

# Chapter 4

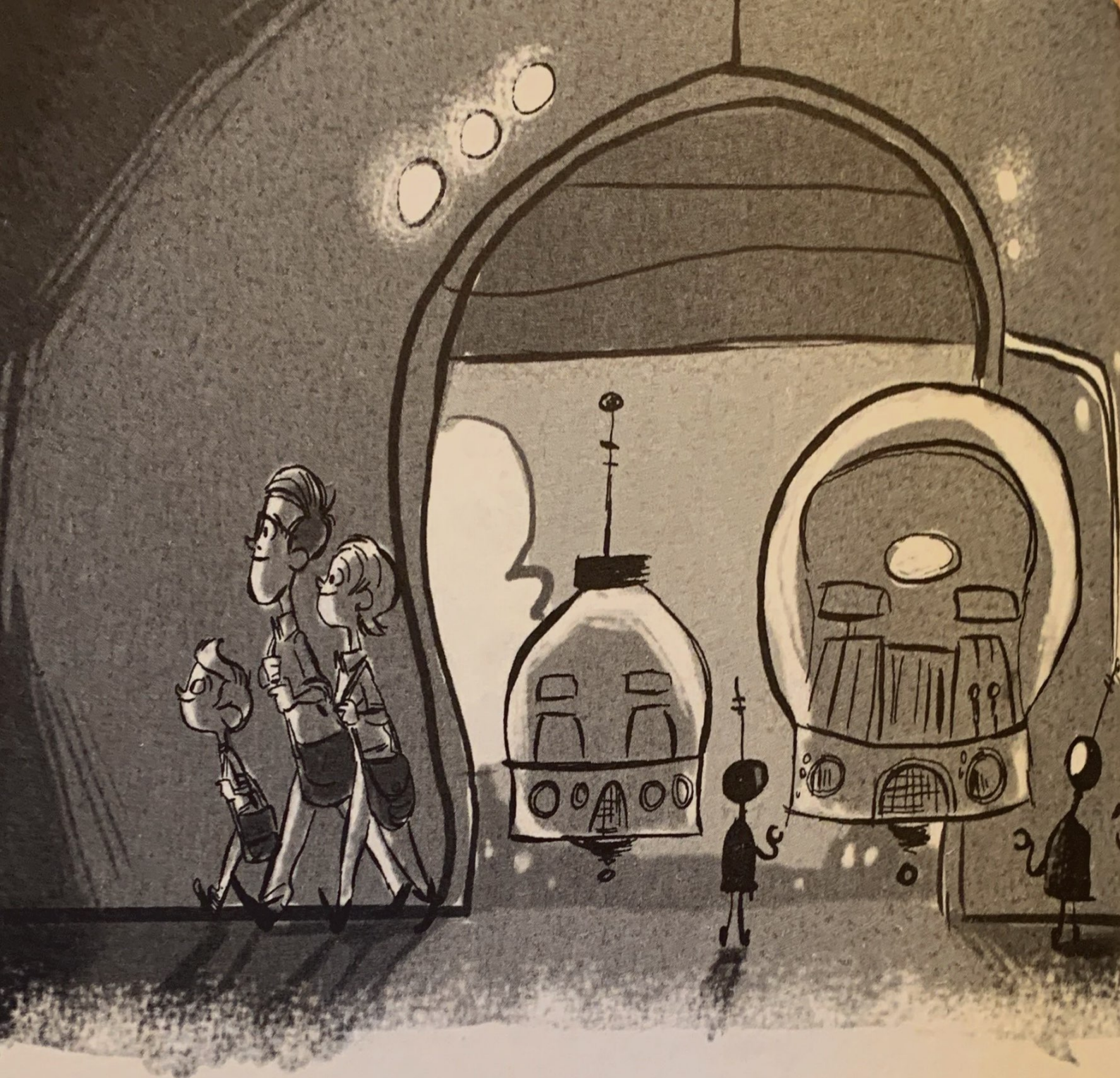
# What a House!

The Nelsons' car flew through the air above Nebulon.

"One twenty-two Zoid View directly below," said the car. It slowed down as it approached a large house.

The house was shiny white. The car glided softly into a big, rounded





garage. It parked next to a smaller red car.

"Destination reached," announced the car. Then the engine shut off.

"Well, Nelsons, we're home!" Dad announced. "Who wants a tour?"



"Me!" Charlotte shouted.

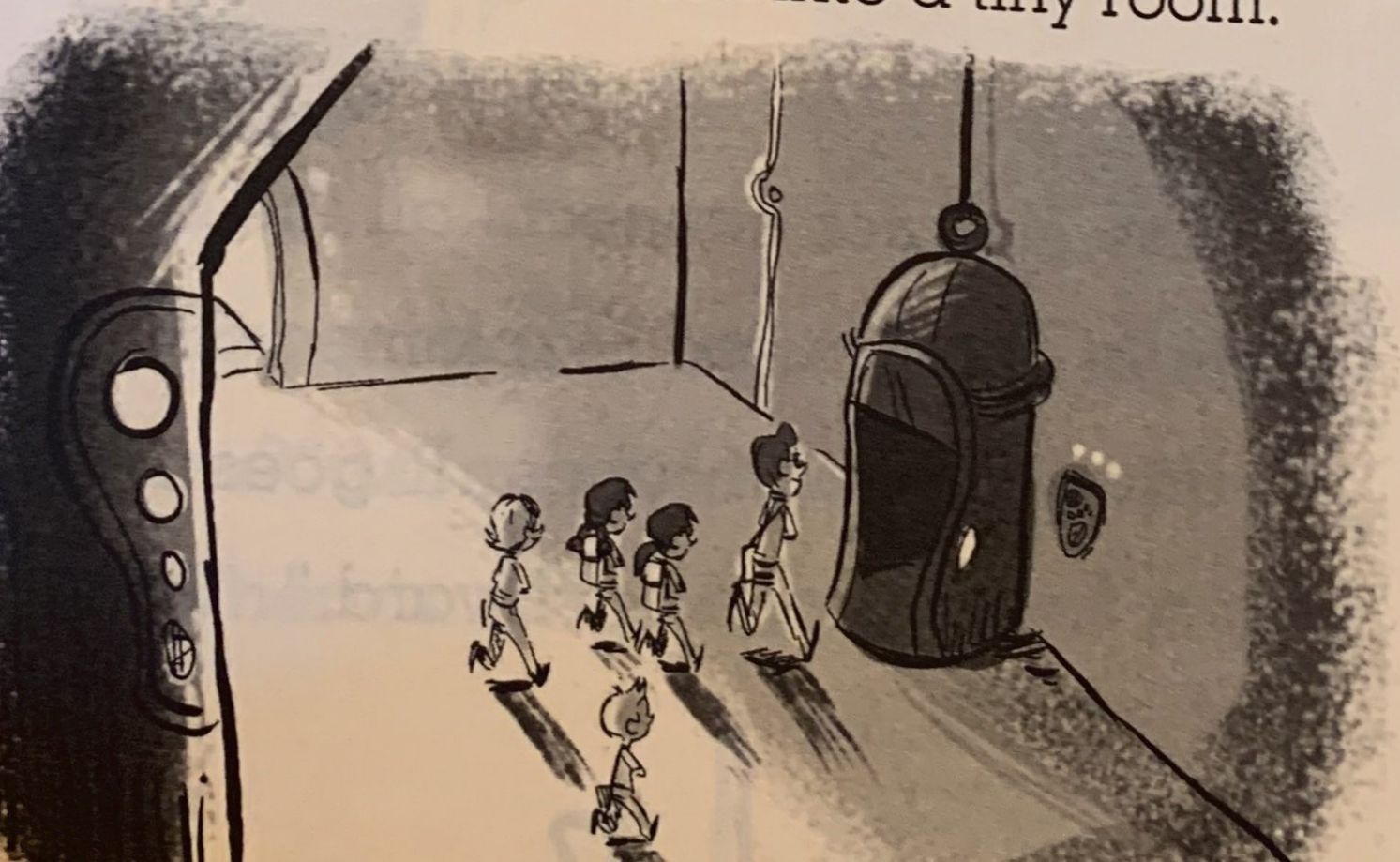
"And me!" Cathy agreed.

"Zack?" Dad asked.

"Uh . . . sure, I guess," Zack said, shrugging.

"Oh, I think you're really going to like this place, Zack," Dad said. "First stop—the kitchen."

Dad walked over to a round door in the garage. He went into a tiny room.

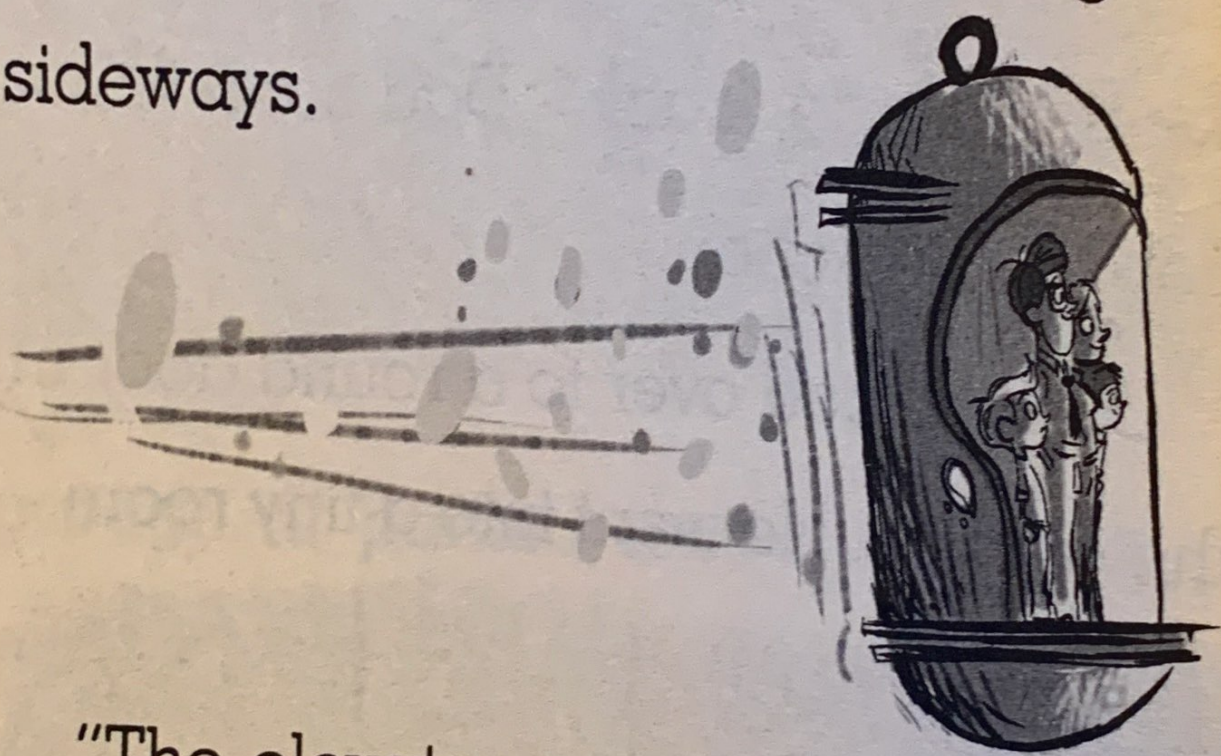




"That's the kitchen?" asked Zack.

"Nope. This is the elevator. Come on in, everyone."

The whole family stepped into the elevator. The door closed with a whoosh. The elevator took off—going sideways.



"The elevator connects all the sections of the house," explained Dad. "It travels through tubes. It goes up, down, forward, and backward."

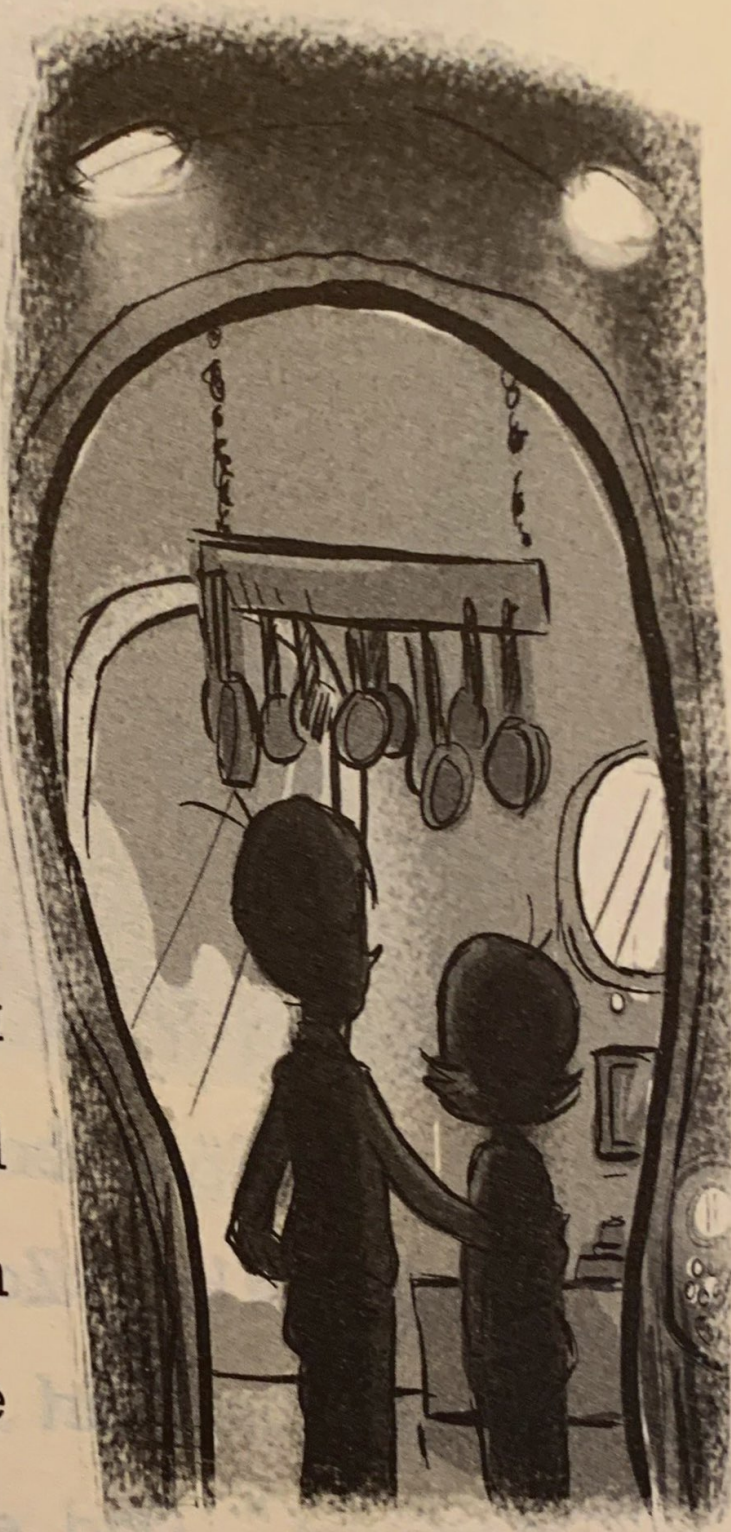


The elevator glided to a stop, and the doors slid open.

Mom stepped into the huge kitchen.

"Wow!" she said.

"Welcome home, Mr. Nelson," said a voice that seemed to be coming from every corner of the room.



"How ya doing, Ira?" Dad replied.

"Ira?" Mom asked. "Who's Ira?"

"Where's . . ."



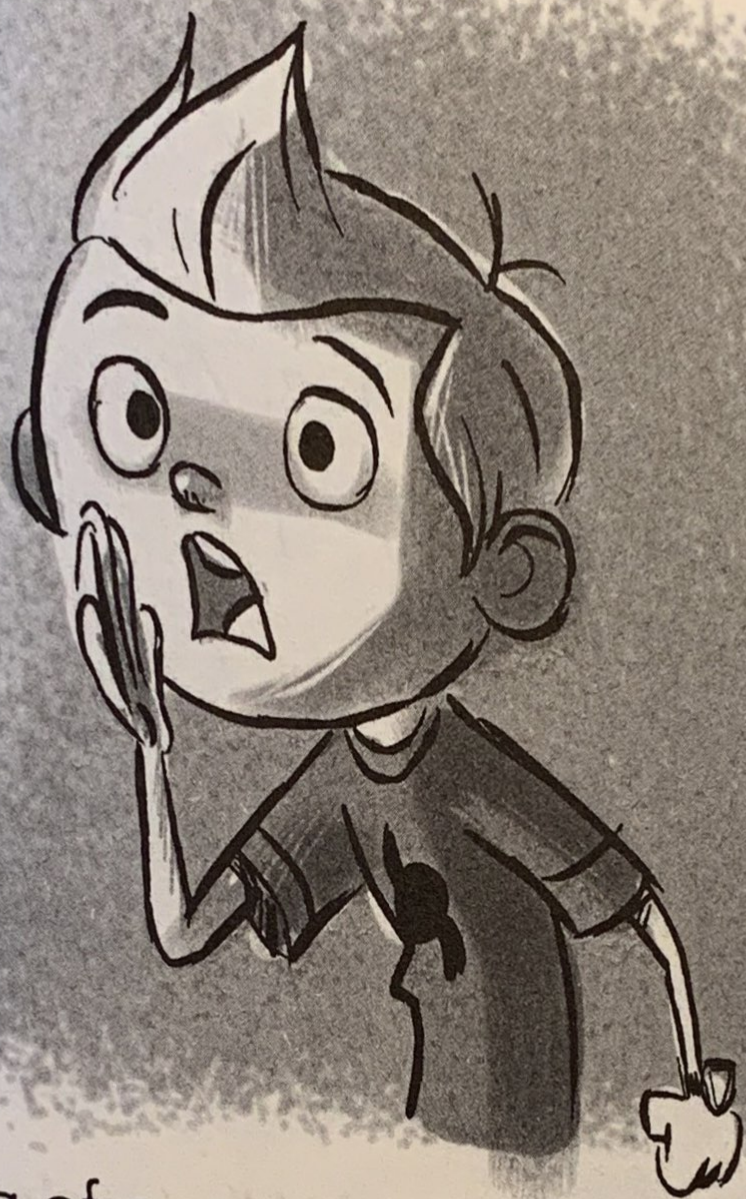


"... Ira?" asked the twins.

"What's Ira?" Zack asked.

"I-R-A is short for 'Indoor Robotic Assistant,'" Dad explained. "He's a computer, but he's so much more. Ira is part of the electrical, mechanical, computer, and communications





systems of every room in the house."

"Hi, Ira," said Zack, giggling a bit. I'm talking to the house, he thought.

"Welcome home, Master Zack," Ira replied.

And the house is talking to me!

"You don't have to call me 'Master Zack,'" said Zack. "Just 'Zack' is fine."





"Very well, Master Just Zack," Ira said.

The whole family chuckled.

"And welcome to you, too, Mrs. Nelson. Miss Charlotte. Miss Cathy."

"Ooh, I like . . ."

". . . being called . . ."

". . . 'miss'!" said the twins.

"So, who's thirsty after the long journey?" Dad asked.

"Can I have some orange juice?" asked Zack.





"Just plain old orange juice?" Dad smiled, and his eyes opened wide.

"How about a jazzy Nebulon juice?"

"Sure, I guess," Zack said.

"Ira, can we please have a spudsy melonade?" said Dad.

"Certainly, Mr. Nelson," Ira said.

A small panel in the wall slid open.







Out popped a metal arm holding a glass of frosty, bubbling juice. "Here is your spudsy melonade, Master Just Zack," said Ira.

Zack looked at the glass with wide eyes. "Thanks, Ira," he said. Then Zack took it and gulped down the cool drink. "Sweet! Spudsy melonade rules!" *Maybe this place won't be so bad after all,* he thought.