

PROLOGUE



A blue-green planet hung in the vastness of space. Many different animals and plants lived on this planet—but the main species was the human race. The planet was called Earth.

On the other side of the galaxy, alien eyes watched the Earth on a view-screen. The image on the screen zoomed towards the Earth's surface. It zoomed over cities and oceans, over plains and deserts.

Through the speaker came the sounds of people talking—men, women and children of all ages, talking in hundreds of different languages. One voice stood out.

This voice proclaimed: "I can help you work this out. All you need to do is cooperate."

An alien head nodded as it listened to that voice.

Chapter 1

CAPTURED

"Stop!" shouted Josh, stepping between the two other boys. "This is really dumb. You shouldn't be fighting over this."

"Oh, yeah," sneered Brad. "What are you going to do about it?"

"Well," said Josh. "I can help you work this out. All you need to do is cooperate."

"How can I cooperate with him?" asked Kevin, pointing at Brad. "He doesn't even understand what the word means."

"Watch it, wimp!" growled Brad.

"Guys," said Josh, "chill out! I know you've got different interests, but you can still do this project together."

"No way!" they said, folding their arms.



"Listen!" said Josh. "Kevin, you're into books and reading and stuff."

Kevin nodded.

"Brad, you're into sports, right?" continued Josh.

Brad nodded.

"No problem!" declared Josh. "Why not do your project on a particular sport? Football, maybe? Brad, you're on the football team. You know everything there is to know about playing the game. Kevin, you could find out about the history of the game. There are lots of books in the school library about it... you could go and read them all."

"Maybe," agreed Kevin, slowly nodding his head.

Brad grunted his approval.

"Problem solved!" said Josh. "Josh-to-the-Max triumphs again!"

Josh heard a strange sound, and looked around to see where it was coming from. Then everything around him seemed to blur and melt away.

Suddenly, there was a blinding flash and he disappeared.