

## Chapter 1: Alan Rules

Josie wiped away her smile and entered the Ozone. Alan handed her today's snack: one Wheat Thin and one raisin.

"This snack is too small," complained Joci.

"A snack is a snack, no matter how small," Alan replied.

"But kids need more food than this!"

"You violated the Hannah Rule and the Francesca Rule: to the cage!"

Joci joined Sephora, Hannah, and Natsuka for snack in the small corner cage of the Ozone.

"Did you break the Sephora rule again, Sephora?"

"Yes," Sephora said as she smiled. "Oops I broke the Sephora rule again!"

Hannah looked very agitated. "All of these rules make no sense. And now there's a rule for pointing out they don't make sense. Why would I want a ridiculous rule named after me?"

Natsuka nodded sadly with her hands up to hold her favorite book. Unfortunately, there was no book in her hands. Alan took her book away when he caught her breaking the Natsuka rule.

Alan spoke to the entire class. "First, I would like to congratulate Ava for once again not breaking the Ava rule. What an incredible good behavior streak you've been on. I'd also like to congratulate Francesca for her first day in the Ozone without getting into trouble."

Joci whispered to Hannah, "Do you think Alan realizes Francesca isn't here today?"

*Ava Rule: No riding horses in the Ozone*

*Francesca Rule: No disagreeing with Alan*

*Hannah Rule: No using logic when disagreeing with Alan*

*Joci Rule: No laughing allowed*

*Natsuka Rule: No reading allowed*

*Sephora Rule: No smiling allowed*

## Chapter 2: Today's Activity

Alan continued speaking to the class, "We have a wonderful activity today. I bought some special glitter for everyone to use, so we will be making glitter bookmarks!"

This was the forty-second day in a row that the activity of the day was making bookmarks. They made construction paper bookmarks, tissue paper bookmarks, feather bookmarks, pompom bookmarks, stamped bookmarks, wooden bookmarks, clay bookmarks, toothpick bookmarks, plastic bookmarks, ribbon bookmarks, and so much more.

"Do we get to go outside?" Joci asked.

"No. We only go outside for special event days and there are no special events today." Snack was over and everyone was stuck in the Ozone making bookmarks. Activity time was no longer a choice; it was mandatory. Every Ozone student had to make bookmarks.

Alan clapped his hands and yelled, "Work as fast as you can! Let's see how many you can make in the next two hours. Hurry up and don't make any mistakes. Isn't this fun?"

"Two hours!?" What about BLT? I have homework due tomorrow," complained Sephora.

"I canceled BLT. We need more time to make bookmarks."

"But without BLT, I won't get my homework done!"

Alan paused and smiled, "I guess we should rename it BLTU -- Bad Luck To You."

Everyone in the room looked silently at Alan. "Why aren't you kids laughing? The letters of BLT normally mean Brain Learning Time, and I changed them to stand for Bad Luck to You. Hahahahaha."

Nobody laughed. Alan continued, "I guess you kids still don't get it. Let me write it out for you..."

"We get it Alan. We just don't think it's funny, so we're not laughing." said Joci.

"Well it is funny. All of you have an inadequate sense of humor. You should have laughed at my joke. New rule: you must laugh at all of my jokes."

Hannah spoke up, "But Alan. You already have a rule that says we aren't allowed to laugh at all."

"Don't break the Hannah rule, Hannah. Go make some bookmarks."

Joci raised her hand and said, "Shouldn't it be BLTY?"

Alan scratched his head. "Why? Because I said so."

"No Alan. The letter 'Y.'"

"Yes Joci. 'Y' is a very nice letter."

"No. I meant in your phrase, 'bad luck to you,' 'you' starts with 'y,' not the letter 'u.'"

Alan's face turned red, "Why you little....make some more bookmarks."

### **Chapter 3: The Special Event Day**

"Let's grab some ladders. We're going outside for a special event day!"

Alan led everyone outside as fourth and fifth graders struggled to carry ladders with them. Special Event Days weren't usually special or events, but they were days outside, which were usually better than days inside making bookmarks.

This would be the Ozone's fifth outdoor special event day of the year. Before, there was the Leaf Raking Challenge, the Driveway Shoveling Shin Dig, the Car Washing Extravaganza, and the Lawn Cutting Competition.

Joci's stomach growled as she watched Alan instruct students to lean their ladders against several houses in the neighborhood. Today's snack of one kernel of corn with one piece of unpopped popcorn left her stomach feeling empty.

Alan announced to the group, "Ladies and Gentleman...and Ozone students, today's special event is our First Annual Gutter Cleaning Contest! This is just like the board game Chutes and Ladders, but it's better because instead of being disappointed when you fall down a chute, you get to enjoy cleaning gutters."

Soon, Joci and Natsuka were on Scottie's roof picking up clumps of dirty wet leaves and twigs out of gutters. "I think I'd rather be making bookmarks," said Natsuka as she reached for a mud covered pinecone.

Joci shook her head, "No more gutters, no more bookmarks, no more tiny snacks, no more silly rules -- We need to change all of this."

"But how?"

Joci thought about it as she pulled at a slimy brown tennis ball stuck to the bottom of a gutter. "We need to make a plan. Let's have a secret meeting on our next field trip. Make sure the cleverest, sneakiest Ozone students sign up for the next field trip. We'll have our meeting then."

"Time is up!" Alan announced. Joci and her friends slowly climbed down their ladders and gathered around Alan as he spoke to the group. "What a successful, profitable--no, I mean educational event! I hope you enjoyed the gutter cleaning contest as much as I did. In fact, I enjoyed it so much that we'll be doing it again. From now on, we will have our Annual Gutter Cleaning Contest every week!"

### **Chapter 4: Joshua and Moonberry**

"Something is up, Joshua," said Moonberry, the fish.

"I know. Your fish bowl is fifteen feet up high on a platform because Alan put you there after you tried to escape," Joshua thought to Moonberry. About a year ago, Joshua discovered that only he could telepathically communicate with Moonberry and that Moonberry was actually a fish from the moon's largest ocean.

“Not that. I mean something is going on with the fifth grade girls,” the fish replied.

Joshua became angry. “Who cares about fifth grade girls? Those devious dames helped Alan prevent your escape!”

“I know, I know, but times have changed. The girls that helped Alan are no longer happy with him. They’ve become very upset with all of his rules. First they just seemed sad, but now they look mad and ready to do something.”

Joshua smiled. “Good. I’m glad they’re not happy. They got what they deserved by forming that annoying alliance with Alan.”

Moonberry swam around his bowl that almost touched the ceiling. “Move past your emotions, Joshua. I think these girls can help me escape. We need as much help as possible.”

“But how can we trust the fifth grade girls?”

“Well, we can’t. In my experiences on the moon and on Earth, I have found that fifth grade girls are the sneakiest creatures I have ever encountered. However, they seem ready to act against Alan and I think they can help us.”

“Okay, okay, I’ll try.”

“Excellent, Joshua. I overheard the Joci and Hannah whispering about coming up with plans on the next field trip. Sign up for the field trip and see if they can help me escape...”

“You’ve only made seventeen bookmarks so far today!” Alan interrupted Joshua’s conversation with Moonberry. “Stop dilly dallying and get to work. And put your shoes on!”

## **Chapter 5: The Field Trip**

“Another full bus for a field trip! I’m so happy everyone loves my field trip ideas!” Will was so proud that every field trip he created was full. However, not one student bothered to consider where the field trip was going to; a field trip meant an opportunity to escape Alan for a little bit.

Today, Joci wanted more than a few hours away from Alan; she wanted a meeting to start a revolution. The meeting, however, would not be possible if Will and Ellen could hear it, so the first task was to distract them. Ellen would be easy. Joci just had to make sure the Frozen Soundtrack was on the bus. Whenever Ellen saw it, she would play it very loudly and sing along.

Distracting Will would be more of a challenge, but Natsuka had a plan. She knew Will was always over-tired because his infant daughter never let him have a good night sleep. So right when the bus started to move, Natsuka began to talk to Will, “Will, did you know I went sock shopping last night? Let me tell you about all the different socks I tried on...”

After 10 minutes of talking about polka-dot socks, striped socks, ankle socks, wool socks, purple socks, and hundreds of other different kinds of socks, Natsuka’s plan of boring Will to sleep worked. With Will snoring and Ellen hollering, “Do you want to build a snowman?” the meeting could begin.

Soon after Joci started the meeting, every student agreed that something had to be done about Alan, but no one was quite sure what to do first. They figured that this was a complicated issue

and may take several meetings, so it was decided that a secret society should be formed. A secret society sounded great, but what should it be named?

Sephora said, "We should call it the Alan Team, so if Alan hears about it, he'll think it's a group that supports him, and we won't get in trouble."

Joci loved this idea, but she wanted to improve it. "Let's turn Alan's name into an acronym that shows we're against him. Maybe **Away Little Annoying Ninny.**"

Hannah spoke up, "We can do better. **Alan Likes Annoying Noses.**"

Natsuka then said, "**Aliminate Lame Alan's Nonsense.**"

Joci bewilderedly looked at her friend, "Natsuka, Eliminate starts with the letter 'E'"

"Oh yeah, ever since Alan banned reading, my spelling has gotten much worse."

David then suggested, "**Abolish Loathsome Antidisestablishmentarianism Notoriousness**"

Ava ignored David's suggestions and said loudly, "Natsuka's idea was good. Let's just changed "eliminate" to "against."

"**Against Lame Alan's Nonsense Team!**"

Everybody liked it, and they decided just in time. The bus, the Frozen Soundtrack, and Will's snoring all suddenly stopped. Will rubbed his eyes and excitedly announced, "We're finally here! I know everyone is so excited to be here, but we still must stay in control. Now let's enjoy this tour of the Paper Clip Factory!"

## **Chapter 6: ALAN Team's First Task**

Ellen was shouting, "Let it Go," and Will was snoring (Natsuka went into great detail telling Will about her pencil collection), so it was time for the ALAN Team to meet. After dismissing some silly, dangerous, and surprisingly disgusting ideas, the team decided they should start with finding ways to annoy Alan.

"Let's hide his shoe laces."

"We can break off all of the rear view mirrors from his car."

"Let's replace the sugar he puts into his coffee with salt."

"Let's call him 'Stanley' instead of 'Alan'"

"We should fill his car up with bookmarks."

Joci was getting annoyed. She liked the idea of annoying Alan, but she wanted him gone. It seemed that everyone else was content with keeping Alan around and just bothering him a little bit.

Joshua, who for the entire trip back was sorting through all the paper clips he bought at the Paper Clip Factory Gift Shop, looked up and said, "We must help Moonberry escape."

"Who cares about that little unprocessed fish stick?" Francesca responded.

"Alan does." Joshua then went on to tell the tale of how Moonberry was Alan's prisoner and that he almost help the fish escape until his plan was thwarted by Hannah and her friends.

"Everything was going swimmingly until you treacherous ladies ruined everything," Joshua said as he pointed at an embarrassed Hannah and Natsuka.

Hannah and Natsuka apologized, "We're so sorry. Alan promised us extra snack if we helped him. We didn't realize that he would become so mean."

Joshua, remembering the advice from Moonberry, decided to shake it off and accepted the apology. He then explained his plan, "After it became impossible to go behind the green door, I decided to work on developing portable transporters. I already used the first one as a test and transported my brother to Venezuela. My other transporter is ready and configured to send Moonberry back to the moon's biggest ocean."

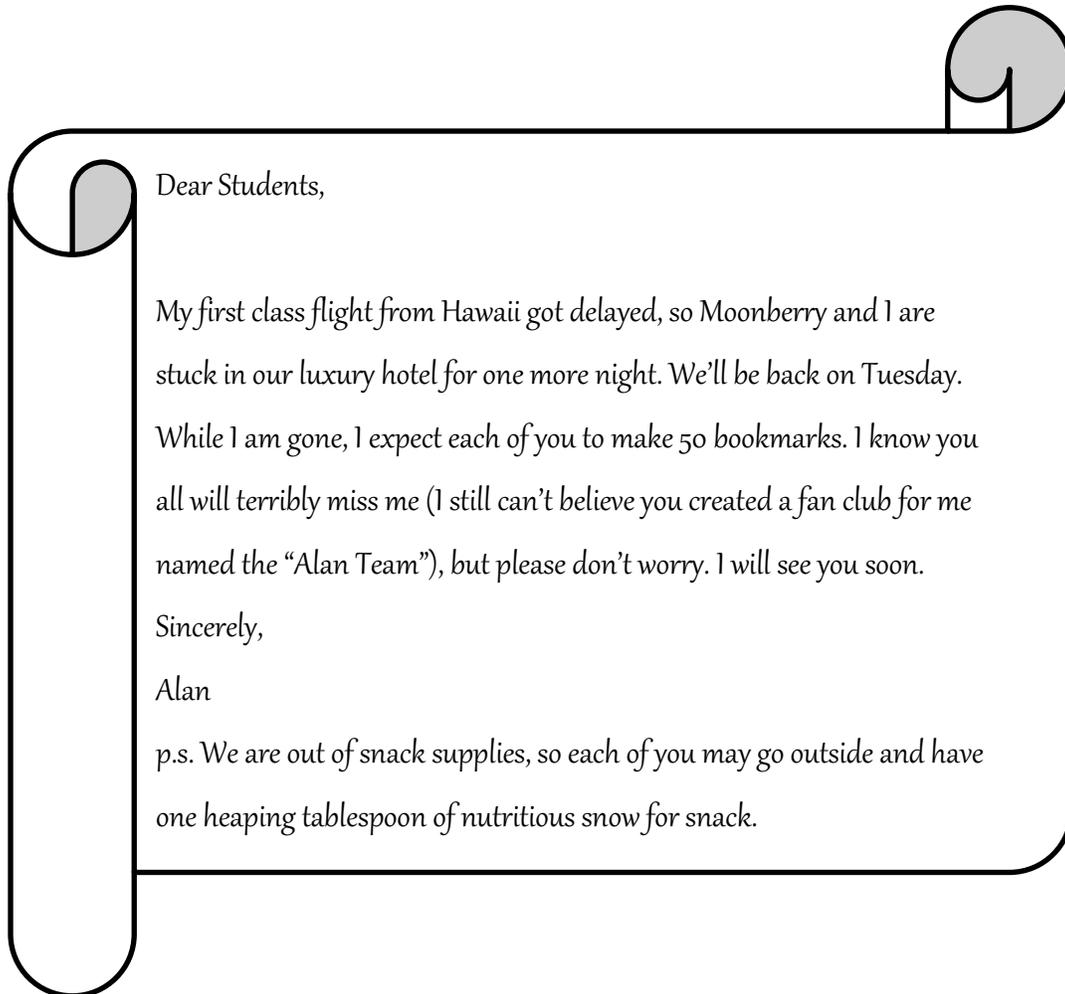
"The moon has an ocean?" Sephora was confused.

"Yes," Joshua replied, "and my transporter will work, but there are two problems. One, I only had enough material to build two, so this must work or it will take a very long time before we can try again. And two, I haven't figured out a way to get Moonberry onto the transporter. If you guys can help me, my plan will work and Alan would be very upset."

Joci laughed. She had a plan. "We will help you Joshua."

## Chapter 7: Back from February Vacation

When Joci entered the Ozone on the Monday after vacation, there was no Alan; there was just a note taped to the door,



Joci was very excited, and it was not because she could have snow for snack. With Alan gone, everyone could work together to figure out how to free Moonberry and overthrow Alan. After paying a few nickels to some kindergartners to create bookmarks for them, Joci, Joshua, and friends started their meeting.

Two weeks ago Joshua told everyone about Moonberry; now was his chance to tell them more details about how to help the fish escape. Everyone crowded around Joshua as he took off his left shoe. "This is my transporter. Once it is activated with my remote control, the next living creature to touch it will be transported."

Hannah interrupted, "But it's just a shoe!"

Joshua then peeled off the sole of the shoe, revealing an interior filled with wires, circuits, and duct tape. Everyone was in awe as they stared at Joshua's shoe. He then continued, "Here is the problem -- Alan put Moonberry so high up on the platform that it's impossible to reach the

fish without a ladder. Furthermore, the platform is only big enough to hold Moonberry's tank. So even if we get to Moonberry, there will be no place to put the shoe."

Joci summarized the problem. "So we first have to get a ladder inside the Ozone so we can get to Moonberry. We then need to sneak up the ladder to get Moonberry down to the transporter. And we need to activate the transporter right before Moonberry touches it because if we activate it too early, someone else may accidentally touch it and get transported to the moon's biggest ocean before Moonberry does."

"And we all have to do this without Alan noticing as he demands us to make more and more bookmarks," added Sephora.

The meeting went on as students worked together to develop a plan. Finally, as the day was coming to an end, Joci, Joshua, and everyone else thought they had a good strategy to free Moonberry.

### **Chapter 8: More Rules**

The fourth and fifth graders quietly ate their snack of one red kidney bean as Alan spoke. "I hope everyone didn't miss me too much yesterday. All of you did a great job making bookmarks while I was gone -- they were maybe the best bookmarks you ever made. Anyway, while I was in Hawaii, I thought of some new rules. The first new rule is the NZ Rule -- No 'What if' questions allowed."

NZ interrupted, "What if I have a 'What if' question?"

"What if I pretend I don't hear that," Alan replied. "My next rule is the David Rule -- no thinking allowed."

David raised his hand, "I don't think that's a good rule."

Alan pretended he didn't hear David and continued, "I find it very confusing that some of you decided to have the same first names. So we now have the Gabe Rule -- if a boy has the same first name as another boy, he has to change his first name."

One Gabe raised his hand, "Only one of us should have to change our name because once one of us does that, then we won't have the same name anymore."

Alan thought about it for a moment, "Makes sense. Only one Gabe has to change his name."

"Which one of us has to change it?"

"Gabe," Alan replied. "Now onto the Maya Rule. If two girls--"

"Yeah, we know. You don't have to explain it," both Mayas said.

"My next rule is the Willa Rule -- if you bring in a lunch that I really like, you must give half of it to me."

Willa whispered to Eleanor, "I guess I won't bring in lobster anymore."

“Ok, I have one more rule today,” Alan said as he pulled out a piece a paper from his pocket. “This morning I received an email from the Ladder Inspection Agency. The email said that we are not allowed to keep our gutter cleaning ladders outside, and that if we do not immediately bring them inside, we will be fined. That means we now will have the Elena Rule -- all ladders will be kept in the Ozone.”

“Why is it called the Elena Rule?” asked Elena.

“Because you’re going to bring the ladders inside. Go get them.”

Joci looked at Natsuka and winked. The fake e-mail they sent to Alan worked.

## **Chapter 9: Shoe**

“But won’t he get really mad?” Hannah asked Joci.

“Maybe, but it’s worth the risk,” Joci replied.

The two fifth graders were finishing up a discussion as they nervously and excitedly entered the Ozone. Today was the day of the big plan.

Alan announced to the room, “Today we are having a special Hawaiian snack. You each get one -”

“NEEEEEIGHHHHHHHHHH!”

“Is someone breaking the Ava Rule? Who brought a horse into the Ozone?” Alan rushed to the corner of the room following the sound.

“NEEEEEIGHHHHHH!” Hannah imitated a horse again.

Alan became upset, “No imitating animals! That will be the Hannah rule!”

With Alan distracted, Sephora snuck the ladder towards Moonberry’s tank.

Hannah replied, “But that doesn’t make sense Alan. There is already a Hannah Rule, saying I can’t use logic to disagree with you.”

“Now you’re breaking the Hannah Rule!”

Sephora climbed the ladder up to Moonberry’s tank.

Joci who was sitting next to Hannah smiled and laughed as Alan grew more and more frustrated with Hannah. Alan looked at Joci and yelled, “Stop breaking the Joci Rule and the Sephora Rule!”

Joshua watched Sephora closely as she put Moonberry into a cup and climbed down the ladder. Alan was still looking at just Joci and Hannah.

Joci then said, “I was thinking Alan. What if we break all your rules all the time?”

“You can’t break the David Rule and the NZ Rule!”

Sephora made it to the bottom of the ladder with Moonberry, so Joshua started to take off his transporter shoe.

“Maybe you’re right,” continued Joci, “I guess I’ll just go read a book now.”

“You can’t break the Natsuka Rule,” Alan yelled as his face got bright red.

Sephora was just a few steps away from Joshua’s shoe, so Joshua used his remote control to activate the transporter. As soon as Moonberry touched the shoe, he would be transported home to the moon’s largest ocean.

“Alan, look over there,” Joci said as she pointed towards Joshua’s shoe. “Joshua just hid ten bookmarks in his shoe!”

Sephora froze as Alan rushed towards Joshua’s shoe, “How dare you steal valuable bookmarks Joshua! The no stealing bookmarks rule will now be called the Joshua Rule. Now let’s see how many you took,” Alan said as he picked up the shoe.

ZAP! Alan touched the shoe and disappeared.

## **Chapter 10: One Week Later**

Everyone was laughing. Everyone was smiling. Maya called Maya, “Maya,” and Maya called Maya, “Maya.” Gabe called Gabe, “Gabe” and Gabe called Gabe, “Gabe.” Natsuka read two books at the same time -- one for her left eye and one for her right eye. All of the old Alan rules were gone and there was just one new rule posted on the wall:

*“The Alan Rule: No Rules Allowed.”*

When Joci put that rule up, Hannah told her that the rule didn’t make sense because if there were no rules, then you couldn’t have a rule that said no rules. Luckily for Hannah, she was allowed to use logic to disagree. Also, David could think about it and NZ could ask, “What if we didn’t have the Alan rule?”

“NEEEEEIGHHHH!!” No, that wasn’t the sound of Hannah breaking the other old Alan rule named after her. It was a Clydesdale Horse trotting all over the Ozone with Ava on its saddle. The horse was making a lot of noise because it didn’t like the poodle Giulia brought into the Ozone. Giulia didn’t even own a poodle before this week, but when she saw that Ava could get away with bringing in a horse, she thought she should buy a poodle to bring in.

Then, when Nicole saw that there was a horse and a dog in the Ozone, she decided to bring in a kitten. The kitten made Moonberry very nervous, especially because he was no longer high on the platform Alan made for him. Fortunately for Moonberry, Joci felt bad for tricking Joshua and the fish, so she purchased a brand new luxurious fish tank with a kitten guard.

The fourth and fifth grade weeklong party in the Ozone finally came to an end on Friday. Ellen entered the Ozone to make an announcement, “Ladies and gentlemen, I know you had a fun week, but I am required to find a leader for the Ozone. Unfortunately, not one adult has applied for the job because it is very well known what you guys did to Alan.”

Ellen glared at Joshua and Joci for a moment and then continued, "Because no adult will take the job, we'll need to be creative."

NZ raised his hand, "What if you put the horse in charge of the Ozone?"

"No, the poodle!" Giulia yelled.

"No, the kitty!" Nicole yelled.

"No, the fish." Joshua yelled.

"That's enough," said Ellen. "It has to be a human, so those of you who want to be led by an animal need to let it go, LET IT GOOO! I am one with the wind and sky --"

"Ellen!" Everyone had enough of that song.

"Oops," Ellen stopped singing and dancing. "As I was saying, no adults will lead you and animals aren't allowed to. Therefore, a fifth grader will become the new leader of the Ozone. In one week, we will have an election to determine the new leader of the Ozone."

## **Chapter 11: The Election**

Sephora, NZ, David, Joshua, Joci, Hannah, Natsuka, Ella, Eleanor, Willa, Nolan, Francesca, and Teddy all signed up to be the next Ozone Leader. Ellen invited the group into the office to discuss the election.

After everyone sat down, Ellen spoke to the group, "Welcome everyone. I'm thrilled to see that so many of you want to become the next leader of the Ozone. Before I talk about the election, let me explain what the Ozone Leader's responsibilities will be."

Ellen pulled out a giant list and began to read aloud, "Number one: every Monday, you will have a one hour meeting with me and the leaders of the other programs."

"Meetings? Yuck, I'm out of here," Teddy said and walked out of the office.

Ellen continued, "Ok. Next, you will be responsible for caring for all of the children in the Ozone, so I expect you to interact with all fourth graders and fifth graders..."

"Fourth Graders? Yuck. I'm out of here," Francesca said and walked out of the office.

"...and interact with both girls and boys." Ellen tried to continue, but then Joshua interrupted.

"I can interact with fourth graders and fifth graders, and I can interact with boys and girls. However, I will not interact with these fifth grade girls!" Joshua angrily said pointing at Hannah, Sephora, and Joci before storming out of the Ozone.

"Ok. Moving on," Ellen continued, "Everyday, you will need to take attendance and keep an accurate count of how many children are in the Ozone."

"Counting? Yuck. I'm out of here," Sephora said and walked out of the office.

Ellen continued, "There are also some paperwork responsibilities with this job. For example, since Alan has left, there have been over one hundred letters sent to him." Ellen pointed at Alan's dusty desk covered with envelopes, "You'll need to open all those letters and read them."

"Envelopes? Yuck. I'm out of here Hannah said and walked out of the office.

Ellen was now just speaking to eight potential future leaders of the Ozone, "There are many other responsibilities that I can talk about after the election, but next I want to mention my three big rules when you work for me. One -- you have to be here every day."

"Bye," Nolan said as he walked out of the office.

"Two -- you must not arrive late."

"Bye," NZ said as he walked out of the office.

"And three -- you must always pay attention."

Natsuka raised her hand and asked, "Can I read while paying attention?"

"No."

"Bye," Natsuka said as she walked out of the Ozone.

Only five students were left in the office. The next Ozone leader would be David, Joci, Ella, Eleanor, or Willa. Ellen said to the much smaller group, "Now let me explain how the election will work. Each of you fifth graders will--"

"We're not fifth graders," Ella, Eleanor, and Willa all said.

"Then, why are you here?" asked Ellen.

"We want to run the Ozone."

"But I said this election was only for fifth graders."

"No you didn't," the three fourth graders said.

"I thought I did. Anyway, you cannot be in the election," Ellen said and then had the three fourth graders leave the office.

Only Joci and David were left. As Ellen was starting to speak, David's mother walked into the office, "David, it's time to go."

"But Mom, I want to become the next leader of the Ozone."

"Sorry David, but I'm in a rush. Let's go." David walked out of the office with his mother. Ellen looked at Joci, "Congratulations. It looks like you're the next leader of the Ozone. We'll still have the election to make it formal, but you'll win since no one else will be on the ballot."

In the election, five voters crossed out Joci's name to vote for a write-in candidate. Three of those voters wrote in "WillEllaNor." One voter wrote, "I refuse to vote for a fifth grade girl," and one other voter wrote, "Tom Brady." Fortunately for Joci, thirty-three Ozone children did vote for her.

Joci was the new leader of the Ozone.

## **Chapter 12: Joci's First Day**

Joci's first day as the Ozone leader started with a meeting, a very long and boring meeting. First, Will discussed how since Alan disappeared, no fourth or fifth grader has signed up for one of his exciting field trips. "I guess Alan was really good at promoting my field trips."

Will then went on and on about stuff Joci did not care about. Then Ellen talked about stuff Joci didn't care about. Then Jason talked about more stuff Joci didn't care about. Then Christie talked and talked.. Then Jason talked again. Then Will talked. Then Christie talked. Then Joci fell asleep.

"No right, now wrong, no rules for me. I'm free! Let it go. LET IT GO!" Ellen's singing woke up Joci. Jason then whispered to Joci, "Ellen insists that we end all meetings by singing Let it Go. You're lucky she didn't notice you sleeping. Now it's time to go shopping for snack."

After shopping for snack, Joci rushed upstairs to her classroom to see what she missed. Her teacher said she missed a lot of fun things and a lot of work. Unfortunately, Joci's teacher expected her to make up all the work she missed and none the fun things.

Joci hurried back to the Ozone with all of her homework to get ready for attendance. Attendance went smoothly except for Joshua intentionally giving her the wrong name and for Elena criticizing her checkmarks for not being as nice as Alan's used to be.

The first snack Joci purchased for the Ozone was gummy bears and peach juice. Although many liked her snack, there were many complaints.

"This juice is too peachy."

"I can't eat gummy bears because I have braces."

"There's not enough peach flavor in this drink."

"This snack isn't healthy."

"I can't eat bears because I'm a vegetarian."

"I only eat red gummy bears."

Then after snack, which no one cleaned up, things got messier. Nicole's cat ruined the yarn supply, Giulia's dog slobbered on everything, and Ava's horse was not house trained. When Joci asked people to help clean up, they refused and said that they did not make the mess.

Relationships were getting messy too. Maya and Maya got into an argument that became so heated that they began to push and shove each other. Joci quickly broke up the scuffle and said, "No pushing or shoving!"

"I think you should allow pushing but not shoving," said David.

“What if you allow shoving but no pushing?” asked NZ.

“Joci just broke the Alan rule!” announced Joshua.

Joci was getting an enormous headache as the day was coming to an end. As she was thinking about all the homework she still needed to do, Joci looked at Alan’s old desk covered with letters. Joci thought to herself, “I haven’t even had time to open one letter. Guess I should open a few now.”

Joci sat at the desk and open the first letter addressed to Alan. The letter was filled with twenty dollar bills. She rushed to open another letter. More twenty dollar bills and even a few hundreds! She opened some more letters. Each letter Joci opened was filled with cash.

### **Chapter 13: Can’t Buy Me Time**

By the next day Joci opened over five hundred envelopes all filled with cash. The letters were all addressed to Alan, but there were several different company names on the envelopes. There was, “Alan’s Gutter Cleaning Service, Alan’s Bookmarks, Alan’s Shoveling, Alan’s Leaf Raking, Alan’s Fancy Bookmarks, Alan’s Car Washing Service, and Alan Cheap Bookmarks, Alan’s Child Care/Labor Consulting Services.”

Joci figured out that all of Alan’s “activities” were his businesses that allowed him to buy all that expensive coffee and go on fancy vacations. Now what should Joci do with the money? She thought about buying toys, electronics, clothing, candy, lots of candy, pizza, and even some books. Although she liked the idea of owning more stuff, Joci didn’t want to turn into another Alan. She wanted to be better than Alan and not cash in on the hard work of her friends. She hid the money away while thinking of ways to spend it.

Joci quickly thought of some ways to spend the money over the next few days. She gave Ava, Giulia, and Nicole each \$20 if they agreed to never bring in their animals. She paid the Mayas to never fight. She gave each student a dollar if the room was clean at the end of the day.

Joci even tried to make peace with Joshua by promising that she would buy whatever he needed to build Moonberry another transporter. Joshua was grateful but not completely satisfied. He said, “Building a transporter takes more than money; it takes a lot of time. And when you tricked me, you caused me to waste a lot of time. You can’t buy me that time I lost.”

The money had made many things better, but Joci was worried that Joshua would remain a challenge. She’d have to monitor him closely.

Joci also purchased an eighty inch television set for the Ozone.

### **Chapter 14: Television & More**

Everyone loved the television set, but they also wanted cable stations. So Joci bought cable. Then they wanted movies. So Joci bought them. Then they wanted to play video games. So Joci bought an Xbox and Playstation. Then, they wanted iPods to listen to music, so Joci bought some. Then Joci bought them music – the fifth grade boys wanted to listen to Taylor Swift; the fifth grade girls wanted to listen to One Direction; the fourth grade boys wanted to listen to Justin Bieber; the fourth grade girls wanted to listen to opera. So Joci bought a lot of music.

When you have television, movies, video games, and music, you need some food to go along with it. So each day, Joci ordered pizza to be delivered to the Ozone. She also bought candy, lots and lots of candy. Joci and her friends also decided to bring back BLT. However, this time it would not be Brain Learning Time nor Bad Luck To You. BLT would now be the time each day to eat Bacon Lettuce Tomato sandwiches.

Ozone children enjoyed all the new things Joci bought, but they wanted more. They wanted cash. When Nolan found out Joci paid Ava, Giulia, and Nicole to stop bringing in pets, he figured he could get Joci to pay him too. On a Tuesday afternoon, Nolan arrived to the Ozone with his monkey butler. The monkey was very polite and helpful, but he was a clumsy monkey (and a bit curious). Within an hour, the monkey broke two iPods, knocked a pitcher of water all over Magic Cards, and accidentally ripped Hannah's picture of water. Joci paid Nolan \$20 if he agreed to never bring in the monkey butler again.

After Nolan's plan work, others copied him. Teddy brought in a snake, Thomas brought in a spider, and Elena brought in an anteater. They each earned \$20 by agreeing to never bring in their pets again. Unfortunately, others also noticed how the Mayas earn their money, and they decided to copy them. Eleanor, Ella, and Willa pretended to fight with each other. Sephora pretended to fight with Natsuka, and Danny loudly fought with one of the Gabes. Joci paid them all to stop.

4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders now had cable television, movies, video games, iPods, music, pizza, candy, BLT sandwiches, cash, and none of Alan's rules. Joshua was contently building a transporter with the supplies Joci purchased. Joci was getting used to sitting through boring meetings, getting her homework done, and taking attendance with checkmarks almost as good as Alan's. Life in the Ozone was better. Joci peacefully leaned back on the brand new massage chair recliner she bought for the Ozone. Just as she put on headphones to listen to music, Joci heard complaining.

"We're bored."

## **Chapter 15: Cold Pizza**

Just one child said he was bored, but soon many others joined him. As each day passed, the complaints became louder and more persistent.

"We're bored. We need better video games."

"We need better music."

"This pizza needs anchovies."

"We need newer movies."

"These BLTs don't have enough mayonnaise on them."

"We need iPads."

"Why don't we have a trampoline?"

"I miss my monkey butler."

"These BLTs have too much mayonnaise on them."

"We need more duct tape."

"Our iPods need fancier headphones."

"We want tacos."

Joci could only think of one solution for all these demands -- keep buying stuff. She bought an iPad, she ordered pizzas with anchovies, she ordered different types of BLTs, she bought tacos, she bought music, and she bought more video games.

Then, Joci tried to buy a trampoline. Just like she always did for every purchase, Joci opened up the secret drawer of Alan's desk and pulled out one of the envelopes of cash. However, the envelope she pulled out was empty. She looked in another envelope. Empty. She kept looking, but all Joci found were empty envelopes. All of the money Alan "earned" was gone.

So much for buying more stuff. Joci thought that if she explained to everyone that they ran out of money, the Ozone children would be calm, reasonable and understanding. They already had so much cool stuff, so why would they want more?

The announcement about no more money came after the last snack of pizza, which was leftover from the day before. Joci stood on top of a chair and waited for everyone to be quiet. And waited. And waited some more. Finally the room was silent. Joci cleared her throat and nervously said, "We have spent all of Alan's money. I can't buy you anything else."

There was silence. Joci thought the announcement went well. She explained the situation concisely and hopefully everyone understood her predicament. Joci, took a deep breath as she stepped off the chair. Maybe everything would be okay. Then a sneaker hit her in the nose. And then a piece of pizza flew over her head. And then there was booing and shouting. Joci ran out of the Ozone under a barrage of thrown pieces of pizzas, crumpled up bookmarks, and smelly shoes.

## **Chapter 16: The Natsuka Incident**

The Ozone had become a rude, messy, noisy place. Alan would have been happy because no one was breaking the Sephora or Joci Rules; there was no smiling or laughter. All there was were frowns and arguments.

Because Joci could no longer afford pizza, she bought cottage cheese for snack. Teddy complained, "This isn't pizza!"

"I know," replied Joci, "But it's all we can afford and it still is food."

Teddy obviously did not feel that cottage cheese should be used for food because he grabbed a handful of cottage cheese, shaped it into a ball, and started a cottage cheese ball fight. Cottage cheese flew everywhere. A ball smacked the new iPad, another ball hit the green door, a few hit the ceiling, and one hit Joci in the forehead.

No one cleaned up the mess when the cottage cheese ball fight ended. After Joci ran out of money, she had to stop paying kids to clean up. Without a financial incentive, children said they had no reason to clean. Joci argued that cleaning up after yourself was the responsible thing to do, especially if everyone wanted a nice, clean space. That argument didn't work, and the Ozone got messier and messier, especially after Ava's horse, Giulia's dog, and Nolan's monkey butler returned.

The Ozone was a mess, a loud mess. Without good food and knowing they could get nothing new, everyone became grouchy. They argued about who could use the fancy chairs, what to watch on the flat screen television, and what music to listen to. Actually, because of the Natsuka Incident, arguments over music led to the end of any television argument.

Since Alan left, Natsuka was content to quietly read without Alan and his silly rules bothering her. She had read every book in the Bowen Library and the Newton Library. Now she was working her way through all the books on Amazon.com. However, the conflicts after the Ozone ran out of money made reading more of a challenge. Natsuka could read through some noise, but not through the amount of grumpy Ozone noise. On the day of the Natsuka Incident, there was an argument about music playing in the Ozone. Nicole wanted to listen to Taylor Swift and David wanted to listen to Justin Bieber. The way they settled the argument was to see who could play their music the loudest. Ellen couldn't stand the loud music in the Ozone, so she played the Frozen Soundtrack as loud as she could.

Natsuka couldn't hear herself think, nor could she read. She just heard the screeching voices of Justin Bieber, Taylor Swift, and Elsa. Natsuka's frustration changed to anger. She screamed, "Be quiet!" and threw the two books she was trying to read across the room. One of the books hit Joci's forehead. The other book crashed into the flat screen television, shattering the screen into thousands of glass pieces. Because of the Natsuka Incident, there was no more tv. Also, no one cleaned up the shattered pieces.

## **Chapter 17: The Return of the Troublemaker**

It was late Sunday night, and Joci could not fall asleep. Two weeks had passed since the Ozone ran out of money. In those two weeks, this once beautiful space had become the Oh-No-Zone. Everyday there was yelling, fighting, crying, and temper tantrums. After the television set broke, the remote broke, and then the couch broke, and then the iPods broke, and then the books were ripped up. There were piles of trash everywhere. The floor had gotten so messy that Stephanie decided to wear snow shoes to walk across the room.

Everyone was mad at Joci too. They blamed her for destroying the Ozone even though she did everything they wanted her to do. Children frequently spoke about how they would have been better off if they elected someone else like Willelleanor or Tom Brady. Joci felt so deflated. At least her friends supported her, but Joci saw through their smiles and words of comfort; she knew her friends were just as miserable as everyone else. At least they were nice to her about it.

And then there was Joshua. Joshua hadn't really paid attention to all the changes in the Ozone since Joci took over. He was too busy building Moonberry's new transporter with all the supplies Joci bought him, so he didn't notice the better food and gadgets added to the Ozone. He also didn't notice when things broke and snack got worse. He was making progress with Moonberry's transporter and that is all that mattered.

Then there was a delay. After weeks of work, Joshua was just about done, but he needed one more part -- a flux capacitor. For the last transporter, he purchased one from some suspicious people in a white van parked in an abandoned parking lot, but those people disappeared. This time he tried to order one from Amazon.com. They were out of stock and weren't expected to get one to deliver to Joshua for at least six weeks. Joshua had to wait.

At first Joshua was just bored waiting and waiting, but, as time went on, he began to resent Joci even more. He had already built a successful transporter, but because of this meanie's trickery, he had to start all over again. Joshua is a logical person, and his logic told him that because Joci caused this boredom and frustration, he should cause some frustration for her. So he went to Wikipedia, looked up practical jokes, and tried to do each one to Joci. He did the Banana in the Tailpipe, the Chewing Gum Bug, Glitter Bombing, the Joy Buzzer, the Dribble Glass,

Whoopee Cushions, Sponge Cake Surprise, the Berners Street Hoax, and some more top secret tricks. Joci really didn't mind most of the practical jokes; some were actually very funny. Then, however, Joshua thought of something really mean that made Joci furious. He started calling her, "Alan the 2nd."

"That's it, no more messes; no more temper tantrums; no more practical jokes; no more broken things; no more Alan the 2nd. Tomorrow, I'm going straight to Ellen to tell her I quit!" With the decision made, Joci finally fell asleep.

Joci got to the office very early on Monday morning, and Ellen was already there. She was blasting the Frozen Soundtrack and talking to another adult. The person's back was to her, so she didn't recognize him. Joci coughed to interrupt, and said, "Excuse me sir. May I speak to Ellen privately for a minute? I have something very important to tell her."

The person turned around and said, "Sure thing Joci-fina."

It was Alan.

### **Chapter 18: Alan's Back**

"How did you get back?" Joci was shocked.

Alan smiled and said, "Don't you worry about that. Now didn't you want to speak to Ellen?"

"Nevermind." Joci rushed out of the office. When she got to the first floor of the school, Joci saw Ava and told her the news. Ava rushed to get her horse, Brown Beauty, and rode the horse through the halls of Bowen to announce that Alan was back.

Ava screamed into every classroom, "Alan is coming! Alan is coming, Alan is coming!" A sense of panic and dread overwhelmed the school. The Ozone was physically destroyed and now Alan would make it even worse with his bookmark making, miniscule snacks, chores, and those awful rules. Natsuka would have to stop reading, David would have to stop thinking, and Sephora would need to stop smiling.

Poor Joshua was so worried and upset that he began to shake. The timing of Alan's return couldn't have been worse. Last night, the flux capacitor had just arrived so Joshua was just days away from completing his transporter. But with Alan around, he would never have a chance to build it and let Moonberry use it.

After hours of worrying about Alan and not being able to pay attention to teachers, it was time for everyone to go down to the Ozone. It was the slowest that fourth and fifth graders ever walked down the stairs. Some students were sweating in fear. Others (and I won't say who to spare them from the embarrassment) were crying. Some were trying to convince themselves that Joci and Ava were lying about Alan's return. No one wanted to enter the Ozone

However, they had no choice. They had to be in the Ozone and that's what they did. Slowly. As children finally entered the Ozone, they saw that the room was finally clean. The television set and other items were still broken, but at least there was no mess. Then the students saw Alan. "Welcome everyone! To celebrate my return, I baked some cakes and brought in lots of ice cream."

Sephora started to smile about the good food, but quickly covered her mouth before being caught breaking the Sephora Rule. Alan noticed. "It's okay to smile, Sephorabella. Children eating cake and ice cream should always smile."

"Alan, what about the rule you made?" asked Hannah.

"Forget about all my rules Vannah. I just want all of you to have fun."

## **Chapter 19: Alan's Chores**

For the next few weeks, Joci and her friends had more fun than they ever had. Alan fixed the television set, video games, couch, i-Pods, and everything else. It was nice that he did this, but Ozone kids didn't care that much about their fixed toys because Alan kept them busy with his chores.

These chores didn't involve cleaning gutters or raking leaves, however. One chore for the kids was to bring in their bathing suits because Alan had filled the Ozone with gallons and gallons of water so there was a swim party. The next day, Alan brought in high powered air conditioners to freeze the swim party pool water, so the next chore for children was to bring in ice skates for a skating party.

Elena was thrilled Alan organized these parties, so she decided to go bring Alan a giant cup of coffee after the parties to thank him. When presented with the coffee, Alan said, "Thank you so much Eliana, but I don't like coffee. You can try giving the coffee to Ellen, but I think she likes it frozen."

One chore Alan did by himself was solving the tricky situation with Ava's horse, Giulia's dog, Nicole's cat, and Nolan's monkey butler. Many children wanted the animals out of the Ozone because of allergies, noise, and messes, but the animals owners didn't want the animals to go away. Alan gathered the four children and said, "Eva, Giuliette, NiCoolio, and Nolan-Ryan, I think I have a solution. If I build an indoor/outdoor animal shelter on the upper field, which you may visit anytime, will you keep your animals out of the Ozone?"

After they agreed, Alan quickly built a giant shelter for the animals, but that led to another chore -- everyone had to learn how to ride horses because Alan rented several horses to race Ava's horse around the upper field. After a day of racing, Alan made everyone stay until it was dark outside to have a special dinner followed by a giant fireworks display.

The Ozone was about more than having fun and watching fireworks; it was about great food. Alan brought in so much food -- pizza, calzones, hamburgers, ice cream, sushi, cotton candy, mac & cheese, and anything else children requested. With food you need good drinks, and, fortunately, Alan made the best smoothies in the world. He started with his masterpiece, the Super Sweet Strawberry Smoothie, which everyone loved, except for children who didn't like strawberries. Therefore, he made banana smoothies for children who didn't like strawberries, chocolate smoothies for children who didn't like fruit, lobster smoothies for children who didn't like sweets, taco smoothies for children with shellfish allergies, and bacon smoothies for children who really liked bacon.

As children were relaxing in the Ozone drinking their smoothies and eating French fries, onion rings, and mozzarella sticks, Alan stood on a chair and had everyone quiet down for an announcement, "Attention everyone. Because all of you have been so good since I've returned,

I decided to plan a special field trip. We're all going to the Apple Store, so I can buy each of you an Apple Watch."

Everyone started cheering. Joci was so happy she began to dance. As Joci was practicing her best dance moves, Joshua approached her. "Excuse me Joci, but this is important. That's not really Alan."

## **Chapter 20: The Very Special Field Trip**

Joci thought Joshua was playing another practical joke on her. Alan looked like Alan and sounded like Alan, so he must be Alan. She told Joshua to stop joking around and signed up for the field trip to the Apple Store. In fact, everyone signed up for the field trip -- everyone but Joshua. Joshua was trying to tell anyone who would listen that Alan wasn't really Alan, but nobody listened because they were so happy with Alan and so excited about getting a new Apple Watch.

On the day of the trip, everyone waited outside in front of the school for the bus to arrive. Finally, the bus did arrive, but Ellen wasn't driving and it wasn't the usual small yellow BASCP bus. Alan was in the driver's seat of a giant luxurious bus. The bus was bright silver and decorated with illustrations of sea life. Under a picture of a giant squid shaking hands (or tentacles) with a giant octopus was the name of the bus, "Aqualunar Transport Services."

As Alan opened the door to the bus, music blasted, but it was not the Frozen Soundtrack. "Under the Sea" was playing loudly as Alan took attendance, saying the name of each child stepping onto the bus, "Nickerbocker, Ethantium, Eliana, Wilma, Emma, Eleanora, Stephacorn, Mayan...."

Joshua grabbed Joci's shoulder and said, "Alan never called anyone the wrong name before he supposedly returned. This imposter hasn't said a correct name yet!" Joci thought about what he said, but she thought that wasn't enough evidence, especially not enough evidence to refuse a free Apple Watch.

Joci and Joshua were the last two to get on the bus. Alan looked at them and said, "Joci-fina and Joshimedes, please join the rest of the group." Joci climbed the bus and went all the way to the back of the bus. Joshua did not follow. He turned around and ran away.

Alan looked at Joshua running away and said, "Oh well, I guess one of you will get two Apple Watches – one for each wrist. Daniel and Russell groaned at the same time, "That's not fair, I want three watches."

"I'll think about it, Danielson and Russo," Alan said as he drove the bus away from the school. No one paid attention to where Alan was driving because the bus was so comfortable with reclining seats, air conditioning, foot rests, individual television sets with headphones, and drink holders that were holding milkshakes for each passenger. Thomas, who was so excited about going to the Apple Store, was paying attention, however. "Alan, you're going the wrong way! Why are you pulling into the Wegmans parking lot?"

"Don't you worry, Thompsonville. I decided we should stop for snacks first."

"But the Apple Store is only two minutes away from here!"

Thomas got louder complaining about this unnecessary display, loud enough to distract Joci away from her movie. When she looked up, she saw Alan was positioning the bus so it pointed directly at the garage doors to the right of Wegmans. Suddenly, a milkshake hit Alan right in the back. Thomas was really upset about this delay. Alan revved up the engine bus as he wiped the contents of the milkshake off the back of his shirt. When Alan wiped the back of his shirt, he pulled his collar down and a giant fin popped out.

Joci stared in disbelief at a giant aqua fin protruding from Alan's back. Joshua was right! Joci yelled, "Get off the bus! That's not Alan!" She opened the backdoor of the bus and jumped out. Nobody followed. Everyone else was too busy enjoying their milkshakes, movies, and headphones.

Joci sat on the pavement as she watched the bus quickly accelerate. It looked like Alan was about to crash the bus into the Wegmans garage. Joci covered her ears as she braced for the crash.

"Splassshhhhhh!"

The bus didn't crash; it splashed. Just as the bus was hitting the garage, it disappeared, leaving only a sound like fifty elephants doing belly flops at the same time in Crystal Lake. The bus was gone. All that was left was some mysterious water.

## **Chapter 21: The Two-Zone**

The next day Ellen was at her desk listening to "Do You Want to Build a Snowman." Out of habit, she turned the volume up at 3 PM because she knew those loud fourth and fifth graders were about to arrive in the Ozone. Today, however, it never got louder. Ellen was so pleased. She thought to herself, "Alan has never gotten these kids to be so quiet! I must praise him for doing such a wonderful job."

"Great job keeping those kids quiet, Alan! I'm giving you a raise."

Alan didn't respond. No one responded. Ellen was about to go into the Ozone to see what was going on, but her favorite part of the song started so she stayed at her desk. Ellen sang, "Just watching the hours tick by - (tic-toc, tic-toc, tic-toc, tic-toc, tic-toc)," and got back to work.

Meanwhile, in the Ozone Joci was quietly reading on the couch while Joshua was intensely working on his transporter by Moonberry's tank. Joci had already told Joshua what had happened with the fake Alan and the bus of children disappearing in the Wegman's parking lot, so there was nothing else to talk about. Joci continued to read Berenstain Bears books and Joshua continued to work on the transporter. As Joci giggled at the exploits of Brother Bear and Sister Bear, Joshua used rolls and rolls of duct tape as he worked on attaching the flux capacitor to the transporter.

Joci was nervously turning the page to see what was going to happen to Papa Bear, who was riding his bike without a helmet when Joshua suddenly yelled, "Finally! I'm finished!" Joshua did a quick dance and lifted his completed transporter high above his head.

Joci watched Joshua grab a cup and guide Moonberry in. Joshua then stared at the cup for a few minutes as Moonberry stared back at him – they were clearly communicating as one tear

rolled down Joshua's cheek while he smiled. Joshua then typed a few buttons on the transporter to activate it and poured the cup of water with Moonberry onto it.

"ZAP!" Moonberry disappeared.

The next day in the Ozone was even quieter because Joshua no longer had a transporter to build. With Moonberry gone, the Ozone felt much lonelier. Joci and Joshua just read quietly. The only noise in the room was Ellen occasionally shouting into the Ozone, "Keep up the good work, Alan. Way to keep those kids quiet."

Joci was about to finish reading her seventeenth Berenstain Bear book of the week. Brother Bear was at the dentist with several cavities because he was eating too many sweets and not brushing his teeth. Then, the silence in the room was suddenly disrupted by a giant zap. Moonberry was back! Joshua quickly put Moonberry back in his tank and listened intently as Moonberry swam in circles.

Joci walked over to Joshua, "What happened?"

Joshua replied, "Moonberry found the real Alan and all of the Ozone students. They are prisoners in a zoo underneath the moon's largest ocean."

## **Chapter 22: People Are Alike All Over**

"It's all my fault!" After Joshua listened to Moonberry, he explained to Joci that when Alan was transported to the moon's largest ocean, mean moon-sea monsters captured him and confiscated the transporter. After throwing Alan into a prison cell, the mean moon-sea monsters studied Joshua's transporter. Soon they were able to copy the technology and build several new and improved transporters.

As the transporters were being developed, other mean moon-sea monsters interrogated Alan to learn about the Ozone. Once they had enough information, a mean moon-sea monster disguised herself as Alan and transported to Newton to capture everyone. Now Alan and every Ozone student lived in water cages in a zoo.

Joci, who was astonished by all of this, asked Joshua how Moonberry gathered all of this information so quickly. Joshua asked Moonberry, paused to listen, and then said, "One student managed to escape and tell Moonberry everything."

"Who was it?"

"Elena."

"But I thought you were the only one able to communicate with Moonberry?"

"Apparently, in the moon's biggest ocean, they invented a human-to-fish translator. I really want to see this invention," said Joshua.

"You will," said Joci. "We must go to the moon's biggest ocean and help everyone escape." Joci felt kind of responsible for everyone getting captured since her trick caused Alan rather than Moonberry to go to the moon's biggest. Moonberry wouldn't have been captured like that

bumbling Alan, and then the mean moon-sea monsters would never had been able to copy Joshua's transporter. Joci felt pretty guilty.

Joshua agreed to go too. "Yes, let's bring back all of the fourth and fifth graders and the real Alan."

"Alan?" Joci wasn't sure she wanted him back.

"Yes, even Alan. He may be horrible, but I know you don't want to be in charge of the Ozone anymore. Alan may be the only human willing to do it," Joshua replied.

Joci eventually agreed with Joshua and prepared to go to the moon's largest ocean. She and Joshua each put a hand on the transporter. With his other hand, Joshua then poured Moonberry on the transporter. With her other hand, Joci plugged her nose closed because she didn't want the Moon's biggest ocean water to go up her nose.

"Is everyone ready?" Joshua looked at Joci who nervously nodded and Moonberry who flamboyantly flipped. Joshua then pressed a few buttons. "Zap!" They were gone.

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A few minutes later, Ellen yelled into the Ozone. "Hey Alan, I just checked our phone messages and there were like 50 messages from parents asking me where their kids are. You know what they're talking about? Alan? Okay, I guess you're too busy to talk. I'll talk to you about it later. Oh yeah, one more thing: really great job keeping those kids quiet!"

## **Chapter 23: A Whole New World**

Joci went from the Ozone to the moon's biggest ocean quicker than she could blink. Joshua really did build a great transporter. The water in the moon's ocean was a very dark purple, but Joci could still see well because the bottom of the ocean was covered with luminescent glowing green seaweed and bright orange dodgeball sized rocks that spookily lit up the ocean. Strange sea creatures, shadows, and caves were everywhere. Moonberry led Joci and Joshua to one of these caves.

Inside the cave were many giant white moon-sea shells. Joshua put one over his mouth and pointed to Joci instructing her to do the same. Joci picked up one of the shells and looked at it. Instead of seeing the usually surface of a seashell, Joci saw white circuits and wires. Before she ran out of breath, Joci covered her mouth with the shell. Not only could Joci now breathe, she could speak and hear Joshua. And she could hear Moonberry! Joci asked Moonberry how he knew about these amazing shells.

Moonberry replied, "My sister Sidney sold seashells by the seashore, so she showed me several secret seashell supply stations."

With the seashells on their mouths, Joci and Joshua followed Moonberry out of the cave and swam about one hundred meters to a cave by an Octopus's garden in the shade. They went into the cave and saw Elena resting on a glowing bed of seaweed.

After everyone greeted each other, Elena explained how she escaped. "When Alan was driving the bus towards Wegman's, everyone started screaming. But instead of crashing into the building, we ended up here in this strange ocean. So everyone started screaming again.

"Right when the bus stopped on the ocean floor, the fake Alan ripped off his disguise, revealing himself to be an ugly moon-sea monster. He put white sea shells on our mouths which helped us breathe and communicate. Then, he opened the bus door to let on a bunch of other moon-ugly sea monsters who were all holding swordfish. As they pointed the swords of the swordfish at us, they explained that we'd be their newest exhibits at their zoo. Apparently, the citizens of the moon's largest ocean got bored watching just the real Alan drinking coffee, eating popcorn, and watching tv in his cage."

Elena continued, "Before they let us off the bus, the leader of the mean moon-sea monsters asked us if we had any questions. Ella raised her hand and asked when we were getting our Apple Watches. The monsters just laughed at her. Then NZ raised his hand, but I could tell he didn't have a question because he started saying 'um' a lot while repeatedly saying he had a question but never actually asking a question. While all of the mean moon-sea monsters were impatiently staring at NZ, I snuck out the back of the bus and swam to this cave. Luckily I later met Moonberry and here we are."

"So now what do we do?" asked Joci.

Moonberry responded, "Luckily, before my life as a prisoner in the Ozone, I was an army general for the Beta Moonfish Military. I'm an expert military strategist and while Elena was telling you her story I devised a plan. But for it to work, you and your friends will need specific skills. Joci, have you and your friends ever played some sort of flag capturing or ball dodging games?"

## **Chapter 24: The Great Escape?**

"Chipotle!!!" Joshua screamed as he swam by the locked gates of the Moon-Sea Zoo.

A few hours had passed since the meeting in Elena's cave. Moonberry and his friends were confident about their plan, and, now that the zoo was closed, they were ready to put the plan into action.

When the moon-sea monster zoo guards saw and heard Joshua, they opened the gates and chased him. Joshua swam as fast as he could, but the moon sea-monsters were faster -- one was about to catch him. Right when the monster reached to grab Joshua, hundreds and hundreds of Beta Fish swarmed around the monsters. Mooncherry, Moonmelon, Fred, and other friends and family of Moonberry joined the fish to help Ozone children escape. As the monsters toppled over because of the swarming fish, Joshua got away. He was now on his way to the Aqualunar bus

Meanwhile, Joci and Elena sneaked into the zoo right after the guards escaped. As Elena searched for the keys to the cages, Joci went up to her locked up friends and told them the plan. Then, while waiting for Elena to come up with the keys, Joci gathered as many rocks as she could.

Elena swam to a corner in the back of the zoo where there was a giant red cave with a golden dome. She thought it looked like a very important place so she looked to make sure there were

no guards and swam in. Inside the cave was beautiful -- there were piles of jewels and ornate decorations everywhere. Elena was tempted to grab some jewels to take home, but she knew her job was to find the keys. After looking for a few minutes, she found a door covered with bulletin board. On the board were some schedules, a sign that said, "Alan's Feeding Schedule," and some photographs of sea-monsters wearing ties. Elena opened the door and saw the keys on the desk. She quickly grabbed the keys and swam out of the office and then out of the cave. This was easy. Too easy.

As Elena swam out of the cave, twenty mean moon-sea monsters suddenly surrounded her. They all were pointing their swordfish swords at Elena. Actually, one wasn't holding a sword. One mean sea-monster was holding a handcuffed Joci. The monster yelled at Elena, "Put your hands behind your back, and slowly walk to me. Don't try anything funny!"

Elena listened to the monster and put her hands behind her back. She then slowly approached the monster. As Elena approached the monster, something grabbed the keys out of her hands. Without keys to the cages and surrounded by mean moon-sea monsters, it looked like Elena and Joci were about to become the newest exhibits of the Moon-Sea Zoo.

## **Chapter 25: A Happy Ending?**

Joci and Elena were both handcuffed and being led to their cages by mean moon-sea monsters. Elena looked at Joci, and whispered, "Thanks for coming to the moon-sea to help with the escape."

Joci sobbed, "You shouldn't be thanking me. I wasn't successful. We shouldn't have..."

"QUIET!" a monster yelled at the girls, "You were foolish to think you could save your friends. You and the rest of the Alans are no match for us!"

"Alans?" Joci bewilderedly asked the monster.

"Yes. That is what we call all of you funny looking creatures from Earth."

"Yuck. How can this day get even worse?"

The monster pointed to a cage where Alan was sleeping, "We ran out of cages, so, Joci, you'll be sharing a cage with Alan."

"Noooooo!" Joci kicked the monster in the shins and tried to run, but another monster grabbed her.

"Hahaha, you're such a silly Alan. You cannot escape us!" The mean moon-sea monster reached to open Alan's cage...

Whapp! The moon-sea monster suddenly grabbed his back and fell to the ground, "I've been hit by a rock!" Then another rock hit him. And another rock hit another sea monster. Moon rocks were raining through the ocean. So many monsters were getting hit by rocks, yet not one hit Joci or Elena.

"What's going on?" Elena asked Joci.

Joci pointed to the top of a cave “Look! There’s Natsuka, Francesca, and Sephora. They’re throwing rocks! They must have escaped!”

Elena looked around and saw escaped Ozone children everywhere. They were all throwing the dodgeball shaped rocks at the mean sea-monsters. Elena and Joci swam away from the bombarded monsters. They hurried towards some cages and saw Hannah unlocking cages. Elena screamed, “How did you get the keys? Someone stole them out of my hands.”

Hannah replied, “That was Moonberry. He said that while you were being captured he was able to grab the keys out of your hands. I got everyone but Alan out of their cages. Where do we go now?”

Joci pointed to a coral moon reef and said that Joshua was bringing the bus there to meet everyone.

Hannah threw a rock at an approaching mean moon-sea monster and said, “Okay. I’ll tell everyone. Let’s go.”

“Wait!” Joci didn’t really want to say this, but she continued, “We have to get Alan out of his cage.”

“No way. Let’s leave him here,” responded Hannah.

That sounded so tempting to Joci, but she said, “I can’t leave him here. I promised Joshua we’d save him.” Joci then took the keys from Hannah and headed to Alan’s cage.

Hannah shouted to all of her friends, “We have to get to that coral moon reef. Everyone keep throwing rocks at the monsters and let’s get out of here!” Some children were able to quickly get to the reef while others kept throwing rocks. Unfortunately, the mean moon-sea monster had started to throw rocks back at the students and they were getting better at dodging rocks.

Elena was getting frustrated when she saw the mean moon-sea monsters jumping over all of the rocks children threw. “Hit them in the head!”

David and Geffrey paused and looked at Elena, “Wait, head shots are allowed?”

“Yes!”

“Finally! We can throw at heads!” Everyone cheered and started throwing rocks at the mean moon-sea monsters’ heads.

Joci approached Alan’s cage and unlocked it. Alan was sound asleep, snoring loudly. “Wake up!” Joci screamed. Alan rubbed his eyes and told Joci to quiet down. Joci yelled at him again, “We’re helping you escape. Follow me to the reef if you want to get out of here.” Joci then ran off to join her friends at the meeting place.

Alan shook his head, “Typical 5th graders refusing to listen to me. Joci, get me a cup of coffee. I’m thirsty.” He yawned, opened his eyes, and slowly walked to the exit of his cage.

Ozone children started to dominate the monsters by dodging rocks and hitting more and more monsters in the head. Most of the monsters were knocked down to the ground, so everyone headed to the coral moon-reef. Elena was already at the reef watching her friends run towards her. Suddenly she saw a monster throw a rock right at Gabe's knee. It looked like it hit him. Gabe paused. "It didn't hit me!" Instead of going to the ground Gabe kept running.

Most of the Ozone children were now waiting at the reef, Everyone was waiting for Joshua and his bus. The fifth grade girls said he wouldn't show up. They remembered how mad he was at them when they tricked him. Joci assured them that he would show up. But as they waited longer and longer and more moon-sea monsters recovered from their injuries, Joci wondered if Joshua would be able to figure out how to work the bus in time. Also, Alan still hadn't arrived. Maybe he fell back asleep.

"Roarrrr!" The bus arrived. Joshua was at the driver's seat with his hands on the steering wheel and giant sunglasses on his face. He opened the door to the bus and yelled, "Everyone on the bus! We're getting out of here!"

Everyone cheered and climbed onto the bus. Joci was at the end of the line and looked over her shoulder. Finally, she saw Alan running with all of the mean moon-sea monsters chasing him and throwing rocks at him. Alan was running so slowly, but it looked like he would make it to the bus before the mean moon-sea monsters caught him.

Everyone else was now on the bus, everyone but Alan. He was still ten feet away. Joci closed the door of the bus. When Alan got to the bus he banged on the door and yelled, "Hurry, hurry. Let me in!" Joshua revved the engine. He had to drive off soon because so many mean moon-sea monsters were almost to the bus.

"Let's go! Leave Alan on the moon," yelled Ethan,

Joci looked at Alan through the bus door window. "Before I let you on this bus, you have to agree to two conditions: one: you have to be nice to kids."

"Yuck!" Alan got sick just from that suggestion, but then he saw the monsters getting much closer. "Yes I agree to be nice."

"And two, you must get rid of all your awful rules."

"Even the Sephora rule?"

"Yes!"

Alan was just about to say no, when a rock flew right by his head and dented the bus. "Yes, yes, I agree to everything! Let me on the bus!"

Joci opened the door and Alan climbed onto the bus. Before Alan even sat down, Joshua slammed his foot on the accelerator, causing the bus to speed through the ocean. Next, he pressed a few buttons and switched on the flux capacitor. Joshua steered the bus towards a giant moon-sea boulder and made the bus go as fast as he could. He really hoped this would work because he did not want to crash the bus into a boulder with so many moon-sea monsters chasing him.

“Zap!”

The bus safely stopped on the Bowen School’s upper field. Children got off of the bus and played a game of kickball.

## **Epilogue**

Moonberry watched the bus disappear right before crashing into the boulder. He then swam off with his brothers Mooncherry, Moonmelon, and Fred far away from the mean moon-sea monsters.

Moonberry was so happy to be back home in the moon’s biggest ocean with his family. He spent his days playing and talking with his brothers, telling them about all the exploits in the Ozone. Although Moonberry was happy to be back home, each time he told his brothers a story about the Ozone he became a little sad about missing his human friends.

Then one day while Moonberry was playing Beta-Tag with Mooncherry, he saw a rock with an arrow drawn on it. The arrow was pointing to a bed of green glowing seaweed. Moonberry looked under the seaweed and found a note and a transporter. According to the note, Joshua quickly built a portable transporter with extra materials he he found on the Aqualunar Bus.

The portable transporter worked. Moonberry was soon back in the Ozone talking to Joshua about algorithms. Moonberry didn’t just talk to Joshua now; he talked to everyone with those white sea shells brought back from the moon. Sephora was smiling, Joci was laughing, Natsuka was reading, and Alan was tolerable.

It was just about six o’clock and the Ozone was closing. Joci left and then Joshua left, each saying goodbye to Moonberry and even Alan. With all the children gone, Alan looked at Moonberry and said, “I feel like eating sushi tonight.”

Moonberry rolled his eyes, “Must you make that terrible joke every night?”

Alan replied, “I think I do. I’ll call it the Moonberry Rule. See you tomorrow, Moonberry.”

“Bye, Alan. See you tomorrow.” Moonberry swam into his portable transporter and went off to the moon’s biggest ocean.