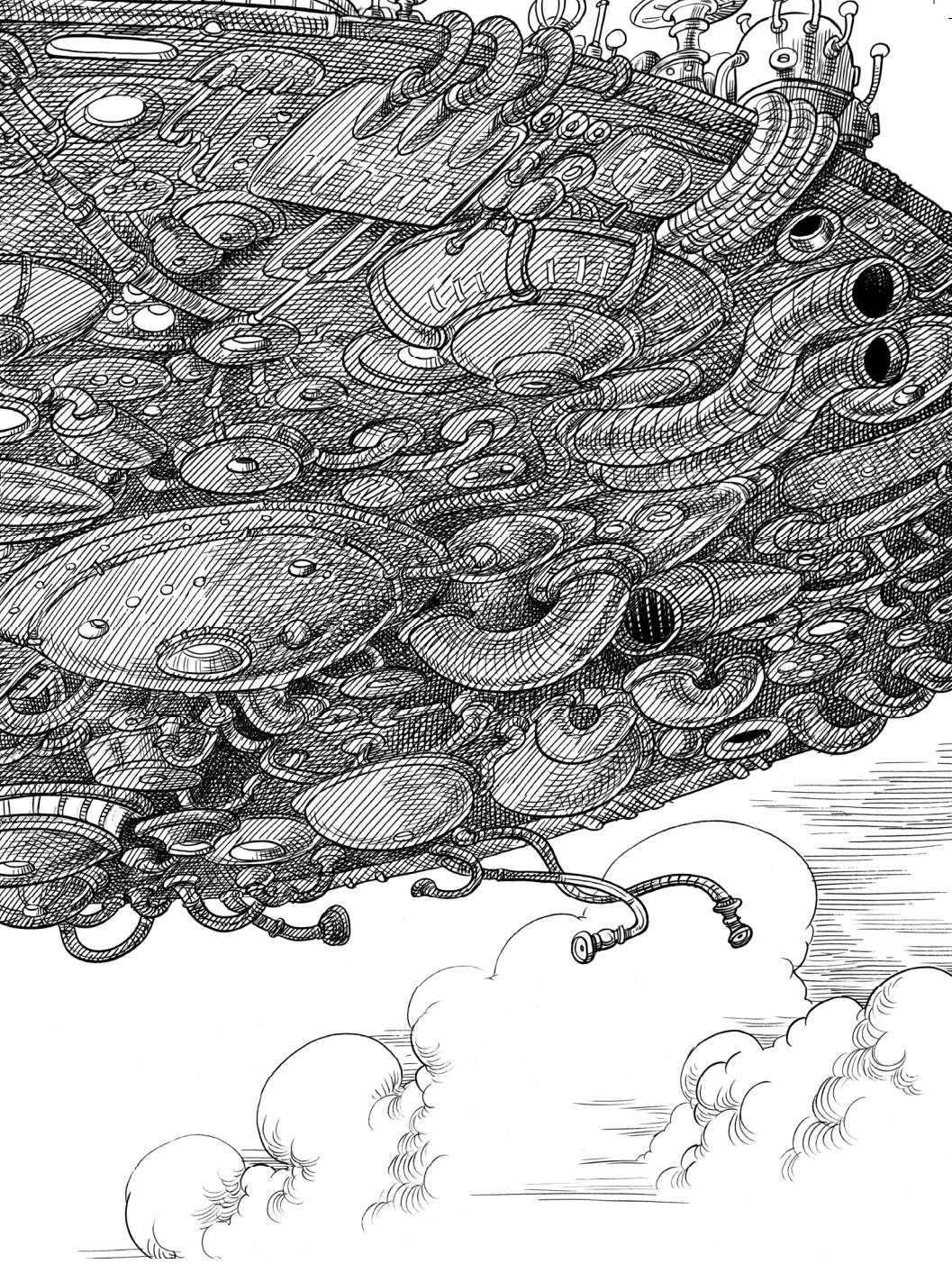


‘I BOUGHT THE MILK,’ said my father. ‘And I did indeed say a brief hello to Mister Ronson from over the road, who was buying a paper. I walked out of the corner shop, and heard something odd that seemed to be coming from above me. It was a noise like this: *thumm-thumm*.

I looked up and saw a huge silver disc hovering in the air above Marshall Road.





Hullo, I said to myself. *That's not something you see every day.* And then something odd happened.'

'*That wasn't odd?*' I asked.

'Well, something odder,' said my dad.

'**T**HE ODD THING was the beam of light that came out of the disc – a glittery, shimmery beam of light that was visible even in the daylight. And the next thing I knew, I was being sucked up into the disc. Fortunately, I had put the milk into my coat pocket.

The deck of the disc was metal. It was as big as a playing field, or bigger.

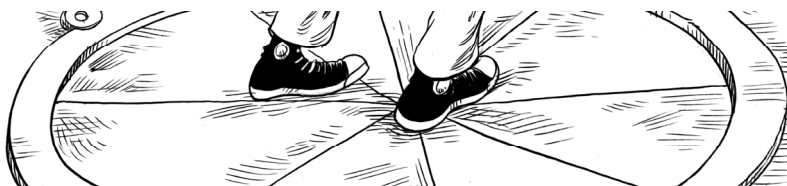
"We have come to your planet from a world very far away," said the people in the disc.





I call them “people”, but they were a bit green and rather globby and they looked very grumpy indeed.

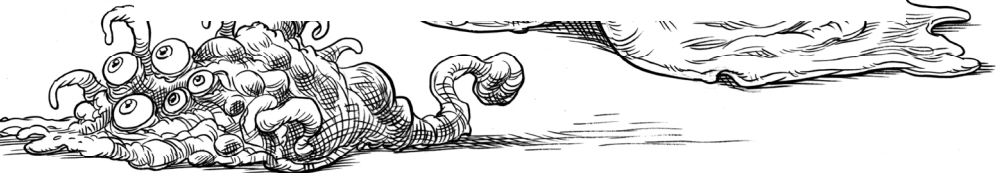
“Now, as a representative of your





species, we demand that you give us ownership of the whole planet. We are going to remodel it.”

“I jolly well won’t,” I said.

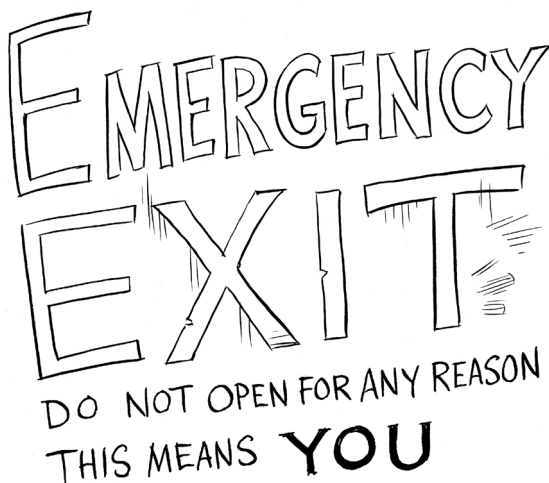


EM
EX

DO NOT OPEN
THIS MEANS

“Then,” one of them said, “we will bring all your enemies here and get them to make you miserable until you agree to sign the planet over to us.”

I was going to point out to them that I didn’t have any enemies when I noticed a large metal door with

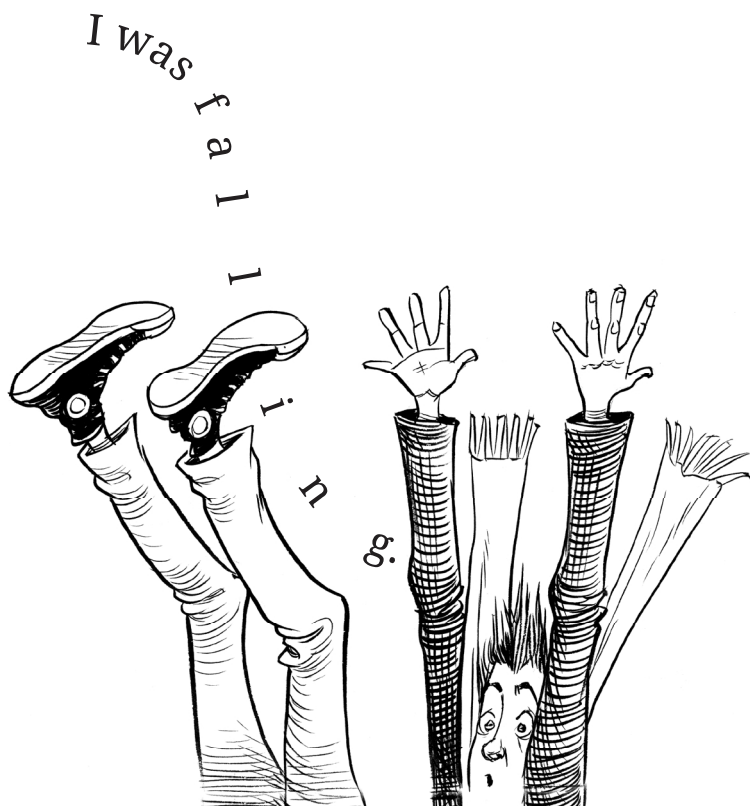


on it. I opened the door.

“Don’t do that,” said a green globby person. “You’ll let the space-time continuum in.”

But it was too late – I had already pushed open the door.

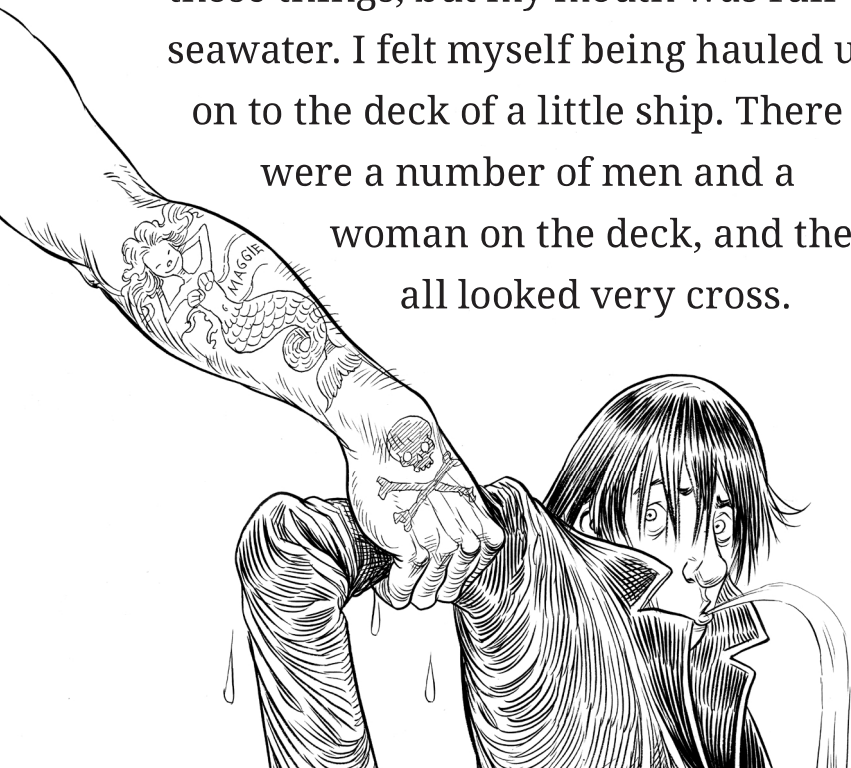
I jumped.



Fortunately, I had kept tight hold of the milk, so when I splashed into the sea I didn't lose it.

“What was that?” said a woman's voice. “A big fish? A mermaid? Or was it a spy?”

I wanted to say that I wasn't any of those things, but my mouth was full of seawater. I felt myself being hauled up on to the deck of a little ship. There were a number of men and a woman on the deck, and they all looked very cross.





“Who be ye, landlubber?” asked the woman, who had a big hat on her head and a parrot on her shoulder.

“He’s a spy! A walrus in a coat! A new kind of mermaid with legs!” said the men.

“What are you doing here?” asked the woman.

“Well,” I said.

“I’d just been to the corner shop for some milk for my children’s breakfast and for my tea, and the next thing I knew –”





“He’s lying, Your Majesty!”

She pulled out her cutlass. “You dare lie to the Queen of the Pirates?”

Fortunately, I had kept tight hold of the milk, and now I pointed to it.

“If I did not go to the corner shop to fetch the milk,” I asked them, “then *where* did this milk come from?”

At this, the pirates were completely speechless.