was Tim.

"Hello Ralph," Tim said, "Ethan seems to have betrayed humankind. We need to do something about it."

"Like what?" Ralph asked.

"I think we should declare war on Evolva," Tim replied.

Ralph thought declaring war was a bit dramatic, but something had to be done about Ethan and he didn't have any better plans.

"Okay, let's go," Ralph said, hanging up.

It was now more than a year after the colonists had first arrived on the planet and they all had loads of spaceships with weapons. Ralph got his together and they blasted off.

Ethan was eating his morning tea when his Holochat rang. He answered it. It was Tim and Ralph, and they didn't look happy.

"You are an alien," Tim said, "you have betrayed humankind. We have declared war on Evolva. You and your strange ideas will be crushed by our military power!"

Ralph opened his mouth to speak but Ethan had already hung up. He was calling Ryan.

"Hello," Ryan said, "what's going on?"

"Tim and Ralph have declared war on us," Ethan replied, "we need your help."

"Unfortunately, I can't tell the Rockodiles what to do, but I'll get their leader," Ryan replied.

Ryan found Carl and gave him his Holochat. Ethan told Carl what had happened.

"Oh no!" Carl exclaimed, "How dare they declare war on you for modifying your DNA? Our DNA has been modified too. We will go and help you immediately!"

"Thanks, Carl," Ethan said.

"No problem," Carl replied. Ryan hung up.

Ethan ran outside to gather his spaceships and they blasted off. As soon as they left Evolva's atmosphere, they saw enemy spaceships. Evolvan spaceships were made out of materials on Evolva and looked alien, with weapons that would look strange to the people from Robotron and Groundor, but they were still the same weapons. They had fast-firing lasers and heavy-damage blasters, just like their opponents. The spaceships of Groundor looked like the spaceships that had blasted off from Earth many years before, but modified to make them stronger. Robotron's fleet also looked similar to spaceships from Earth, but some of them were controlled by robots instead of humans, or were remote controlled from Robotron. Despite the fact that the spaceships looked different, their weapons were very similar. Lasers zapped enemy spaceships and sometimes a blaster would fire a big, round bullet. Lots of spaceships were being destroyed, but they were mostly Evolvan because they were outnumbered. There were just too many enemy spaceships! They were going to lose!

Luckily, there were more spaceships being made on Evolva to replace the ones which had been destroyed. Although things didn't look good for the Evolvans, they were holding their ground. It was very difficult though and one false move might send all their spaceships back to the planet in smoking heaps. Luckily, after ten weeks, when the Evolvan soldiers knew they couldn't hold on for much longer, the Rockodiles arrived! They took longer to arrive than a spaceship would because it's difficult to stay in Warp Speed when your fuel is Burnernite. However, they were not too late! When they arrived, they immediately threw fireballs at the enemy spaceships with their tails and bit a few with their diamond teeth. The Groundor and Robotron forces tried to fight back but their lasers were deflected and hit their own ships. Their blasters were also deflected. They soon discovered that they could hit the Rockodiles by attacking their tummies, but the Rockodiles moved around so it was hard to stay underneath them. The Evolvans and

Rockodiles seemed to be winning now, but it was still quite close.

Chapter 12: An unlikely alliance

Ethan woke up early one morning because his Holochat was ringing. He groaned. It was probably Tim and Ralph trying to convince him to surrender. He answered the call anyway. It was Ralph.

"What do you want?" Ethan snapped. He was angry with Ralph and his tiredness was making him even angrier.

"I'm having trouble with Tim," Ralph said.

"Sort it out yourself!" Ethan shouted, "you've attacked my planet, woken me from my sleep and now you want me to help you? That's ridiculous!"

"Ethan, you don't understand," Ralph said, "I want to switch sides and join you in the war."

"Why?" Ethan asked suspiciously.

"I came up with a plan to build robot bodies for everyone on Rockatron and put their minds in them," Ralph said, "It's because they don't want to wear spacesuits when they go outside for the rest of their lives."

"So basically you want to turn yourselves into robots?" Ethan asked.

"Yes," Ralph replied, "but Tim didn't like it. He started calling us robots and saying that we had also betrayed humankind. I have realised that even if we defeat you, Tim will just attack me afterwards. So I want to join you."

"I don't like Tim either," Ethan said, "he calls us aliens and kills all the wild aliens on his planet. I am going to let you join us, but if you do anything suspicious, we will attack you."

"Thank you," said Ralph, "Are we going to attack Groundor?"

"Yes," Ethan said, "we are going to attack Groundor this afternoon. We must stop Tim and save the aliens on his planet. Are you ready?"

"I'm ready," Ralph said. He hung up.

Chapter 13: Attacking Groundor

At lunchtime, the Rockodiles and the Evolvan fleet were fighting the Groundor and Rockatron fleets. Ralph was pretending to still be loyal to Tim but he had ordered his soldiers to avoid hitting their new allies while making it look like an accident. Tim called Ralph on his Holochat to say that Ralph's soldiers were useless and hadn't shot a single opponent since 7 AM that morning and Ralph replied that they were probably just having a bad day. Tim accused Ralph of being a robot and a traitor again but didn't realise what was going on. At 1 PM the Robotron fleet suddenly turned on the Groundor fleet. The Groundor fleet was pushed back to their planet and most of their spaceships were destroyed. The Rockodiles and the Evolvan and Rockatron fleets chased the survivors into Groundor's atmosphere and landed. Then the fight resumed on the ground. The Rockodiles still threw fireballs at people and bit them but the Evolvan and Rockatron soldiers switched to their ground weapons. They had space lasers and blasters, smaller versions of the ones on the spaceships, and also space snipers, machine guns, rifles and grenade launchers. The Groundor soldiers had similar weapons but there were less of them. On the ground, it was harder to hit the Rockodiles' tummies so they made a lot of progress by

themselves. They did about half the work. Eventually, the Grounder soldiers surrendered and the allies took over a nearby city.

The war on Grounder continued for a few weeks. More Grounder soldiers surrendered and more cities were captured. Eventually, the allies reached the Grounder capital and attacked it, capturing Tim. According to the soldiers' reports, Tim was holding a space machine gun and fired lots of bullets around his room. Five soldiers were killed by them but eventually a soldier with a space sniper shot his leg, injuring him. He dropped his weapon and surrendered.

Tim was brought to the old Evolvan space station, which was still flown by the captain. The other residents of Grounder were forced to leave the planet and join one of the other two colonies. Ralph and Ethan planned to create a spray similar to Tim's which would reverse what he had done and restore the aliens' habitat. One tenth of the planet still had aliens in it so restoring the planet was still possible. But first, the allies needed to speak to Tim.

Chapter 14: Talking to Tim

On the space station, Ethan, Ralph and the captain sat on chairs in a meeting room. Carl lay on the floor. There was one empty chair in the room. A door opened and two guards entered, dragging Tim behind them. They forced him to sit on the chair and stood behind it. Tim looked around the room. He was furious.

"LET ME GO!" He yelled, "OTHERWISE I WILL KILL YOU ALL!"

"You don't seem to be in a position to do that," Ethan said.

Ethan, Ralph, the captain and the guards all had space rifles and Carl raised

his burning tail threateningly. Tim was unarmed.

"YOU HAVE ALL BETRAYED THE HUMAN RACE!" Tim said, "YOU ARE ROBOTS AND ALIENS!"

"We're trying to make a deal with you," Ralph said, "we don't want to kill you but we will if we have to."

The guards pointed their space rifles at Tim's head. Tim sighed. "What do you want?" He asked.

"We want you to make a spray that will restore Groundor to how it looked like before you arrived," Carl said, "we would make one ourselves, but you already know what you put in your spray so it would be much quicker to ask you."

"Why do you want me to make this spray?" Tim asked, "why do you want to destroy everything I have built? Why do you like the aliens so much that you would attack me to save them?"

"Because they are living creatures," Ethan said, "you don't kill humans so you shouldn't kill aliens either. You were killing living creatures and we had to do something about it."

Tim wanted to protest but he was aware of the guards looming behind him so he said, "I will start working on this spray immediately."

A few weeks later, Tim finished making the spray and workers were sent to Groundor. A few months after that, the planet was restored, apart from the buildings. They decided to leave the planet unsettled just in case another

colony arrived and wanted it. Tim was offered jobs on both planets but he refused to join either colony so he was kept in a prison on Robotron.

While all this was happening, scientists on Robotron were researching how to download a human brain into a robot and creating test robots. Eventually, they finished and all the citizens of Robotron became robots. Ralph was very excited to show Ethan and called him on his Holochat immediately.

Ethan, who was having a holiday on the space station, answered the call.

"Hello Ethan," Ralph said.

"Who are you?" Ethan asked.

"I'm Ralph," Ralph said, "we downoladed our brains into robots today."

"Wow!" Ethan said, "you look completely different!"

Ralph was now a humanoid robot made of shiny steel with red eyes.

"You look different from when you first arrived on Evolva too," Ralph said. They both laughed. The captain entered the room Ethan was in.

"How are you going to reproduce?" Ethan asked.

"We don't have to," Ralph said, "when our robot bodies wear out, we can download ourselves into new bodies. But if we ever need to increase our population size, we'll use artificial intelligence."

"It's bad enough having artificial intelligence in spaceships and space

stations," the captain said.

Hey! That's not very nice! The space station's computer protested.

"Shut up," the captain said.

I like Ralph, the space station's computer said, *his ideas are amazing.*

"Thank you," Ralph said.

"Could you please go away?" The captain asked, looking at a camera on the wall, "we're trying to have a conversation here."

Sure, the computer replied.

The captain sighed. "The problem with artificial intelligence is that they are intellegent," she said.

"See you later, Ralph," Ethan said.

"See you later," Ralph replied. He hung up.

Chapter 15: Aliens!

After he came back from his holiday, Ethan decided to visit Robotron again and see what had changed after the citizens had become robots. Everything was different. All the outposts were being destroyed and recycled. Giant cities with artificial intelligence everywhere were being built. The lifts asked you if you wanted them to play a song and the cars drove themselves. Aliens no longer roamed the streets outside the buildings. They were kept out by a big wall. Ralph had decided not to tame the aliens and he still thought they

were weird and disgusting but he made sure he didn't destroy their habitat. Although most of the planet was settled by Robotron citizens, there were a few large areas left untouched. In these areas, aliens roamed freely and lived their lives without human interference. Ethan was impressed.

Nothing major happened for a few years after that. The Evolvans, the Rockodiles and the Robotron citizens lived peacefully together. However, one day, two mysterious spaceships were spotted flying over Rockatron. A few weeks later, the same two spaceships were also seen flying over Evolva and Robotron. When they flew over Evolva and Rockatron, it was night-time and not very many people saw them, but when they flew over Robotron, it was 8 AM. Ralph was polishing his feet when his foreign advisor burst into the room.

"Ralph!" He exclaimed, "you have to see this!"

"What is it?" Ralph asked.

"Spaceships flew over Robotron!" The foreign advisor yelled, "they looked really weird. They could have been aliens! We filmed it on the telescope! Come and have a look!"

Ralph ran to the observatory. The robotic telescope was at the top of a big tower and they ran up the stairs as fast as they could.

Why don't you just use me? A robotic lift asked.

"I didn't see you," Ralph said.

But I was right in front of you! The lift exclaimed.

Ralph didn't reply. He ignored the lift's moans about being ignored and how offended it was. Finally, he reached the top.

"Where are the videos of these spaceships?" He asked.

What was that? The telescope asked, *I was on Sleep mode. I save power that way.*

Ralph sighed and repeated his question.

I'll put it on the screen, the telescope said. A computer screen next to it flickered to life and a video started playing. Two spaceships slowly moved across the sky. Zooming in, Ralph saw that one of them was small, yellow and streamlined with two lasers, one on each wing. The other one was green and grey. It was covered in armour and had three lasers on each wing. Both of them looked nothing like the spaceships of Robotron and Evolva. They were definitely aliens.

"This is amazing," Ralph said, "I must tell Ethan and Carl." Carl now had his own Holochat, modified for Rockodile use. This made it easier to talk between the three planets. Ralph raced down the stairs, despite protests from the lift, and ran home. He picked up his Holochat and called Ethan and Carl.

Chapter 16: Contact

Ethan was supervising some builders who were building a town hall in a suburb of Evolva's capital city. Suddenly, his Holochat rang. He pressed a button to accept the call. It was Ralph and Carl.

"Hello, Ralph. Hello, Carl," Ethan said, "what's happening?"

"I don't know," Carl said, "ask Ralph."

"What's happening, Ralph?" Ethan asked.

"Aliens flew over Robotron," Ralph said, "we recorded a video of them."

"My citizens reported seeing aliens too but I was asleep in my burrow at the time," Carl said.

"My citizens saw them too, but I was in bed," Ethan said.

"They shouldn't be far away," Ralph said, "if we are fast we can catch up to them."

"I hope they're friendly," Carl said.

"Let's go!" Ethan exclaimed.

"Okay, see you both soon," Ralph said, hanging up.

Ethan quickly put on his spacesuit and got in the nearest laser spaceship, telling the driver to take him to the space station.

A few hours later, Ethan and Ralph were in the space station. Carl was still on his way, he would take six weeks to get there. The captain put the space station on maximum speed and headed towards the alien spaceships.

Don't go so fast, the space station's computer complained, *you might*

crash. I'm too young to die.

"We have to go fast to catch up to those aliens," the captain replied, "Besides, I won't crash. I trained for ten years. And you're extremely old by the way. You were created a hundred years before we started our journey to find another Earth."

What if the aliens attack us? The computer protested, *I'm unarmed! I'd blow up! After we get back to Evolva, you really need to give me a few space blasters.*

"I'm not going to give you any weapons," the captain replied, "I don't believe in fighting."

The computer didn't say anything but if it had eyes, it would probably be rolling them. Two hours after they set out, the space station finally caught up to the aliens. They tried to contact the aliens using Holochat, radio and morse code but the aliens didn't seem to understand what they were saying. They didn't have Holochats or any devices that could pick up Holochat or radio signals. They didn't seem to understand morse code either. However, they eventually decided to go into the space station's docking bay, which the captain had left open. The docking bay closed and everyone on the spaceship went there. Ethan, Ralph, the captain, the ship's crew and the guards all entered the docking bay and saw four aliens standing in front of them. One of them was humanoid, yellow and a bit smaller than a human. It was holding a yellow gun that looked a bit like a space laser. The other three were mostly green but they had metal parts on them and their left arms had no hands. They were replaced by metal guns that also looked a bit like space lasers. They had three eyes, two arms and three legs. The yellow alien started talking in a strange language extremely fast. When they realised the

humans couldn't understand it, the other three aliens started talking in a squeaky, scratchy language. Eventually, they realised the humans couldn't understand that either.

"Hello," Ethan said, "can you understand me?" There was no reply. Nobody knew what to say or do. They had finally discovered aliens, not aliens created by humans like the Rockodiles but real aliens. However, they couldn't communicate with them.

Chapter 17: Clever aliens

The aliens started talking among themselves. The yellow alien was using a strange device with a microphone and bits that went over its ears, allowing it to talk in the language of the other three. It pointed to the device, pointed to the humans and pointed to what looked like a camera in one alien's pocket. The alien nodded and walked towards the humans, holding the camera. It pointed at Ethan's mouth and opened its own mouth.

"What's it trying to do?" Ralph asked.

"I don't know," the captain said.

"I think it's trying to record us speaking so it can create a translation device," Ethan said. He gave the alien a thumbs up. The alien pressed a button on his camera and Ethan started talking. He told the alien who he was, which planet he lived on and where he came from. Then the alien held up a hand and he stopped. The yellow alien stepped forwards, took the camera and pointed to Ralph's Holochat. Ralph held it up and the alien took several pictures of it. Then all four aliens waved and walked back to their spaceships.

"Open the docking bay," the captain said.

What was that? The space station's computer said, *I didn't hear you. I was in Sleep mode, saving power.*

The captain sighed.

"Don't worry," Ralph said, "The Als on Robotron do the same thing."

The captain repeated her command and the docking bay started opening.

"No!" The captain yelled, "wait for us to get out first!"

You should have given me clearer instructions, the computer said, waiting for all the humans to leave the docking bay. Then the docking bay opened and the aliens left.

A few months later, Ethan's Holochat rang. He answered the call. It was Ralph and two aliens! The aliens must have successfully created their own Holochats. There was one yellow alien and one green alien. Ethan noticed that they were both wearing translation devices.

"Hello," the yellow alien said in perfect English, "I am President Zac, leader of the Quickdash. We live on a planet called Zoomar."

"Excuse me," Ethan said, "we need to call someone else." He quickly called Carl, who had been informed about the alien meeting and had decided to go back to Rockatron. Zac repeated his introduction.

"And I am King Klaww, leader of the Tritons," the green alien said, "Our

planet is called Tritiara. Who are you, and where do you come from?"

Carl, Ralph and Ethan introduced themselves.

"Nice to meet you," Zac said, "shall we see each others' planets?"

"Okay," Ethan said, "we'll start on Robotron. That's the planet with the robots and the big metal buildings on it."

"We'll see you there," Klaww replied.

"Wait for me," Carl said, "I'll take six weeks to get there."

"Okay," Ethan said. He hung up.

Chapter 18: Alien planets

Six weeks later, all the leaders were on Robotron. They started by showing the aliens Robotron, Evolva and Rockatron. The aliens liked Evolva and Robotron a lot. Klaww liked Robotron best and Zac liked Evolva best. However, neither of them liked Rockatron or its inhabitants. It wasn't unusual to hate Rockatron, but nobody on Robotron or Evolva hated the Rockodiles. They were very friendly.

"Things move so slowly on this planet," Zac complained, "and it's so boring! The planet, the Rockodiles, everything! Everything is boring!"

"It's not good to rush things," Carl said, "it's better to do things slowly and get everything right than to do it quickly but get it wrong and have to do it again."

"And there's no technology," Klaww whined, "they don't even have any weapons apart from their teeth and Burnernite."

Carl and the human leaders tried as hard as they could to make the aliens like the Rockodiles, but the aliens kept complaining.

"I think we've spent enough time on this planet," Ethan said eventually, "now you should show us your planets."

The aliens nodded and told everyone to follow them. They blasted off and eventually got to another solar system with two planets that supported life on it. One of them was Zoomar and the other one was Tritiara.

They landed on Zoomar first. The first thing Carl, Ethan and Ralph noticed was that everything was yellow. There was yellow grass and a few yellow trees. The houses were yellow, the footpath was yellow, the hills were yellow and the sky was yellow. Lots of Quickdash zoomed past so fast they were just blurs. Zac told them that Quickdash could move and talk very fast. They could reach speeds of 100 kilometres per hour so they didn't need cars and they spoke a strange language called Fast-tongue. Their clothes and buildings looked a lot like human clothes and buildings from Earth, except they were all yellow. For weapons, they had lasers that didn't do much damage but fired really fast so you did a lot of damage overall. Their main spaceships were the Speedorz, a small one-person spaceship. Each Speedorz had two lasers, one on each wing. They had no armour but could move extremely fast so they were hard to hit. They also had a few unarmed space stations, like the Evolvon and Robotron citizens. They also had a government that controlled the whole planet and a space army that used Speedorz called the Speedorz Squad. At the end of the tour of Zoomar, Zac gave everyone a sweetcorn. The sweetcorn was made on Zoomar and it was

yellower than normal sweetcorn. It was a lot sweeter too.

Then they went to Tritiara. Klaww told them that the planet used to be completely green with a lot of metal under the surface. The Tritons dug the metal up and used it to make parts of the planet metal. Eventually, the whole planet would be made of metal. They used metal and technology to modify their bodies too. There were a few trees but most of them had been chopped down. The Triton army, the Triple Lasers, used lasers similar to the Quickdash lasers which were attached to the ends of their arms, replacing their hands. The Tritons lived in buildings similar to the Quickdash buildings except grey and their spaceships were the Triple Tanks, which had lots of armour and three lasers on each wing. They couldn't move very fast but took ages to destroy because of their armour. The Tritons were a monarchy, and King Klaww was their leader.

Ralph, Ethan and Carl said they liked the alien planets, although they secretly didn't like Tritiara that much. The Tritons were destroying the planet's wild animals by making it metal, but Carl, Ralph and Ethan didn't want to make King Klaww angry. The aliens replied that they liked Robotron and Evolva a lot, but they didn't like Rockatron and the Rockodiles were boring. Carl was a bit offended but kept quiet, not wanting to start another war. He remembered the war against Groundor and didn't want it to happen again with different planets. They all said goodbye and went home, but they weren't happy. The aliens were unhappy because they hated the Rockodiles. They just weren't right. They were monsters and they had to be destroyed. Carl and the human leaders were unhappy because the Rockodiles had been called boring. When Ethan and Ralph arrived home and the citizens of their planets saw how unhappy they were, they became unhappy too because they remembered what had happened last time their leaders were angry. The war.

Chapter 19: Attack on Rockatron

The next day, President Zac's holochat rang. He picked it up. It was King Klaww.

"What's going on?" Zac asked.

"I think we need to do something about the Rockodiles," Klaww said.

"Like what?" Zac asked suspiciously. He suspected that King Klaww secretly wanted to rule over the whole galaxy. Maybe Klaww was trying to trick him into sending his armies somewhere so that he could attack Zoomar. He thought he had seen a greedy look in Klaww's eyes when the humans were giving him a tour of their planets. Still, he hated the Rockodiles. They were slow, boring and weird.

"I think we should declare war on them," Klaww said, "they are monsters. We have to destroy them."

"Okay," Zac said. His suspicion was gone. He couldn't wait to shoot Carl!

"We'll set off for Rockatron this afternoon," Klaww said, "I'll see you there." He hung up.

Zac told the Speedorz Squad what was happening. They started preparing immediately.

A few weeks later, Carl woke up. There was talking above his burrow. He gathered all the Rockodiles in the burrow together and they went up to investigate. Lots of Quickdash and Tritons were pouring out of their

spaceships. When they saw the Rockodiles, they started firing. The Quickdash ran around really fast while firing their lasers. The Tritons stayed in one main group and slowly marched closer, firing their own lasers. Most of the lasers bounced off the Rockodiles' scales and some of them hit other Quickdash and Tritons, but a few Rockodiles were killed.

"We need to set our tails on fire!" Carl yelled, "go to the Burnernite chamber!"

The Rockodiles disappeared back into their burrow.

"They're running away!" One of the Tritons exclaimed.

"It might be a trap," a Quickdash said, "let's send a few soldiers down to investigate."

Five Quickdash soldiers and five Tritons walked into the burrow. The Rockodiles had finished setting their tails on fire, apart from Carl, who had turned on his Holochat. They walked out of the chamber, ready for battle, and saw the ten unfortunate aliens in front of them. They threw fireballs at them. Four of the Quickdash and all five Tritons were killed. The last Quickdash ran out of the burrow, screaming. His bum was on fire!

"It's a trap!" One of the Tritons yelled, "everyone move back five metres!"

The aliens moved back. The Rockodiles burst out of their burrow and threw fireballs at the aliens. Several aliens were killed, mostly Tritons. The aliens responded by firing lasers but only five Rockodiles were killed. The Rockodiles were winning. The aliens were being pushed back towards their spaceships. Eventually, they would have to blast off and continue the fight in

space.

Chapter 20: The humans arrive

Ethan was eating lunch when his Holochat rang. He answered the call. It was Ralph and Carl.

"Nice day today," Ethan said, "what's happening?"

"We're being attacked," Carl said.

"Who's attacking you?" Ralph asked.

"The aliens," Carl said.

"Do you need any help?" Ethan asked.

"At the moment we're winning," Carl said, "but we'll need your help after we force them off the planet. We're better at fighting on the ground than in space."

"We'll set off at once!" Ethan exclaimed. He hung up and gathered his spaceships.

A few weeks later, Ethan and Ralph's spaceships arrived at Rockatron. The aliens had been pushed off the planet and the battle was now in space. Lasers and blasters were fired everywhere. Fireballs zoomed around the battlefield and a Rockodile bit a Speedorz in half. The Speedorz circled around the battlefield, firing their lasers. The Triple Tanks, the Rockodiles and the human forces stayed in big groups and concentrated on one target at a time. The Speedorz were hard to hit but lasers fire really fast and the

human forces fired so many of them that a few hit. A few Speedorz exploded. The Triple Tanks were harder to kill. Lasers, blasters and fireballs hit them but they seemed to do almost no damage at all. Eventually, one of them exploded, proving that they weren't indestructible. The humans and the Rockodiles were winning. Their opponents were slowly being pushed back towards their planets.

It took a few months for the aliens to be pushed back to their planets. There weren't very many Speedorz left now; most of them had been destroyed. More Speedorz were being made on Zoomar, but not fast enough to replace the ones that were destroyed. Quickdash were fast, but not *that* fast. There were still quite a few Triple Tanks left. Now there was a difficult choice to make. Which planet would they attack first?

Chapter 21: King Klaww never surrenders

One morning, Ethan, Ralph and Carl were on Rockatron, deciding which planet to attack first. Then Ethan got a call on his Holochat. He answered it. It was Zac.

"What do you want?" Ethan asked.

"I surrender," Zac said, "your forces are too strong. I have realised that being slow is okay and the Rockodiles aren't as boring as I thought they were. They fight amazingly."

"Okay, we will stop attacking you," Ralph said, "but if you attack us, we will destroy you."

"Okay," Zac said, "I'll see you again after the war."

"See you later, alligator," Carl said, "I'm glad you saw the power of the Rockodiles."

Ethan hung up. "That makes our choice a lot easier," he said, "we'll attack Tritiara this afternoon."

As soon as Zac surrendered and his Speedorz started moving back towards Zoomar, the Triple Tanks attacked them. King Klaww was really angry. He and Zac could have ruled the galaxy together, feared by everyone, but the coward had surrendered! Now he had to be destroyed. Luckily, the Rockodiles and human spaceships blocked the way to Zoomar. That afternoon, they attacked. The Triple Tanks were now outnumbered and they were destroyed. The allies landed on Tritiara and got out. Some Tritons started firing lasers at them immediately but the Rockodiles threw fireballs and the humans fired lasers and blasters. A soldier with a space machine gun shot down five Tritons and a Triton killed two Evolvans and a Robotron soldier. A Triton was hit by a fireball and was burned to death. A soldier with a space sniper shot a Triton officer and a Rockodile was killed by ten Tritons. (It took ten Tritons to kill one Rockodile and five of them were wounded by the time they killed it.) There was a city nearby. It was made of metal and it had several buildings on the surface. Trapdoors led underground, into the planet, where there was a giant underground building. The allies attacked and captured the city. The war continued for several months, but eventually the soldiers reached the Triton capital, Steelspike. They attacked King Klaww's palace and eventually got through the guards to King Klaww's throne.

"You have lost," a Rockodile officer said, "surrender now."

"NEVER!" Klaww yelled, "KING KLAWW NEVER SURRENDERS!" He picked up a

laser which was lying next to his throne and shot a Robotron soldier. The allies attacked. Five soldiers were killed by Klaww and it took another five to hold him down. The soldiers put Klaww in a spaceship and took him to the space station, where Carl, Ethan, Ralph, Zac and the captain were waiting. As soon as the Tritons saw their king being dragged into a spaceship, they surrendered.

Chapter 22: Talking to Klaww

King Klaww walked into the room, escorted by two guards with space shotguns. He was furious. Ethan, Ralph, Zac and the captain were sitting on chairs and there was one empty chair. Carl was on the floor, under Ethan's chair. It was the same room Tim had been interviewed in. The guards forced Klaww to sit down.

Klaww looked around the room and saw Zac. "YOU TRAITOR!" He yelled, "WE COULD HAVE RULED THE GALAXY TOGETHER BUT YOU CHICKENED OUT! YOU'RE A COWARD AND A TRAITOR!"

"Zac did the right thing," Carl said, "he saw that he was losing the battle and realised that Rockodiles aren't that bad after all. Surrendering was the right thing to do. Now you should do the same."

"KING KLAWW NEVER SURRENDERS!" Klaww shouted, "I WILL KILL YOU ALL! THE TRITONS WILL KEEP FIGHTING! THEY WILL SAVE ME AND I WILL RULE OVER THE WHOLE GALAXY, FEARED BY EVERYONE!"

"Actually, the Tritons have already surrendered," Ethan said.

"THEN I WILL KILL YOU MYSELF!" Klaww shouted. He knocked the guards away. They flew across the room, hit the wall and fell to the ground,

unconscious. King Klaww advanced towards Ralph, who was the closest target. He reached out and snatched the space rifle out of his hand. Then he pointed it at Ralph's head.

"Help!" Ralph yelled.

"Everyone calm down," the captain said, "we don't want to kill you but we'll have to if you keep behaving like this."

You don't want to kill him? The space station's computer asked, *but he's going to shoot Ralph! You have to stop him!*

"Everybody surrender otherwise I will shoot him," King Klaww said. The leaders looked around helplessly. There was no way they could stop King Klaww before he shot Ralph. They were going to have to surrender. They were just about to drop their weapons when someone zoomed past and knocked the space rifle out of Klaww's hands. It was Zac! He was the only person who was fast enough to stop Klaww.

"Everyone get out of the way!" Carl yelled, lighting his tail with Burnernite. Everyone moved out of the way, except for King Klaww, who Zac had pushed over. Carl raised his tail and threw a giant fireball at Klaww.

"NOOOOOO! I WILL BE BACK!" King Klaww shouted as he was burned to death. Eventually, he was just a pile of glowing embers on the floor.

Yay! The space station's computer said, *you saved Ralph!*

"These embers will take a long time to clean up," the captain said, glaring at Carl, "why couldn't you just bite him to death?"

"Fireballs look better," Carl said, "besides, he deserved it."

"Thanks for helping us, Zac," Ralph said, "if it wasn't for you, we would have lost. King Klaww is very tough!"

Chapter 23: The End

After the war, the Tritons were told they could still keep their planet but they weren't allowed to have their own weapons or make the whole planet metal. There were still a few wild animals left on the planet and their numbers slowly increased over time. The Quickdash joined the alliance with the Rockodiles, Evolvans and Robotron citizens. Carl said they would make good ally-gators. They also started trading with each other and Zac was forgiven for fighting against the other allies. There were no more wars for a long time and they all lived happily ever after. Especially the Robotron citizens, who lived forever.

The End