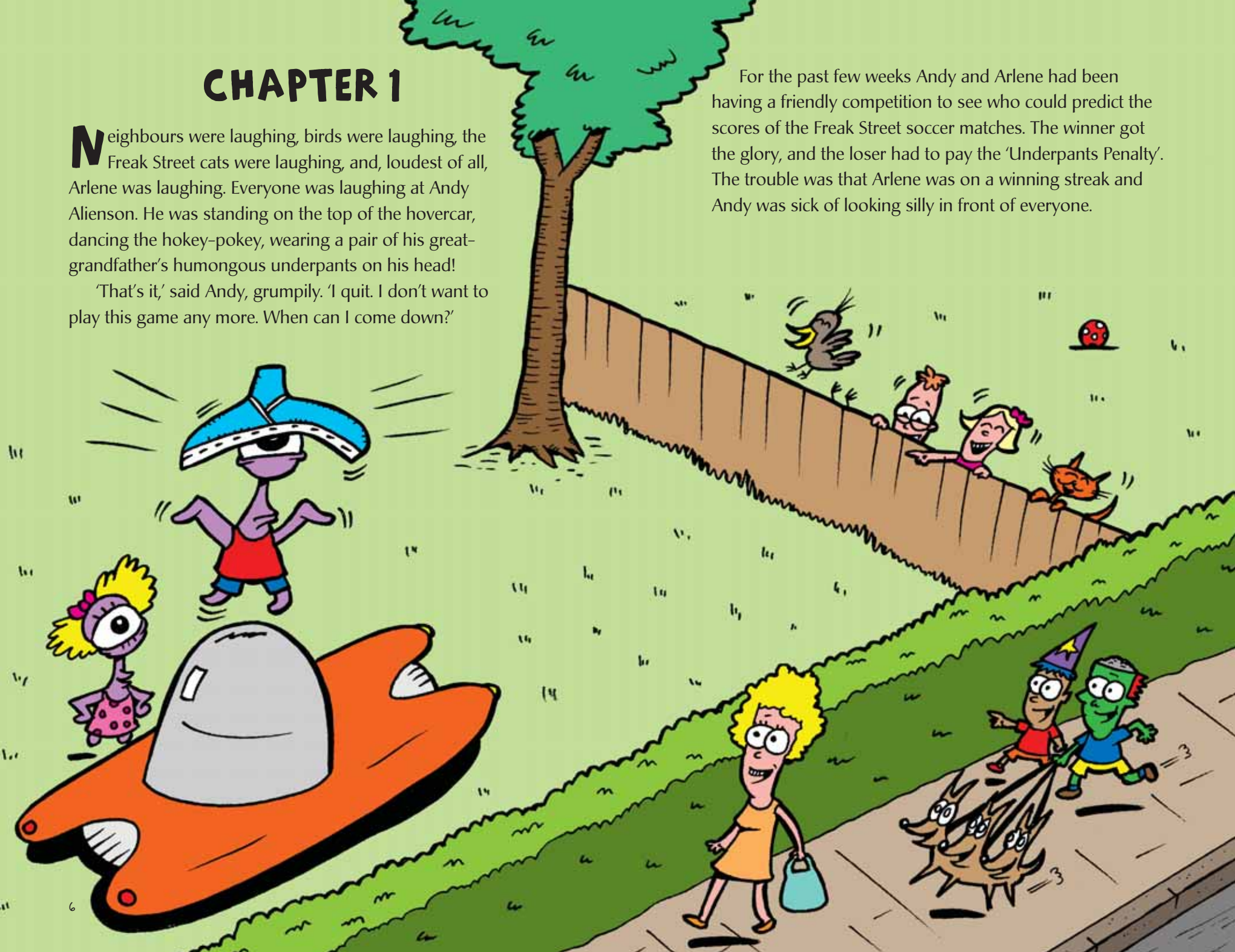


# CHAPTER 1

Neighbours were laughing, birds were laughing, the Freak Street cats were laughing, and, loudest of all, Arlene was laughing. Everyone was laughing at Andy Alienson. He was standing on the top of the hovercar, dancing the hokey-pokey, wearing a pair of his great-grandfather's humongous underpants on his head!

'That's it,' said Andy, grumpily. 'I quit. I don't want to play this game any more. When can I come down?'

For the past few weeks Andy and Arlene had been having a friendly competition to see who could predict the scores of the Freak Street soccer matches. The winner got the glory, and the loser had to pay the 'Underpants Penalty'. The trouble was that Arlene was on a winning streak and Andy was sick of looking silly in front of everyone.



'You know the rules,' chuckled Arlene. 'Loser has to dance on top of the car with great-grandpa's undies on their head, for one hour.'

'But I end up wearing them every week.' Andy shook his head in dismay. 'How do you keep getting it right?'



'There's no secret,' replied Arlene, smugly. 'You just need to know the teams really well.'

'You must be cheating,' said Andy, desperately. 'Are you using horoscopes? Numerology? A crystal ball?'

'I know who's in-form right now,' said Arlene, 'whether there are any player injuries, who likes playing in what kind of weather and conditions . . . It's a science!'



Andy, who'd never been any good at science, groaned. 'Well it's the big match next week,' he said. 'Freak Street vs. Snob Street Academy in the annual Cup Final grudge game. I'm going to get the score for that one spot on!'

Arlene chuckled. 'You've got no chance!'

'Oh really? Well what about this,' he suggested boldly, 'loser has to spend a whole month wearing the giant underpants on their head?'

'You're on!' replied his confident sister. 'Prepare to lose, undie-man!'

