

SOPPY SUSANS FROM SPACE

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CHAPTER ONE

BECAUSE WE'VE GOT TO BEGIN SOMEWHERE...

(It will probably help if you sing an impressive tune - the theme to a big budget science fiction movie perhaps - and slowly move this page away from you while you read. But don't bother if you've just got comfortable.)

#

Long, long ago in a part of space far away...
(well, it was a week last Tuesday, ten million light years past Alton Towers...)

In the darkest part of the galaxy lies the most wicked planet the universe has ever seen - the planet Suse. Its inhabitants, the Susans, are a violent warrior race who have ruthlessly conquered every other planet in their part of space:

They beat the people of the planet Belch by adding a secret ingredient to their night time cocoa that made

them burp cabbage flavoured bubbles in their sleep.

They conquered the citizens of the planet Cule by converting their showers so that, instead of spraying water, they gave out jets of pure liquid frog.

And you really don't want to know what they did to the population of the planet Poo...

Then, one day, they noticed a planet they hadn't spotted before. A small green and blue planet that they had never tried to invade.

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(Really sing out that tune now!)

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THE PLANET EARTH!

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Uh-oh.

CHAPTER TWO

SO SNEER, YET SO FAR

Things that happen in this chapter:

We are introduced to the bad guy and his wicked plans.

Our heroes have a picnic.

A giant hamster eats Scotland.

(Note: one of the above probably isn't true.)

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Look around. Big isn't it? Shout out your name.
Can you hear the echo?

This is Lord Sneer's palace, from where he rules Suse, and sends out his warriors to conquer planets, take over worlds, and get pizza, because even evil overlords get peckish from time to time.

And that is Lord Sneer himself - sitting on his throne, made from the teeth of his enemies (don't be too impressed, it might make him look big and clever, but he has to spend six hours a day brushing it, and

occasionally, he'll sit down on down on the molars that used to belong to King Chuffle of the planet Vamp. The Vampians have very, very sharp teeth).

That thing on his lap is his pet, Fang; a sort of giant slug. Unlike Lord Sneer's throne, Fang hasn't got a single tooth in his head, so he won't bite - but I still wouldn't stroke him. If he jumps up and licks your face, you'll smell like a pair of pensioner's underpants for a week.

Lord Sneer isn't happy. But then, he never is.

"Ooze!" he screamed, his voice slicing around the walls of the palace, setting his throne on edge. "Where are you?"

Sir Ooze of Suse, Lord Sneer's personal assistant, slid into the room, holding his big, green book in front of him in case Lord Sneer was in a throwing mood. Lord Sneer would throw just about anything when he was mad, but always at the same target: Ooze.

"I'm sorry my Lord, umm," said Ooze as he cautiously lowered the book. "I've been making plans for the banquet, umm. It appears that we don't have noodles, my Lord, and, umm, that is all that Prince Tantan will eat."

A cup bounced off Ooze's head. He ducked behind his book again.

"So?" asked Lord Sneer.

"Well," mumbled Ooze from behind the book, "you said, umm, that we were having Prince Tantan for dinner, and..." Ooze stopped as the realisation dawned. He opened his book to the page marked 'Menu', crossed out the word 'noodles' and wrote in 'Prince Tantan'.

"Never mind that now," said Sneer. "Look at this!"

Lord Sneer pressed a button in his tooth throne, and a large screen raised out of the top. This TV was the latest of the throne's gadgets which included a stereo, a games console, and a hi-tech security system in case the tooth fairy turned up with a pair of pliers, a big sack, and the keys to a retirement home in the Caribbean.

The screen hissed into life. Ooze peered over the top of his book at it. The picture showed a boy and girl of around the same age, sitting in a garden. The girl was playing with a doll, and the boy was drawing in a sketchpad.

"What are they?" asked Lord Sneer. Ooze looked again, in case it was a trick question.

"Umm, they're, umm, children, my Lord?"

The saucer that matched the cup bonked off Ooze's forehead. He'd long ago changed all the crockery in the palace to plastic, but it still hurt.

"I can see that, you fool! What are they doing?"

Ooze looked closer, and saw that the children were sitting on a blanket, surrounded by plates of food. He

was almost too scared to say it.

"Umm... Having a picnic?"

Ooze cowered behind his book, waiting for the next piece of tableware to come flying his way. It didn't, but he kept the book there, just in case.

"Exactly," said Lord Sneer, quietly. "And do we allow people to have picnics on the planets we conquer?"

Ooze didn't need to look in his book for the answer to this one. It was one of the three biggest rules the Susans had for the worlds they defeated: no complaining about being conquered, no whispering rude words about Lord Sneer, and definitely no picnics.

"Absolutely not, my Lord!" said Ooze.

Lord Sneer smiled. If things were bad when Sneer shouted, they were much worse when he smiled. "So, that means...?"

Ooze's brain kicked into action. If you were really close, you might have noticed some rust falling out of his ears, but Ooze has got really bad breath, so it's probably just as well you stayed where you were.

Suddenly, his eyes lit up as he hit upon the answer. "It means we haven't conquered that planet yet, my Lord!" he shouted triumphantly.

"Exactly!" A teaspoon hit Ooze on the nose. He didn't put the book back. There was no point.

"I want this planet defeated now!" said Lord Sneer.

"Send General Grimace!"

"Umm, General Grimace is still on the planet Nudge, my Lord. Conquering the Naries."

"Then send Major Frown!" shouted Sneer.

"Umm... Major Frown is busy taking over the planet Bibble."

"Captain Glare?"

"On the planet Goop, my Lord."

"Corporal Sombre?"

"Umm, battling the Tolins."

"There must be someone who can do it!"

Ooze flicked through his book, keeping one eye on the rather sturdy teapot that was sitting beside the throne.

"Umm... Sergeant Sulk is with his platoon on the planet Spink; Lieutenant Dismal is struggling with the Chunks; and, umm, Private Pout is on a fishing holiday in sector seven."

He reached the last page in the book. "In fact, umm, apart from the two of us, there are only three Susans left on the entire planet."

"Fine, send them!" commanded Lord Sneer.

"But, my Lord, they're not, umm..."

Lord Sneer jumped up and pointed to the screen. The children had now each opened a bag of crisps. "This must be stopped!"

As Lord Sneer reached for the teapot, Ooze turned and ran. He slammed the door to the throne room just in time to hear the teapot smash against it, followed by Lord Sneer's scream as he sat down on the dentures that had once belonged to Queen Chiffle of the planet Vamp.

CHAPTER THREE

MEET THE GOOD GUYS

Let's take a moment for a quick visit to Earth to meet our heroes in person. It'll be a whirlwind trip, so if you feel travel sick, you might have to hold your breath while reading this chapter, or make a sick bag out of your homework (your teacher won't mind).

This is Tom. He's 12 years old, and his hobby is painting and drawing. He's very good at it. I'd remember that if I were you. I made such a big deal of pointing it out, it's certain to be important later in the book.

Sitting next to him is his twin sister, Liz. She's playing with a doll, which looks like a very girly thing to do, until... She reaches into the picnic basket, and pulls out a handset with a long aerial, like you get with remote control cars. She presses a button, and the doll starts to walk around the garden, turning left or right as Liz works the handset controls. She made this

herself, out of an old video recorder and a broken toaster. Good, isn't it?

I know what you're thinking: if it's worth remembering Tom's art abilities, should I also make a mental note that Liz is good with electronics? I'm not saying. In fact, I may have already given too much away, but it can't hurt to take a good look at her robot doll, can it?

Right, that's that covered. Fasten your seatbelts, and switch off all mobile 'phones - we're about to set off back to the planet Suse.

It's often a bit bumpier on the return trip, so those of you who had to use your homework as a sick bag on the way here might want to grab a couple of extra text books.

Just in case.

CHAPTER FOUR

IT'S CURTAINS

Thank you for flying Suse Airways, the fastest way to travel around the galaxy. We are currently flying at twice the speed of time, and expect to land back on planet Suse approximately ten minutes ago, at the end of chapter two.

Please take care when leaving the ship, as you may feel a little queasy after the flight - and don't forget to leave a forwarding address for your stomach, which should catch up with you around tea time on Thursday.

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You're back. Don't worry, you haven't missed anything.

Lord Sneer is still shouting and screaming - even though Fang is the only other creature in the room to hear him, and he's fast asleep.

Sir Ooze is still worrying himself silly about how Lord Sneer will react to the only three remaining Susans

available for this mission, and there are enough dents in the cover of his book to reclassify it as a skate park.

Things are, however, different in Lord Sneer's bedroom...

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"No!" yelled Oliver Jillington-Wolde from the foot of Lord Sneer's bed. "I distinctly asked for dark green camouflaged wallpaper, NOT blue and red striped! How is Lord Sneer supposed to give off an air of wickedness if it looks like he sleeps inside a tube of toothpaste?"

Glancing down, he read from his pink clipboard.

"I want the shelving unit to stand proud. I want it to say 'these books help me to conquer!' And the floor is to be polished until you can see your face in it."

"Get those curtains up now! I want them in place by the time Lord Sneer comes up for his afternoon nap. Come on - chop, chop!"

Oliver Jillington-Wolde gazed around the room and sighed. He was alone. There was absolutely no-one there to give orders to, bark insults at, or hit over the head with a length of curtain rail.

Things were better before everyone on the planet was sent away to war, he thought to himself as he trudged over to the pasting table and began to unroll a length of wallpaper.

It was then that the door opened, and Sir Ooze's

face appeared.

"Umm..." he said.

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In the palace gardens, Alsmere the gardener was asleep. Not an unusual state of affairs you might think, especially when you consider his age. But what was unusual was that he was face down in a pot of daffodil bulbs, snoring like a walrus.

He'd set out with good intentions. "Today I will plant bulbs in pots for the courtyard," he said to himself. Daffodils, tulips and roses. "And, under no circumstances will I fall asleep and..." FLUMPH! SNORE!

Too late.

#

Meanwhile, someone was enjoying themselves immensely. Oh, it's not me. No. I'm sitting here typing this with a bandage wrapped round my head.

You see, I was stapling some pieces of paper together this morning when the 'phone rang and, before I knew it, I'd raised my hand up, said 'Hello?' and stapled my ear to the side of my face.

Don't laugh. It's not funny!

But this is. Take a look...

#

"Now, spoon your toffee mixture onto your baking tray," said Pukka as he smiled broadly into the TV

camera. "Flatten with a spoon, and whack it in the oven. Lovely!"

The smiling Susan, dressed in a bright white chef's uniform, kicked the oven door open with his foot and slid the tray inside. Then, with one swift movement, he pulled out a tray of ready cooked toffee, spun it on one finger and dropped it lightly onto the counter.

"Here's some I prepared earlier, and now you can use your novelty cutter to shape your finished toffees."

Pukka smiled his biggest smile to date, and winked to the camera.

"See you next week!"

He reached over to the play button on his stereo, and a tape of theme music and audience applause rang out. Pukka continued to cut up his tray of toffee until the camera turned off.

Wait a minute - there's something not quite right with that camera. It's made out of a cereal box! And we're not in a TV studio, it's Pukka's bedroom with all his teddy bears lined up along the windowsill as an audience.

You see, Pukka wants to be someone. Someone who makes a difference. Or, failing that, a TV chef.

After he's nipped to the toilet, that is.