

THE TWELVE LABOURS OF THE HERCULES

THE <sup>CANOSA  
+ SUNYER</sup>  
ROBOTONS  
AND THE HYDRA OF LERNA



bromera



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# THE ROBOTOTS

The universe is infinite.

Astronomers say that the part we see from here has a diameter of more than 90 billion lightyears and contains 100 billion galaxies.

One of those galaxies, called the Milky Way, is made up of 300 billion stars.

And around one of those stars, called the Sun, orbit eight planets and a load of smaller objects, like satellites, dwarf planets and comets.

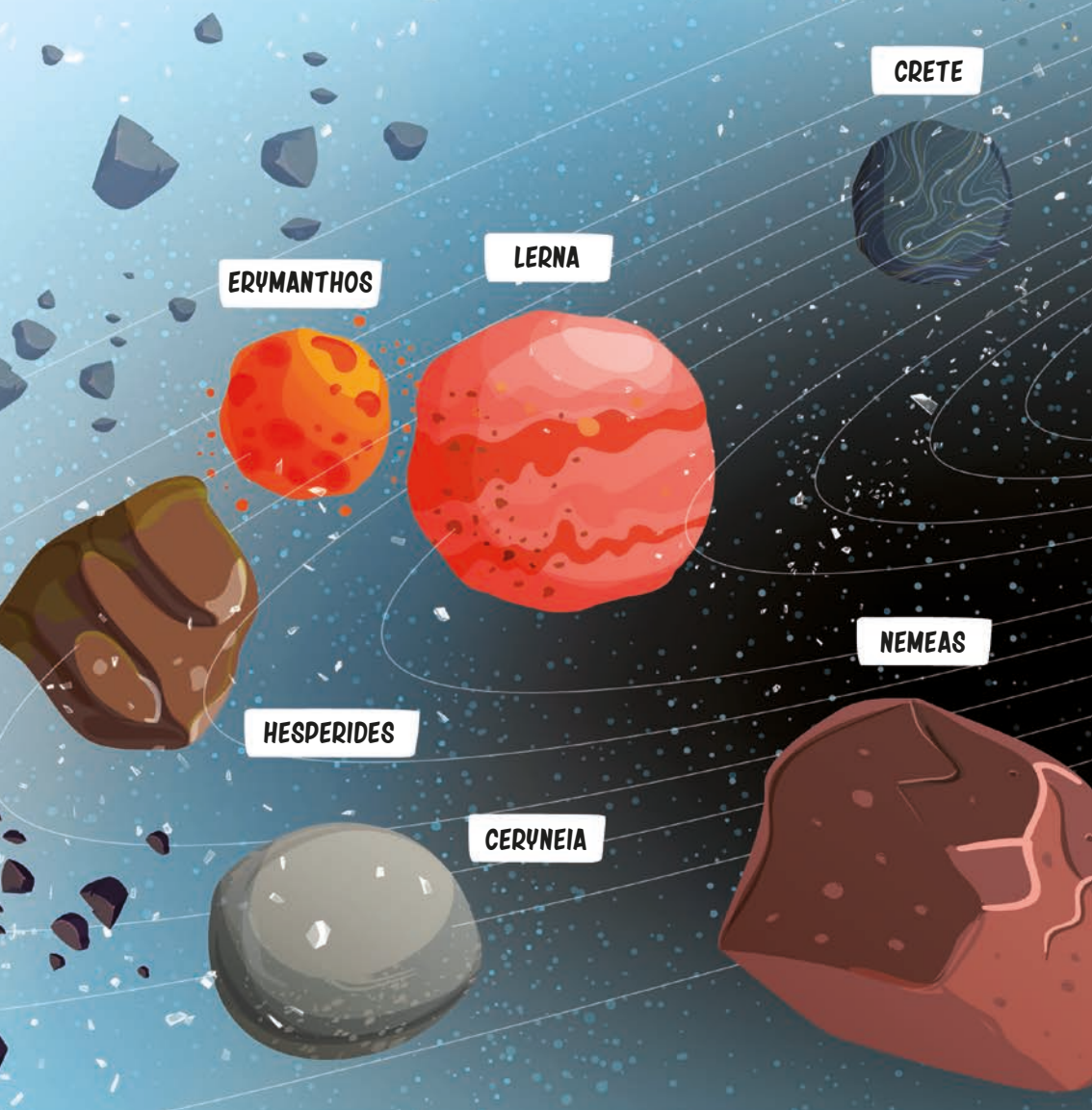
The third-closest planet to the Sun is called Earth and is full of friendly creatures, such as lemurs and snails.



But I don't know why I'm telling you all that now, because our story starts very far from here, in the Arcadia galaxy. A galaxy which is also made up of a bunch of stars and all that...Well, if you want the exact details, you can look them up online.

Arcadia is 148 million lightyears from Earth. For those who prefer to measure in kilometres, that's  $1.4 \times 10^{21}$ km. In other words: very, very far.

Look closely, can you see a spaceship?



ERETRIA

TYMPHALIA

HADES

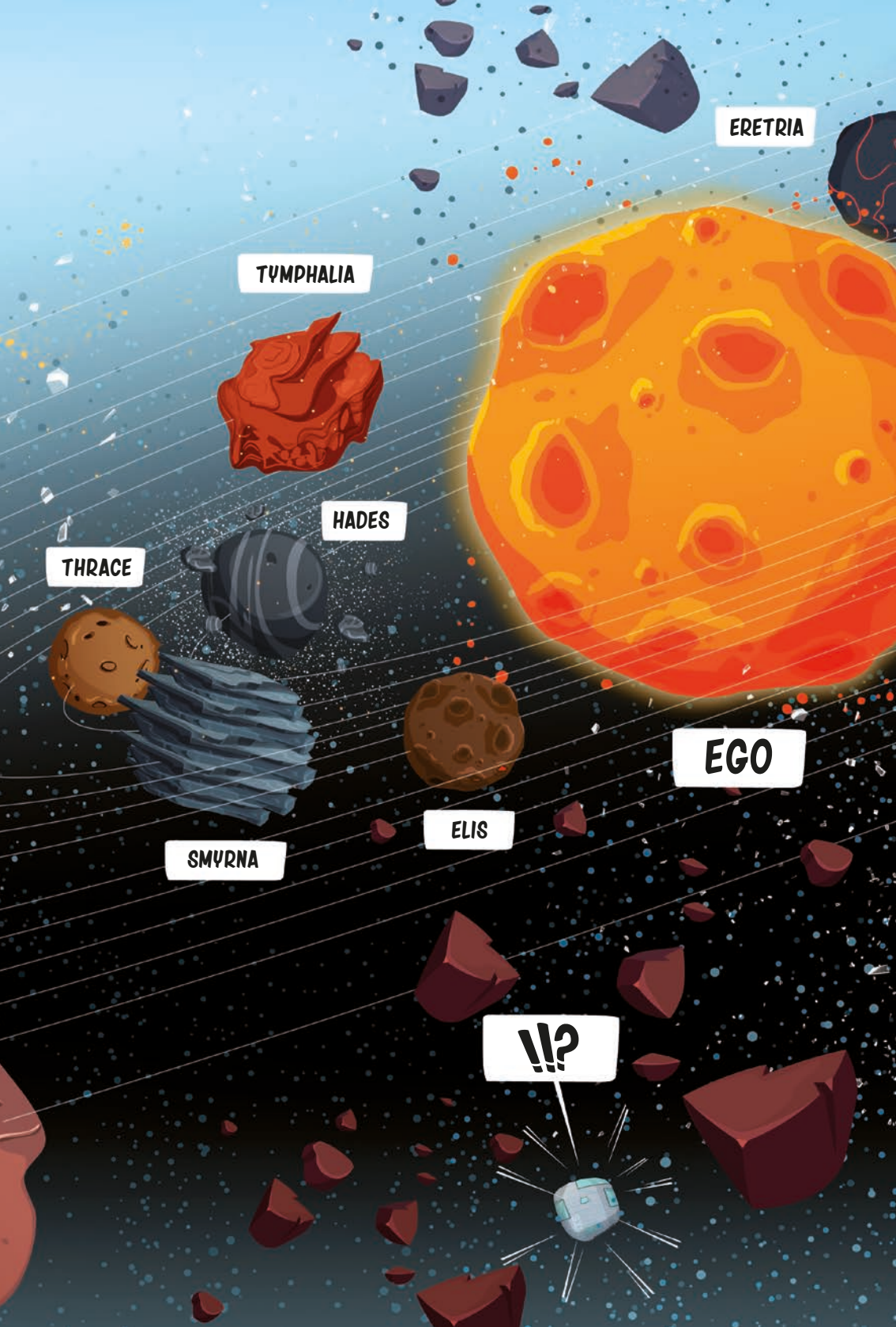
THRACE

EGO

ELIS

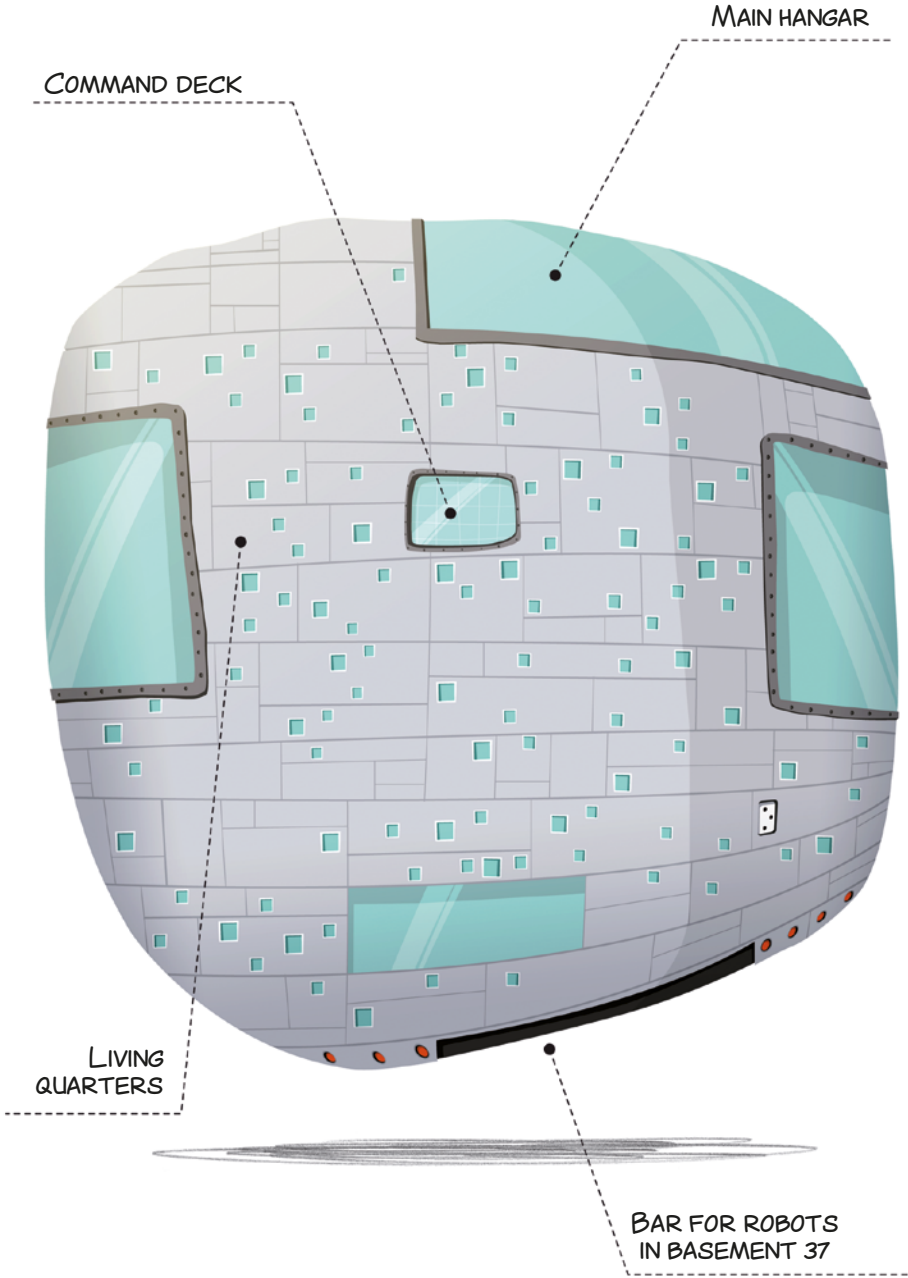
SMYRNA

!!?





It's the *HMIS Hercules*, a prison ship where planet Earth's Space Navy sends all the brutes they want rid of.



THIS IS  
COMMANDER EURYS-  
THEUS, THE HIGHEST  
AUTHORITY ON BOARD.

I'M IN CHARGE  
HERE!

HIS OFFICIALS,  
THE PILOTS, THE  
ENGINEERS

THE TECHNICIANS,  
THE SOLDIERS

I'M THE MOST  
IMPORTANT ROBOT!

THE SERVANTS'  
SERVANTS

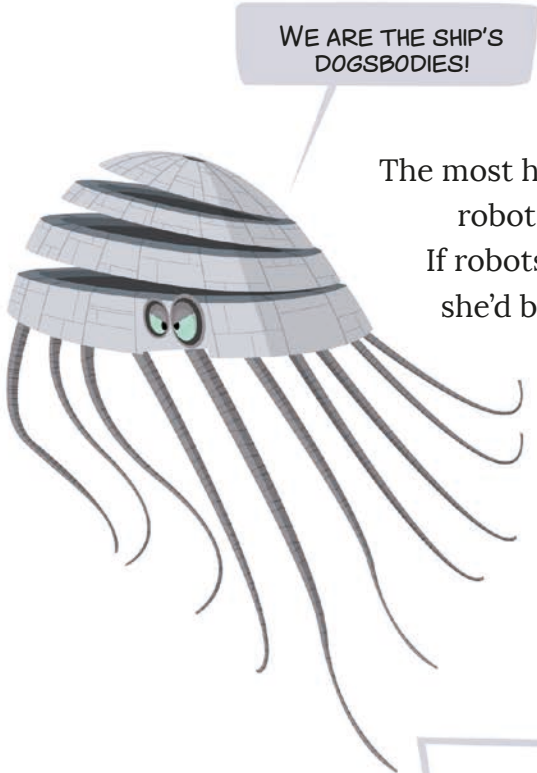
THE SERVANTS

THE CHEF, THE ROBOT COOK, THE ROBOT MECHANICS, THE  
MAINTENANCE ROBOTS AND THE JUICER.

Wow, you're  
heavy!

AND THE ROBOTOTS, WHO MAKE UP THE LOWEST LEVEL OF ALL THE CREW.  
THEY ARE EVEN BELOW THE JUICER.

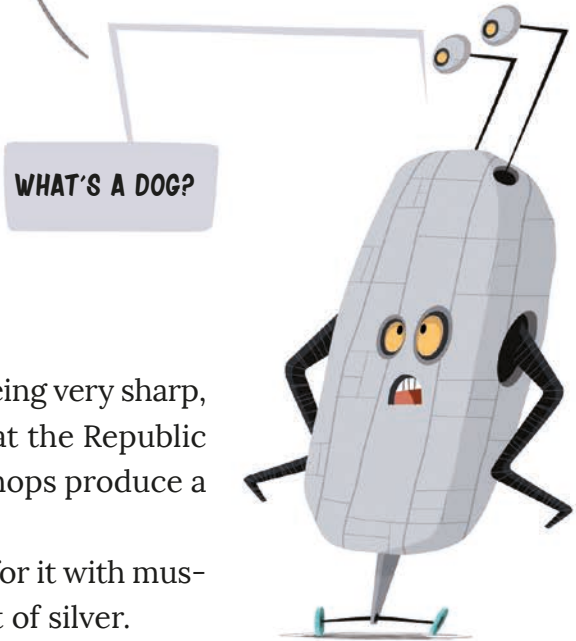
These are the Robotots:



WE ARE THE SHIP'S DOGSBODIES!

## POP

The most hyperactive and stressed robot in the Known Universe. If robots were allowed holidays, she'd be the perfect candidate.



WHAT'S A DOG?

## ROB

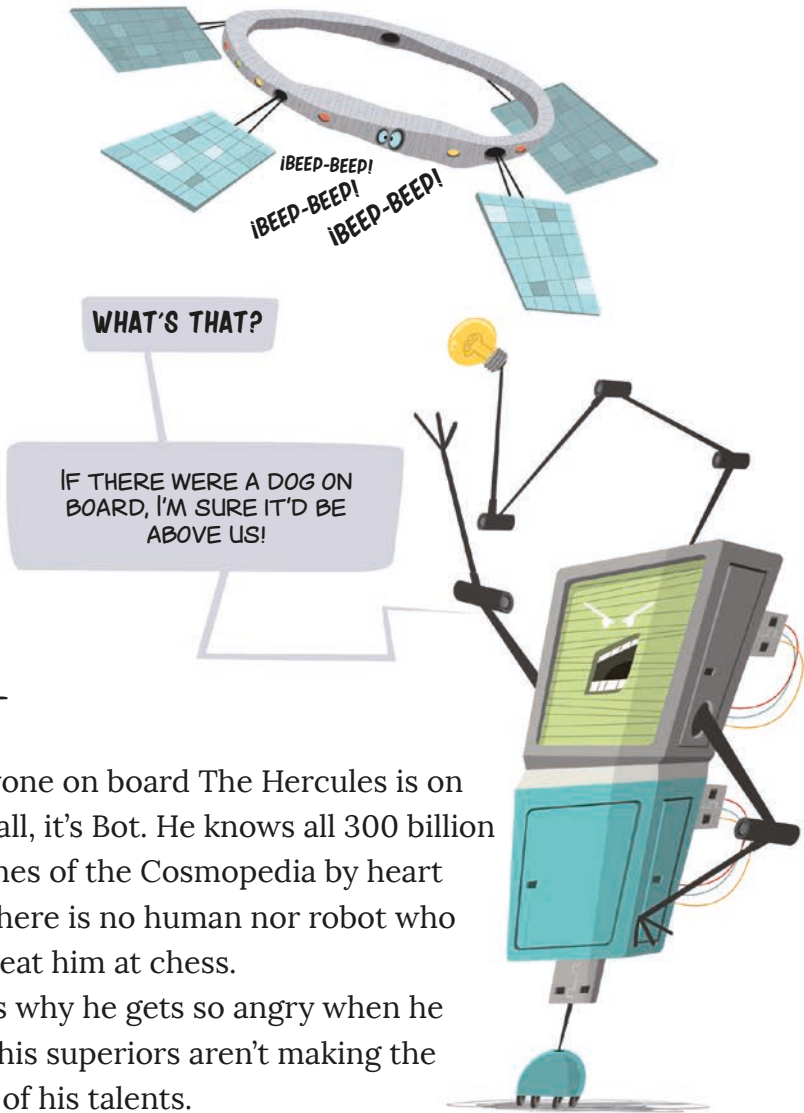
Robots are known for being very sharp, but Rob is the proof that the Republic of Earth's cyber-workshops produce a bit of everything.

That said, he makes up for it with muscles of steel and a heart of silver.



# BEEP

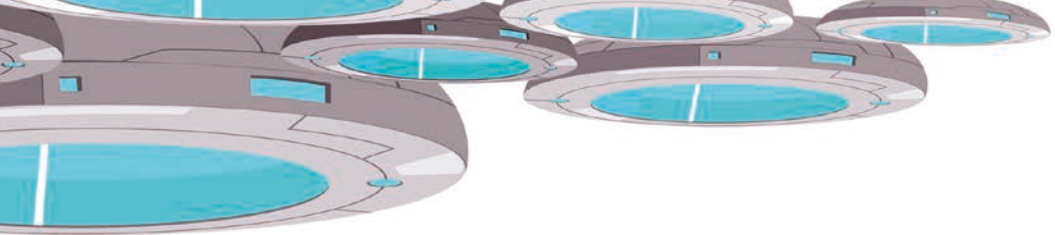
Some robots just have bad luck and Beep is one of them. If anyone is going to get hurt, it will probably be him. Luckily, he can count on Bot's knowledge to repair him. No one is too sure what his skills are, and as he can't speak, he can't tell us.



# BOT

If anyone on board The Hercules is on the ball, it's Bot. He knows all 300 billion volumes of the Cosmopedia by heart and there is no human nor robot who can beat him at chess.

That's why he gets so angry when he feels his superiors aren't making the most of his talents.



Every evening, when their work is done, the service robots on the *HMIS Hercules* gather together to drink a glass of motor oil in the robot bar in basement 37. Everyone is there: the maintenance robots, the waiter robots, the mechanic robots and...in a corner by themselves, the Robotots.

Today they are very angry because they have spent all day unblocking the ship's officials' toilet. And it's not a very pleasant task!



The Robotots don't have a set job assigned, they just do whatever no one else wants to. They are good for anything. Well, not everything: only the unpleasant, tiring, dangerous, dirty, thankless, repetitive jobs in places where it's too hot or too cold, at crazy times of day and without any safety measures.

Luckily, as robots don't have feelings, they don't mind doing these kinds of jobs.

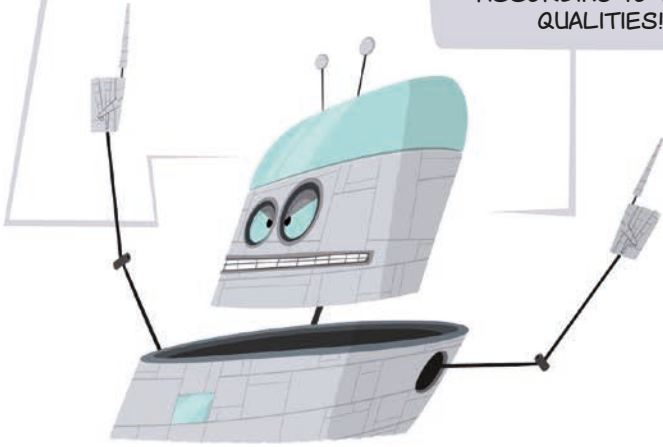
OUR SUPERIORS  
ARE THE ONES WITHOUT  
FEELINGS!

WE DON'T MIND, HE SAYS.  
I CRY EVERY MORNING  
WHEN I GET UP FOR WORK.



**DON'T COMPLAIN  
SO MUCH, ROBOTOTS!**

**EVERYONE IS VALUED  
ACCORDING TO THEIR  
QUALITIES!**



This is Chef, the head of the *HMIS Hercules'* robotic kitchen. He is pedantic, arrogant, despotic with the other robots and stinks of garlic. But he makes the best potato omelette in this part of the Universe and thanks to that he has the highest rank of all the robots on the ship.

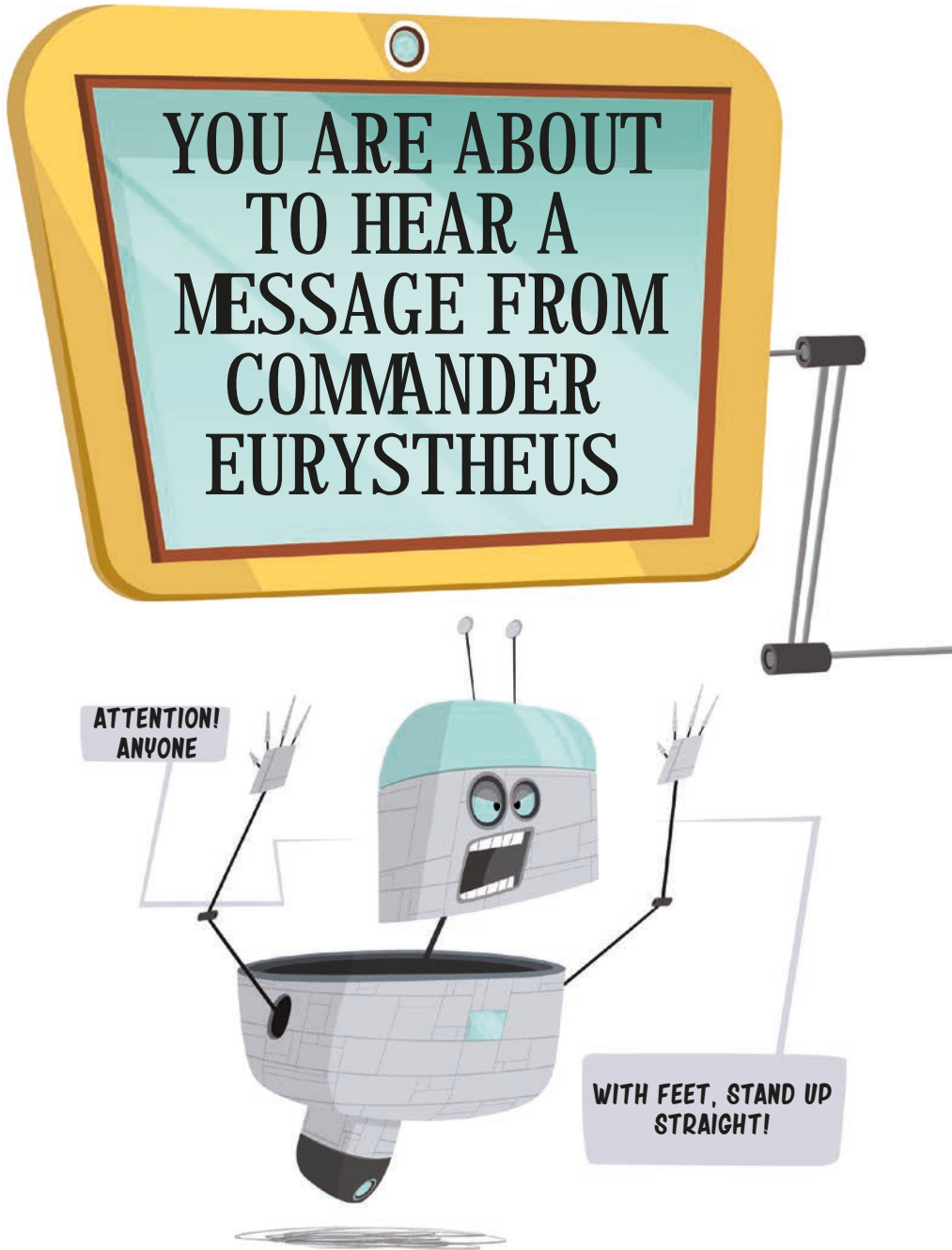
**EASY FOR YOU  
TO SAY**

**YOU JUST HAVE TO MAKE SURE  
THE KITCHEN ROBOTS PEEL  
THE POTATOES RIGHT...**

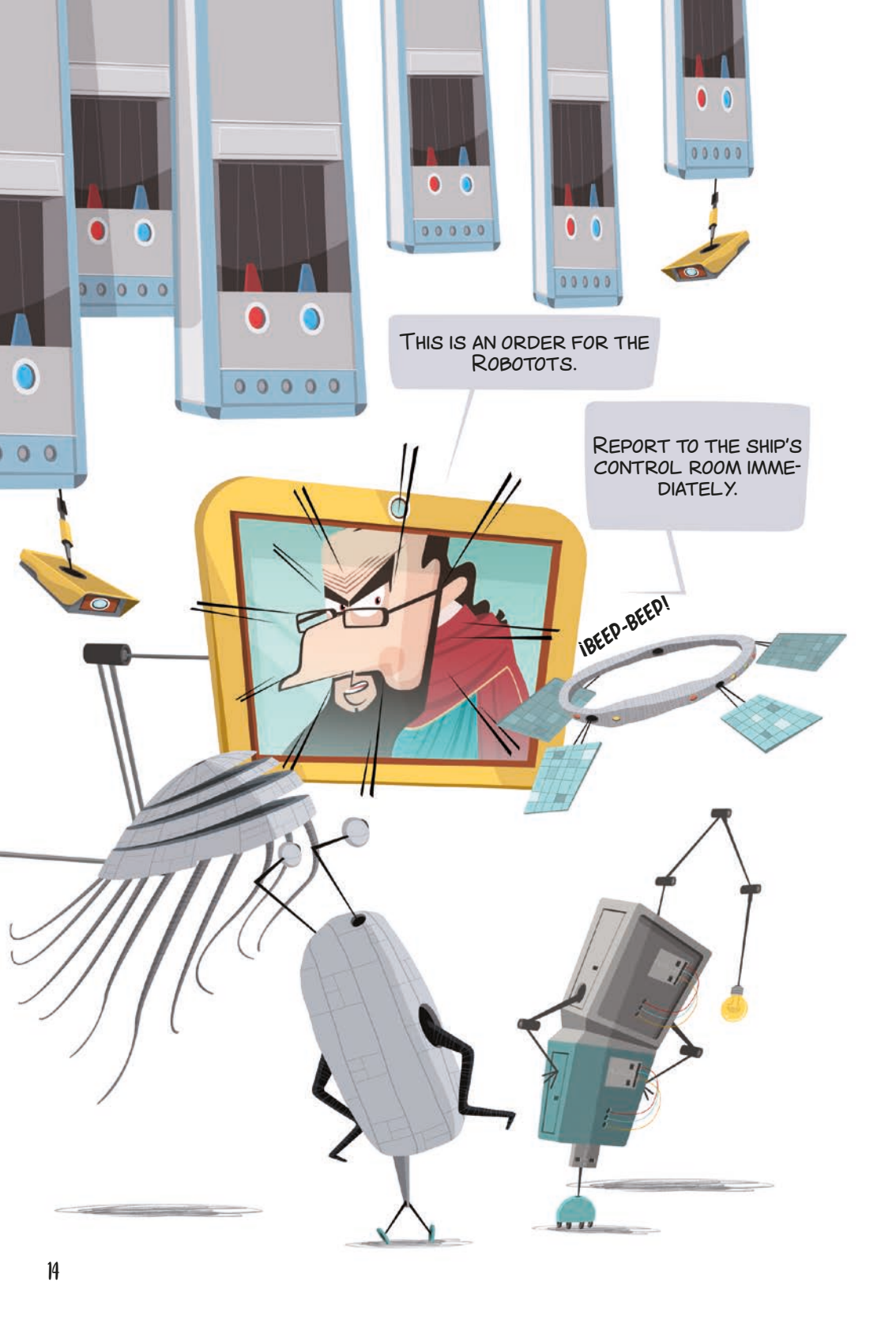
**...AND BEAT THE EGGS  
ENERGETICALLY.**



Suddenly, the big screen in the bar turns on and a message appears:



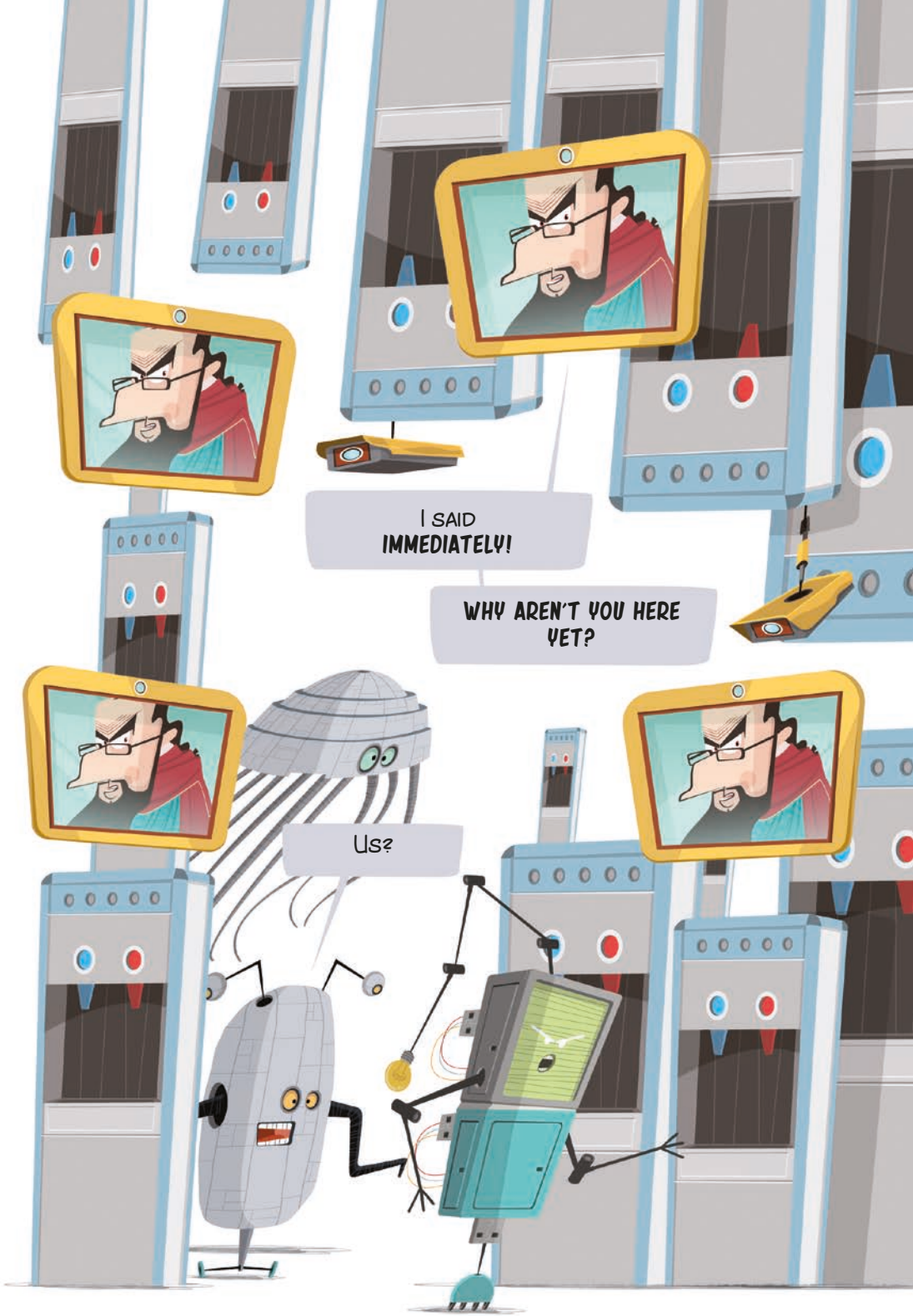




THIS IS AN ORDER FOR THE ROBOTOTS.

REPORT TO THE SHIP'S CONTROL ROOM IMMEDIATELY.

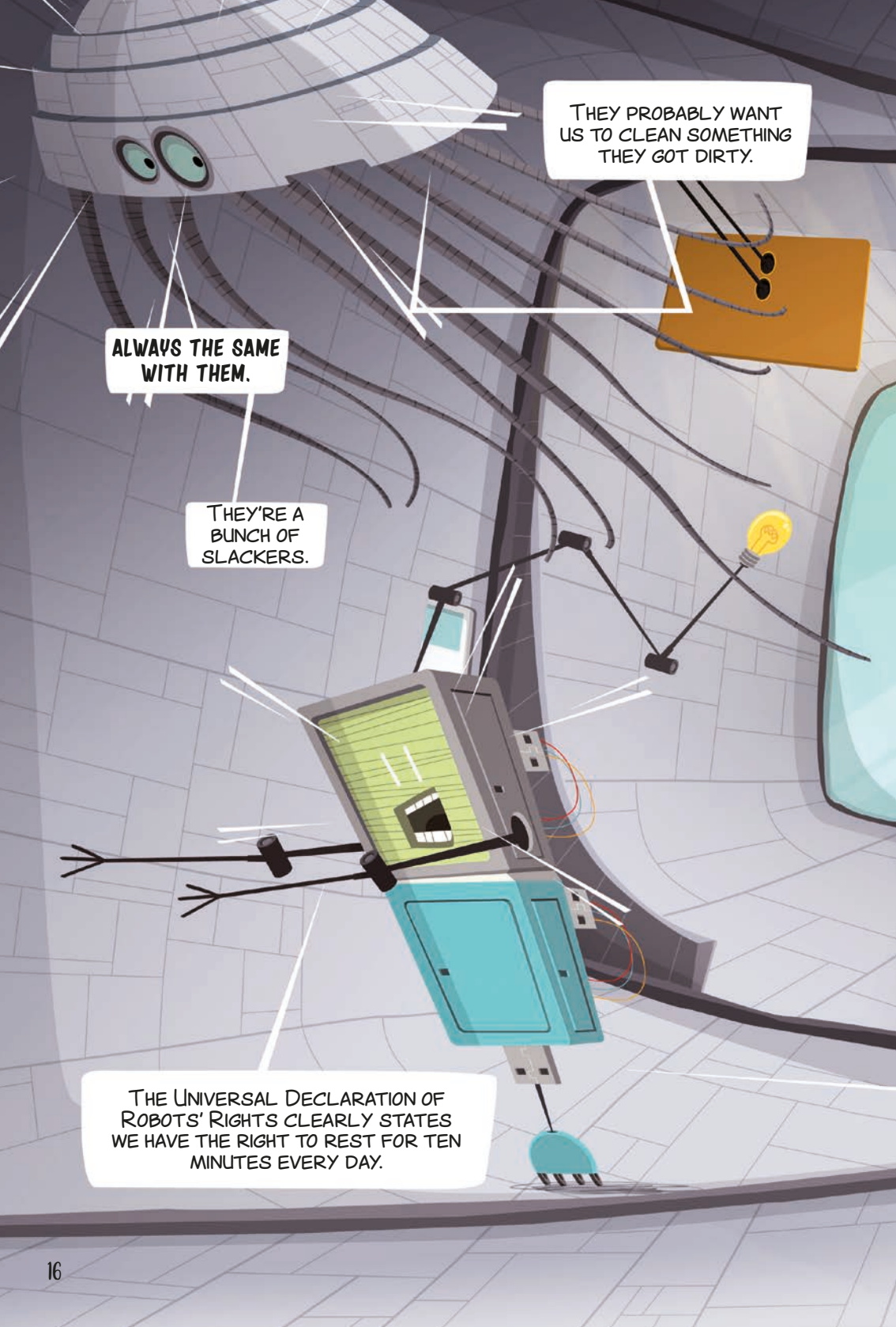
IBEEP-BEEP!



I SAID  
IMMEDIATELY!

WHY AREN'T YOU HERE  
YET?

Us?



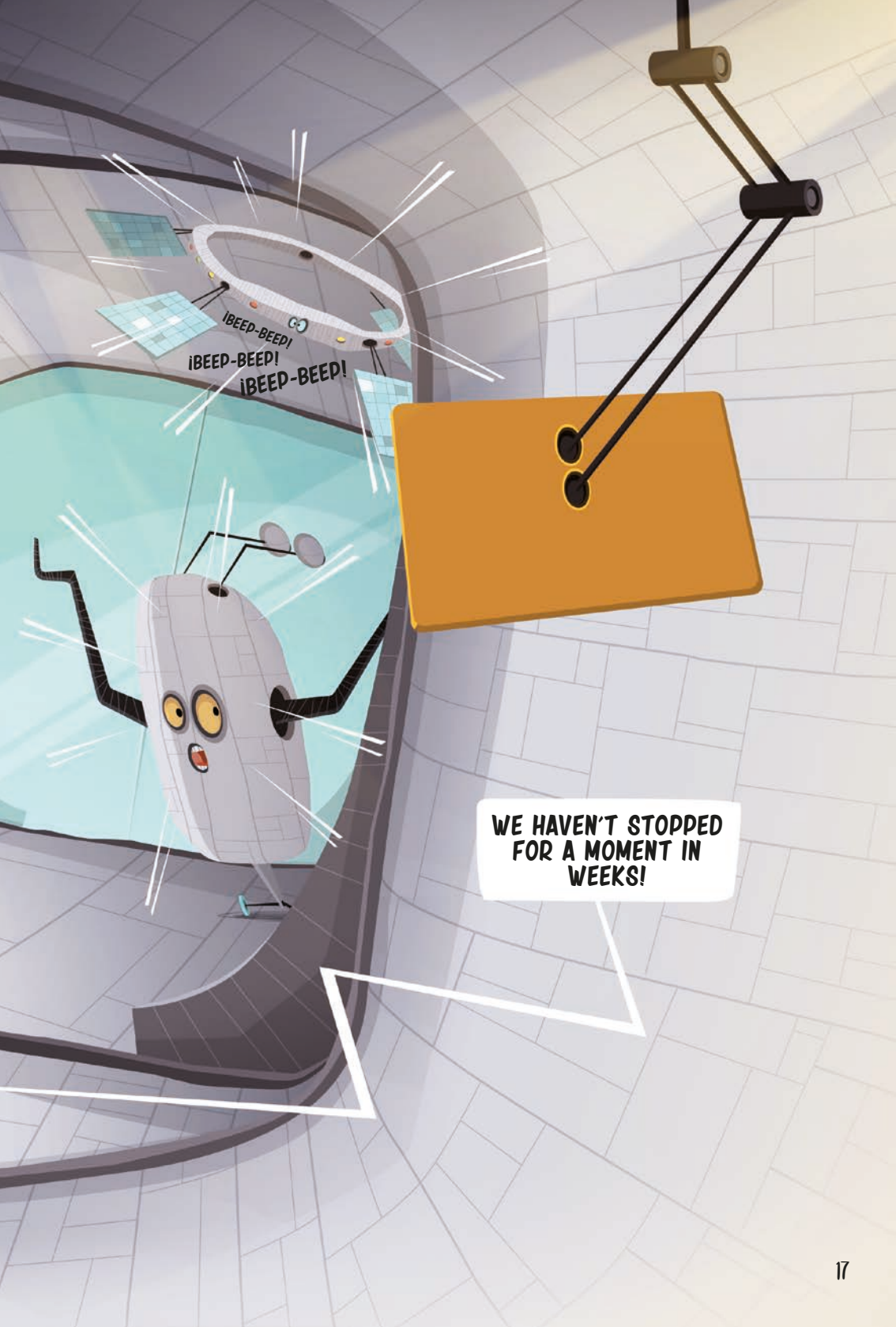
THEY PROBABLY WANT US TO CLEAN SOMETHING THEY GOT DIRTY.

ALWAYS THE SAME WITH THEM.

THEY'RE A BUNCH OF SLACKERS.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF ROBOTS' RIGHTS CLEARLY STATES WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO REST FOR TEN MINUTES EVERY DAY.





IBEEP-BEEP!  
IBEEP-BEEP!  
IBEEP-BEEP!

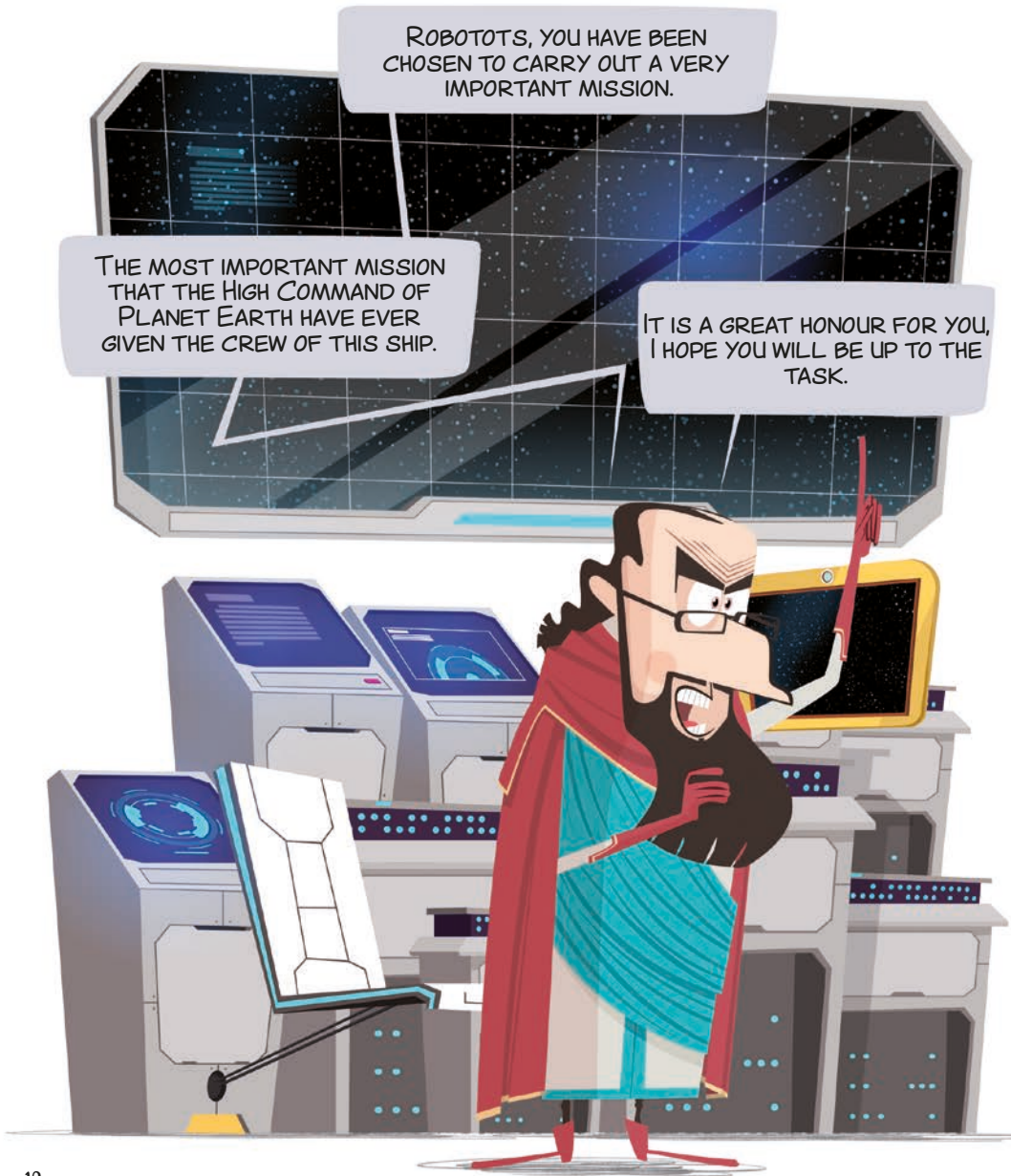
**WE HAVEN'T STOPPED  
FOR A MOMENT IN  
WEEKS!**

It's the first time that the Robotots have gone into the control room. They know the kitchens, bathrooms, machine rooms and store rooms inside out, but they have never set foot in the room where the important things are decided and where the officials give their orders to the crew and robots.

ROBOTOTS, YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN TO CARRY OUT A VERY IMPORTANT MISSION.

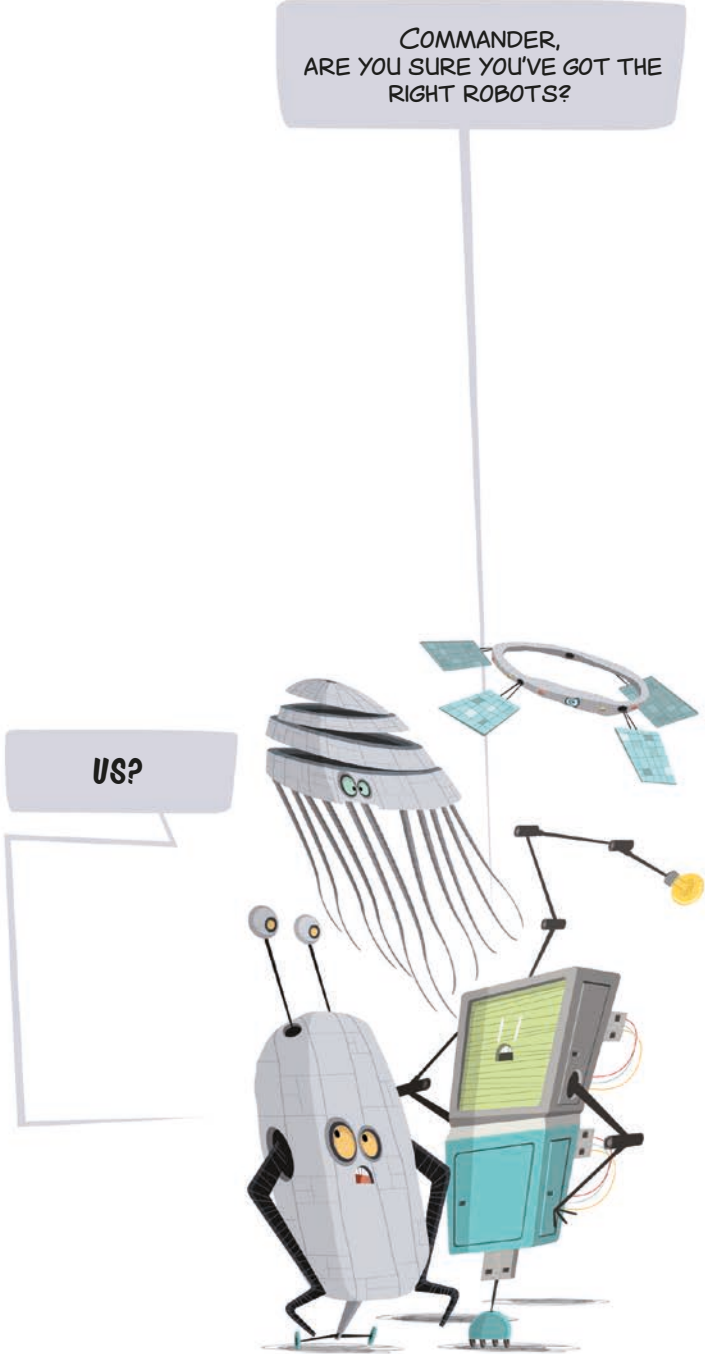
THE MOST IMPORTANT MISSION THAT THE HIGH COMMAND OF PLANET EARTH HAVE EVER GIVEN THE CREW OF THIS SHIP.

IT IS A GREAT HONOUR FOR YOU, I HOPE YOU WILL BE UP TO THE TASK.





The Robotots have come to feel very small and insignificant.





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## THE MISSION

Actually, it didn't go exactly like that. If you want to understand where our story began, we'll have to go on a journey back in time and space. Specifically, two hours back and  $1.4 \times 10^{21}$ km to the right, if the universe can be said to have right and left.

We're going back to planet Earth.



We're in the meeting room of the Planetary Military Staff. Sat at the head of the table is President Hera, leader of the Republic of Earth. The one talking is General Delfos, her right-hand man.

THE HERCULES IS BY FAR THE WORST SHIP IN THE INTERSTELLAR FLEET.

IT HAS NEVER COMPLETED A MISSION SATISFACTORILY.

ITS CREW ARE GOOD-FOR-NOTHING SLACKERS.

IT'S TRUE, PRESIDENT, THANKS TO THEM, UNIVERSAL WAR THREE ALMOST BROKE OUT.

AND WHAT CAN WE DO TO GET RID OF THEM?



WHAT IF WE SEND THEM  
ON AN IMPOSSIBLE  
MISSION?

A MISSION THEY WILL  
NEVER COME BACK  
FROM?

GENERAL, DO YOU MEAN A  
SUICIDE MISSION?



WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT, IT  
SOUNDS A BIT STRONG, BUT...  
YES.

PEOPLE WITH GOOD INTENTIONS  
AND EMPATHY NEVER BECOME  
GENERALS, EVERYONE KNOWS  
THAT.





General Delfos' idea was accepted quickly. Time to get to work.



...ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS CORNERS OF THE UNIVERSE, AND ASK THEM TO DO SOMETHING IMPOSSIBLE.



LIKE TAKING ON THE MONSTER OF PLANET LERNA.





THE HYDRA?

THAT'S CRAZY!

THEY WON'T LIVE TO TELL THE TALE!

EXACTLY!

IT'S NOT A BAD IDEA...

And now, we board *The Hercules* again: we travel back the  $1.4 \times 10^{21}$ km from planet Earth to the Arcadia galaxy, where we left the poor Robotots with Commander Eurystheus about to explain their mission.



Just think: you must be the readers who have racked up the most kilometres in the history of literature!



ROBOTOTS, PRESIDENT HERA HAS PERSONALLY CHOSEN YOU TO GO TO PLANET LERNA...

...AND FREE ITS INHABITANTS FROM THE MONSTER WHICH TORTURES THEM DAY AND NIGHT.



ARE YOU SURE SHE CHOSE US?

DOES SHE KNOW US?



YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW ALL THE DETAILS ABOUT HOW YOUR SUPERIORS MAKE DECISIONS.







IT'S A KIND OF GIANT SERPENT  
WITH LOTS OF HEADS...

WHICH EATS ANYTHING WHICH  
COMES NEAR, WHETHER  
FLESH AND BONE OR IRON AND  
SCREWS.

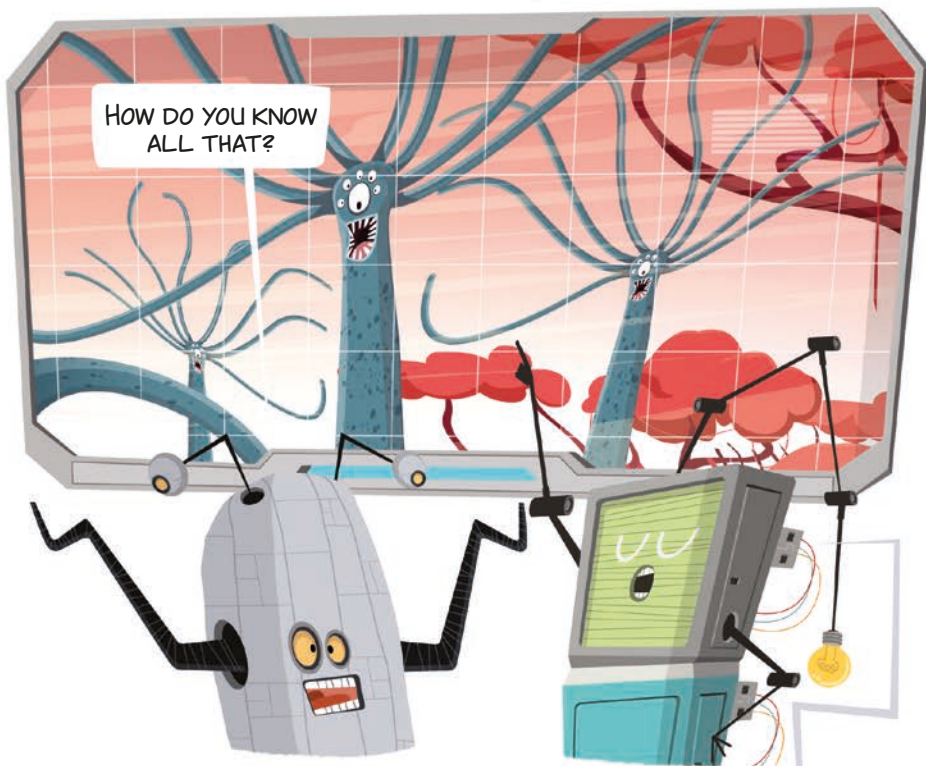
WHENEVER SOMEONE MANAGES  
TO CUT OFF ONE OF ITS HEADS,  
IT GROWS TWO MORE.



IT'S PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE!

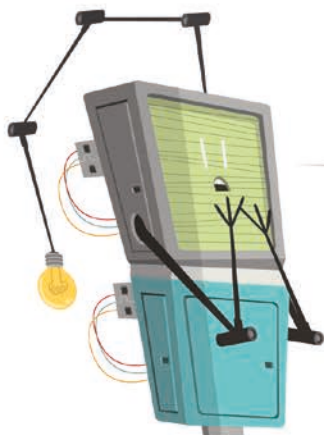


HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THAT?



IT'S IN THE COSMOPEDIA!

JUST LOOKING AT IT MAKES ME TREMBLE!



The commander made it clear to the Robotots that if he had chosen them to carry out the mission the president had given the ship, it was because he thought it too dangerous to send humans.



THAT'S WHY I HAVE CHOSEN YOU, GOT IT?



IF YOU DON'T COME BACK, NO ONE WILL CARE.

WE WILL.



THAT DOESN'T MATTER.



EVERYONE KNOWS ROBOTS DON'T HAVE FEELINGS.

YOU DON'T MIND DYING FOR THE HERCULES' CREW.

IF YOU SAY SO, SIR...

I'M NOT SO SURE.





ENOUGH  
CHIT-CHAT, POT.


BEHAVE LIKE A  
ROBOT.

MY NAME'S NOT  
POT, SIR.

IT'S BOT!

I'VE NO INTENTION OF  
WASTING MY TIME LEARNING  
YOUR NAMES.

WHATEVER.



IN ANY CASE, I DON'T THINK  
ANY OF YOU WILL SURVIVE.





There's no going back now: the Robotots' mission has begun!

Will they be able to defeat the strong, dangerous, disgusting, enormous, repulsive, invincible and bloodthirsty Hydra?

And most importantly (for them!): will they manage to get out of planet Lerna alive?

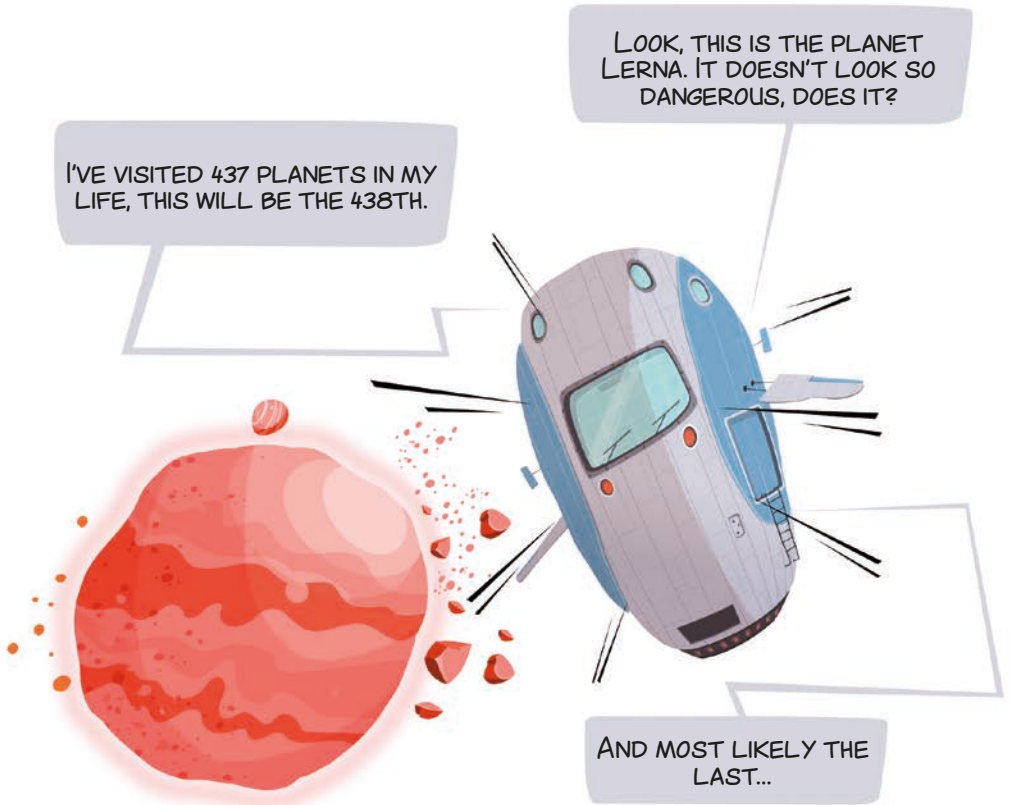




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# ALCYONE LAKE

The mission is underway! Hold on to the book tightly with both hands and let's join the Robotots for what will probably be the final hours of their lives.



The *Macaria* rescue ship lands quietly in a swampy area. Planet Lerna's atmosphere is very similar to Earth's and humans can breathe without difficulty, although that is of little concern to the Robotots because they don't have lungs.

I DON'T SEE A PARKING METER AROUND HERE. I HOPE WE DON'T GET A FINE.

NOW WE JUST HAVE TO FIND THE HYDRA...

ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO FIND IT? WE COULD STILL TURN BACK...



MAYBE THAT BOY CAN HELP US  
FIND IT.

THE COSMOPEDIA SAYS THE  
HYDRA LIVES IN ALCYONE LAKE,  
NOT FAR FROM HERE.

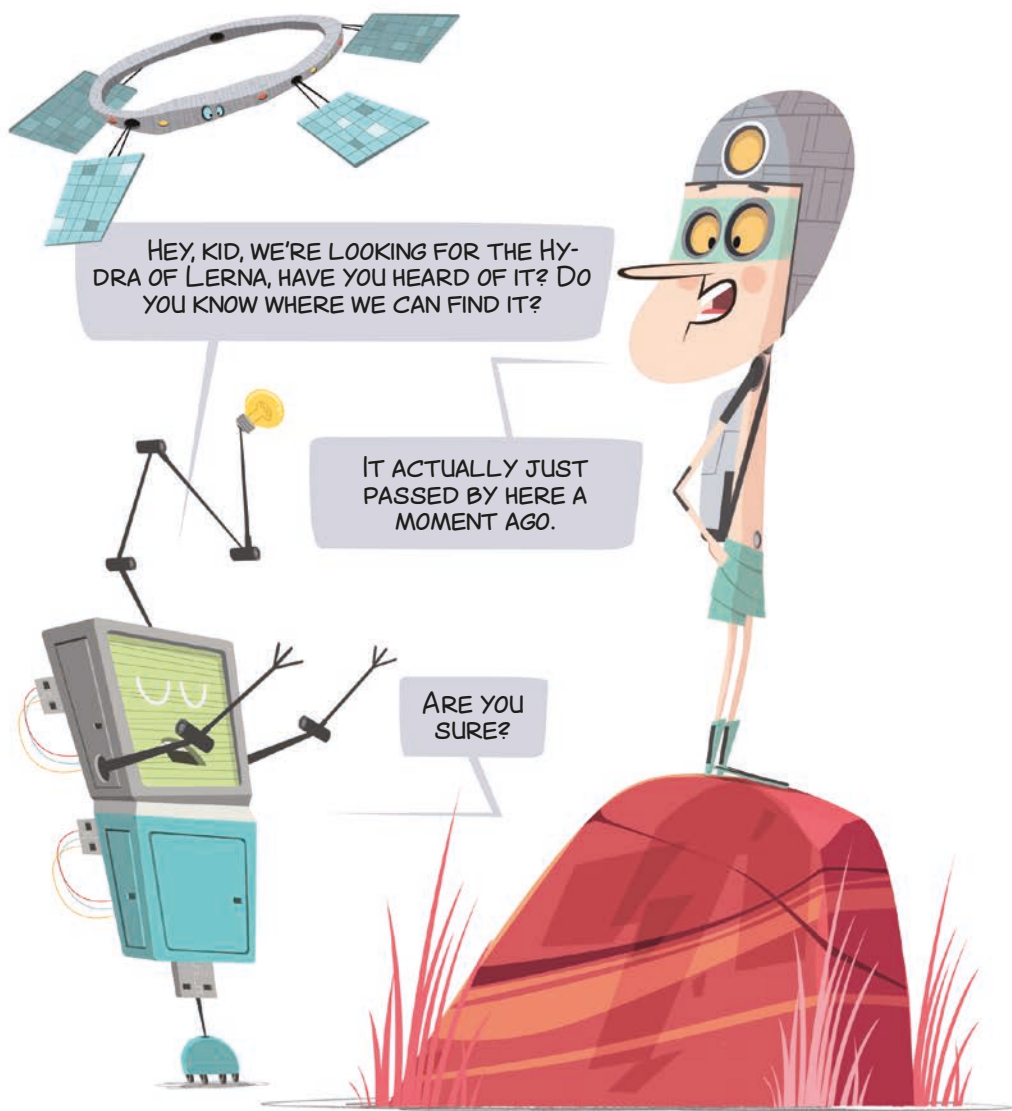
LOOKING FOR THE HYDRA IS A BAD  
IDEA...I'M TELLING YOU LOOKING FOR  
THE HYDRA IS A BAD IDEA!



Who could this boy, who is resting on a rock by the lake, be? You only have to turn the page to find out!



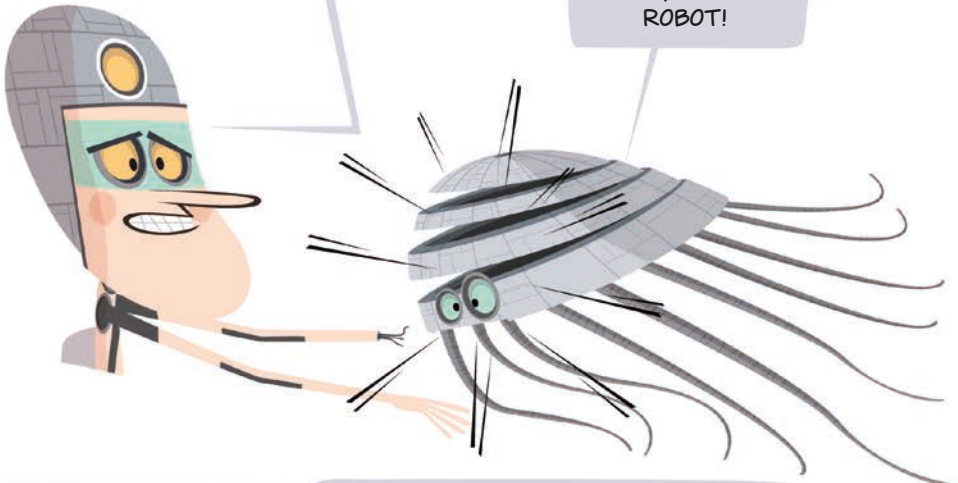
In the swamps around Alcyone Lake, you don't often see people. Probably, the fact an abominable monster with fifty heads lives there has something to do with it: a stroll around such a lake, generally speaking, doesn't appeal much. And that's why the Robotots didn't want to miss the chance to ask the only person around for information.





TOTALLY. LOOK, THE HYDRA ATE MY HAND.

YIKES, YOU'RE A ROBOT!



I'M NO ROBOT, I'M AN ANDROID, AN AUTOMATON WITH A HUMAN FORM. MY NAME'S LOLAU.

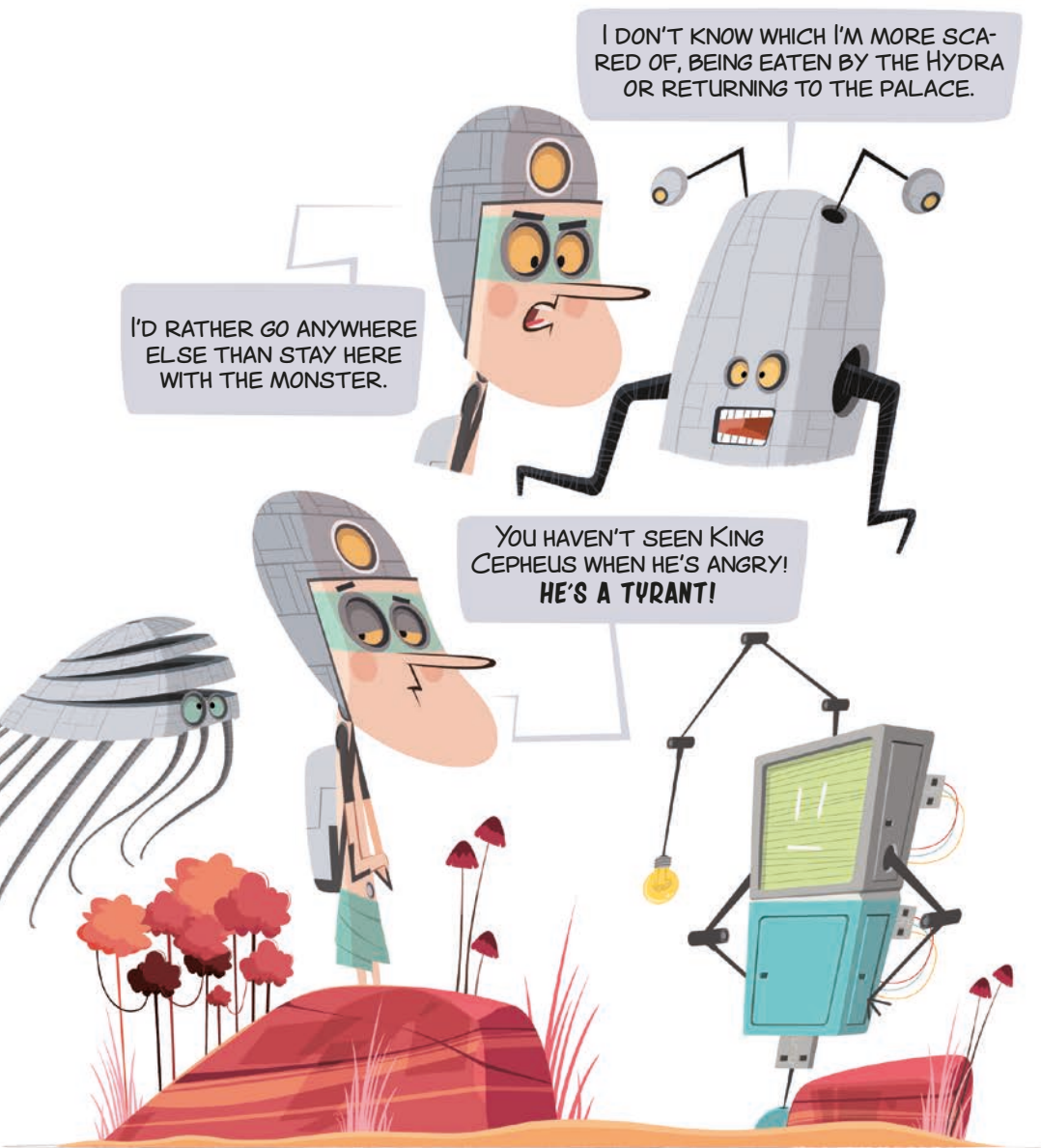
OKAY, OKAY, LET'S NOT GET PEDANTIC: ROBOTS, ANDROIDS, PARKING METERS, JUICERS, WE'RE ALL BROTHERS!



WE ARE THE ROBOTOTS AND WE HAVE COME ON A VERY SPECIAL MISSION, YOU KNOW.



Iolau explains to the Robotots that he is one of the service androids belonging to King Cepheus, lord and ruler of planet Lerna. This morning, he came to Alcyone Lake to fetch a jug of water and one of the Hydra's heads bit him. Now, with no hand and no jug, he doesn't dare return to the palace for fear they will punish him.



I DON'T KNOW WHICH I'M MORE SCARED OF, BEING EATEN BY THE HYDRA OR RETURNING TO THE PALACE.

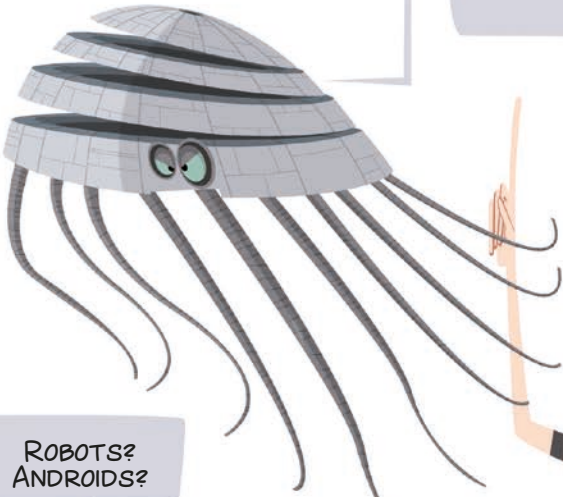
I'D RATHER GO ANYWHERE ELSE THAN STAY HERE WITH THE MONSTER.

YOU HAVEN'T SEEN KING CEPHEUS WHEN HE'S ANGRY! HE'S A TYRANT!



HUMANS ALWAYS TREAT ROBOTS BADLY, IT'S A UNIVERSAL INJUSTICE!

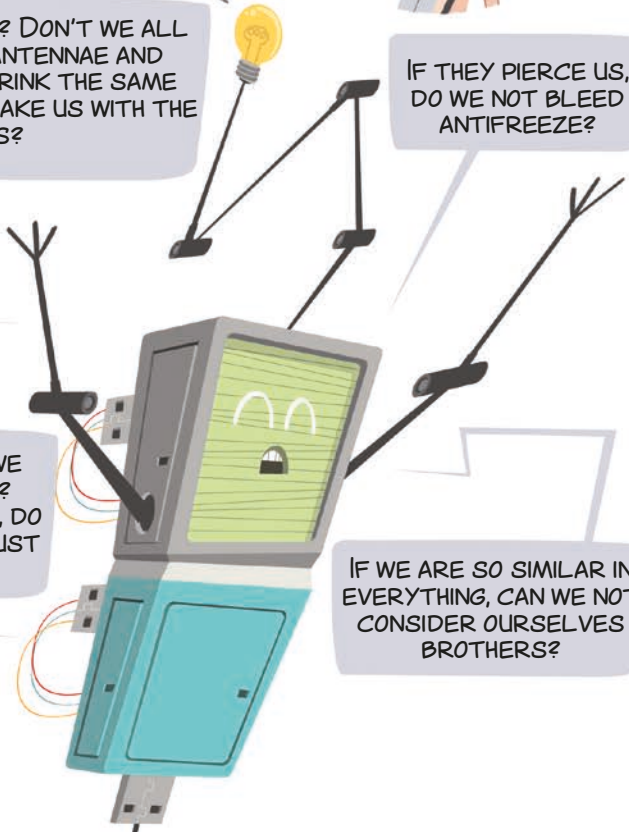
WELL, I'M NOT REALLY A ROBOT, I'M AN ANDROID WITH A HUMAN FORM.



ROBOTS?  
ANDROIDS?

DON'T WE ALL HAVE EYES? DON'T WE ALL HAVE CHIPS, SCREENS, ANTENNAE AND BATTERIES? DON'T WE DRINK THE SAME MOTOR OIL? DON'T THEY MAKE US WITH THE SAME TOOLS?

IF THEY PIERCE US, DO WE NOT BLEED ANTIFREEZE?



IF THEY FORMAT US, DO WE NOT LOSE OUR MEMORY?  
IF THE HUMANS OFFEND US, DO WE NOT BOW OUR HEADS JUST THE SAME?

IF WE ARE SO SIMILAR IN EVERYTHING, CAN WE NOT CONSIDER OURSELVES BROTHERS?

The Robotots ask Iolau to be their guide to find the Hydra and they tell him about their mission to liberate the inhabitants of Lerna from the monster. What they don't tell him, of course, is that they haven't the foggiest idea how to do it.

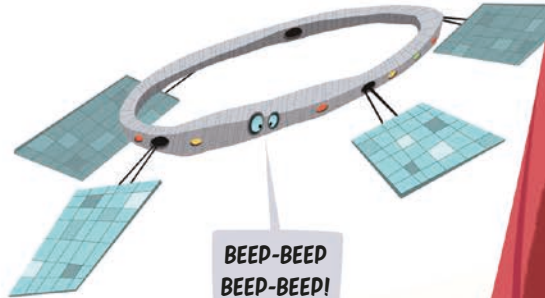
OKAY, I'LL ACCOMPANY YOU, BUT I'M WARNING YOU THAT I HAVE NO INTENTION OF GOING ANYWHERE NEAR THE MONSTER.

I'VE ALREADY LOST ONE HAND, I DON'T WANT TO LOSE THE OTHER, I USE IT A LOT!



Accompanied by the young android, the Robotots discover a clearing by the riverbank where someone has tied up several sheep.

IS THAT THE HYDRA?  
I IMAGINED SOMETHING  
MORE FEROCIOUS.



BEEP-BEEP  
BEEP-BEEP!

NO, SILLY, THESE ARE THE SHEEP  
THAT THE INHABITANTS OF LERNA  
OFFER TO THE MONSTER SO THAT IT  
DOESN'T ATTACK US.

EVERY DAY WE HAVE TO  
BRING IT A DOZEN!

AND WHAT DOES THE  
HYDRA WANT THEM  
FOR?







DINNER TIME!

BEEP-BEEP!

TO EAT THEM, OF COURSE.

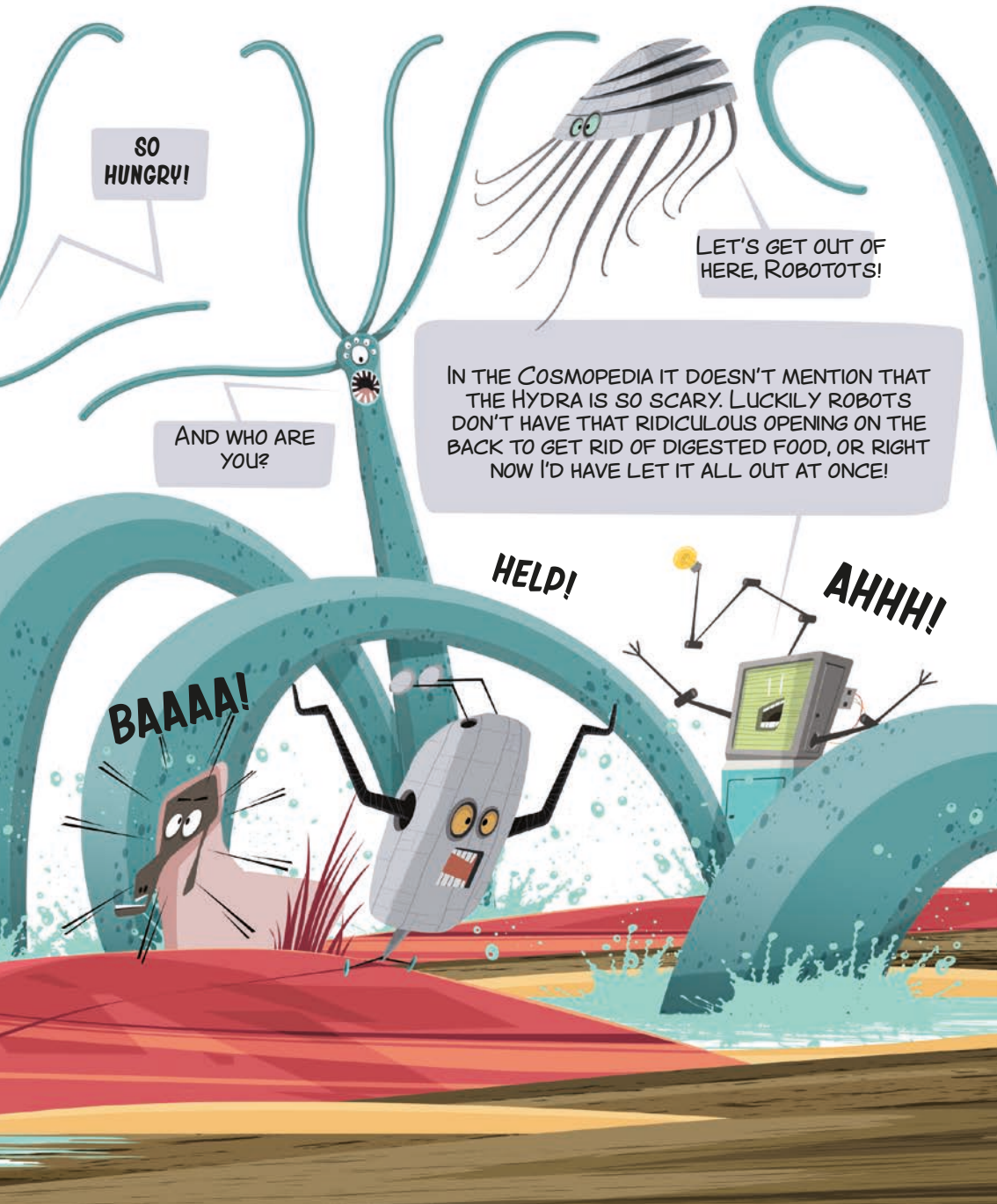
BAAA!

BAA!

BAAA!

BUT DIDN'T YOU COME HERE TO  
FACE THE MONSTER?  
WELL, HERE IT IS!

Scientists say that robots cannot feel emotions, but what the Robotots are feeling right now is very similar to panic, confusion, desperation, helplessness, fear, worry and despair!



**SO HUNGRY!**

**LET'S GET OUT OF HERE, ROBOTOTS!**

**IN THE COSMOPEDIA IT DOESN'T MENTION THAT THE HYDRA IS SO SCARY. LUCKILY ROBOTS DON'T HAVE THAT RIDICULOUS OPENING ON THE BACK TO GET RID OF DIGESTED FOOD, OR RIGHT NOW I'D HAVE LET IT ALL OUT AT ONCE!**

**AND WHO ARE YOU?**

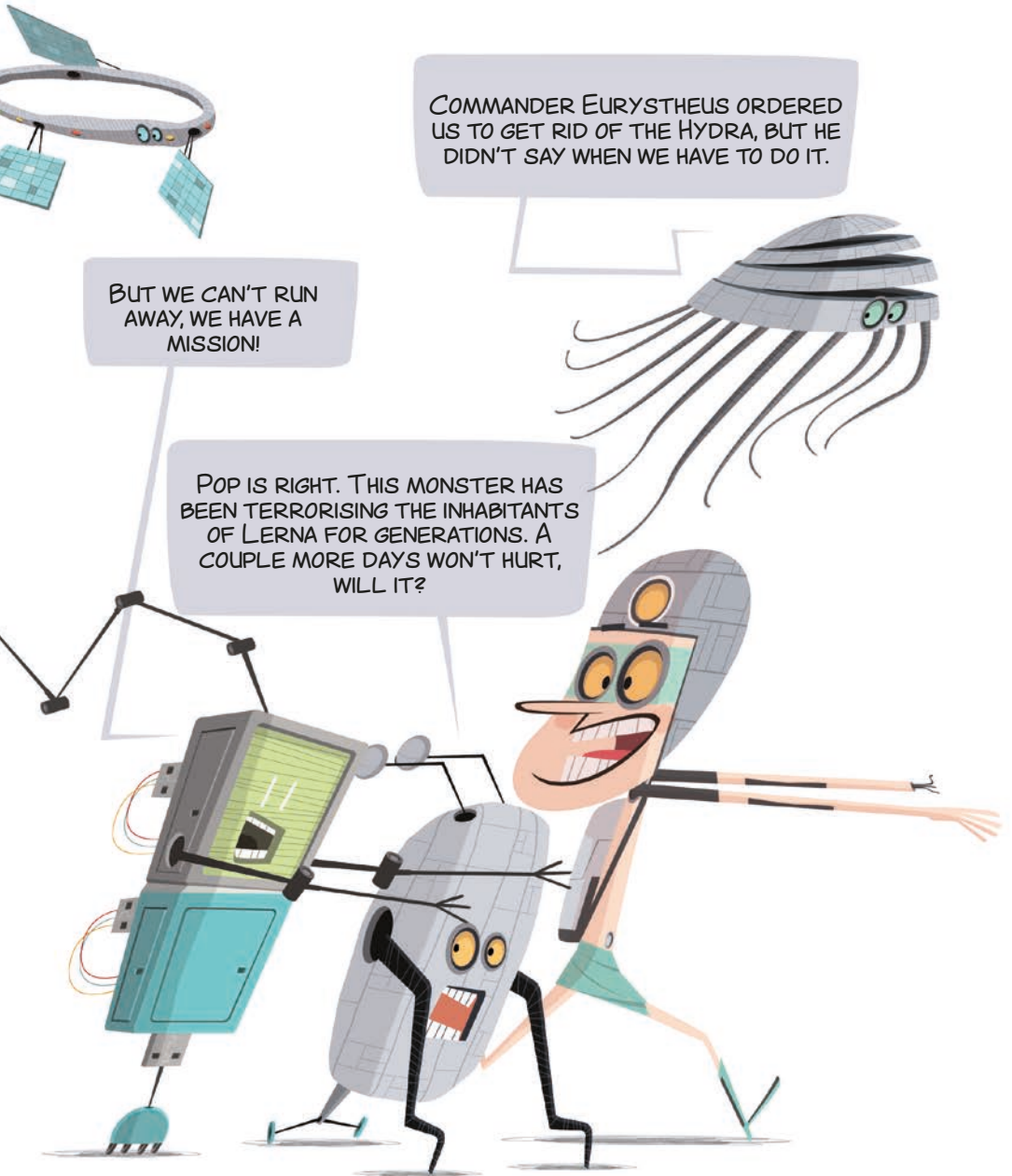
**HELP!**

**AHHH!**

**BAAAAA!**



As fast as their bodywork allows, the Robotots flee from the lake and the Hydra's pointy fangs. Their first meeting with the monster has left them never wanting to see it again.





IF YOU LIKE, YOU CAN COME TO THE CITY WITH ME. ALTHOUGH I DON'T KNOW HOW KING CEPHEUS WILL RECEIVE US...

Iolau's suggestion excites the Robotots, keen to go anywhere else rather than return to Alcyone Lake. Death, especially if it's a horrible, terrifying one, can wait.



DOES YOUR KING HAVE FIFTY HEADS AND FANGS SHARPER THAN DAGGERS? NO, RIGHT? THEN LET'S GO!

I'M STARTING TO LIKE KING CEPHEUS ALREADY.



What awaits the Robotots in the city of Lerna?