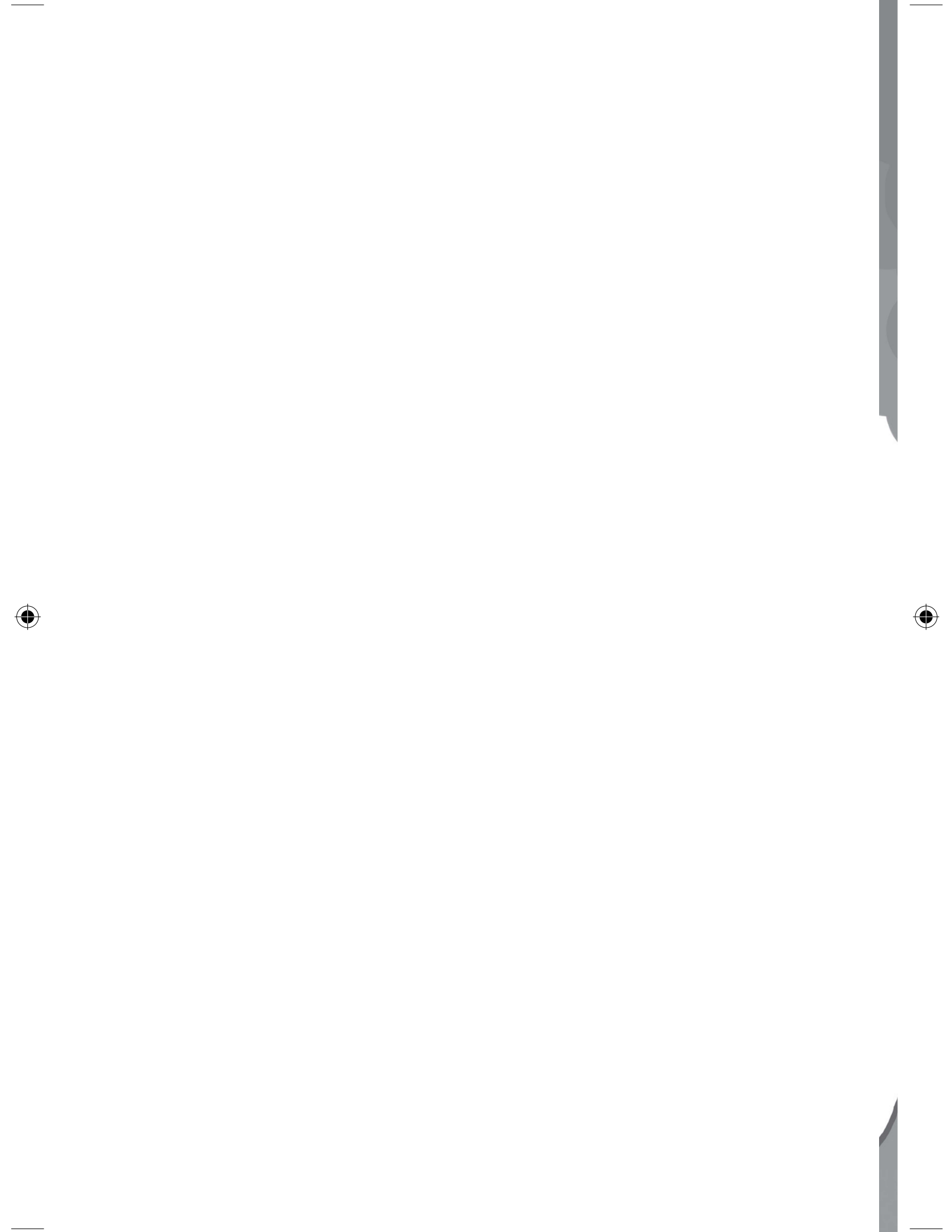


OLIVER'S GREAT BIG UNIVERSE





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JORGE CHAM

SIMON & SCHUSTER



*To my Tía Loraine,
the coolest aunt on the planet
—Oliver*



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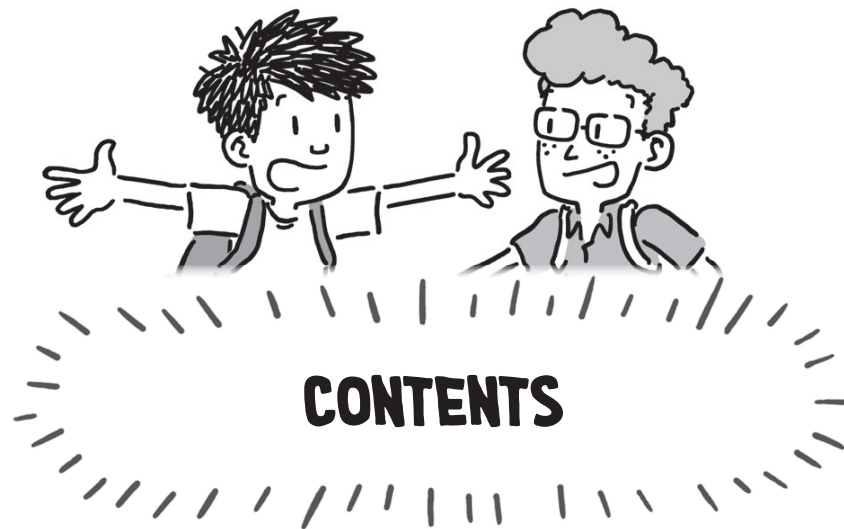
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CHAPTER 1

VOLCANOES ARE HOT!



Welcome! My name is Oliver, and I'm going to tell you all about why I wrote this book. But first, let me tell you about the time I met a real-life **CAVE-WOMAN**. Not only that, it turns out I'm related to her!



Here's what happened: About a month ago, I was playing video games with Evie Howard. Evie is a good friend of mine who moved to India a few months after we started middle school. Before she

moved, she and I made a book about the universe, which, if you haven't read it, you totally should. There are a bunch of funny comics in it that Evie drew. Her dad, Dr Howard, who studies things in space, helped me write it. But now they live in India, which is super far away. We still manage to find a time to play online together, though.



Normally, I'm not allowed to play video games before noon or late at night before bedtime, but my parents make an exception for Evie because they know I miss her. Sometimes that means I have to get up really early, because there's a twelve-hour time difference between here and India, but I don't mind. I hate waking up early, but for Evie

(and playing video games) I'd happily wake up at the crack of dawn.



ME, WAKING UP TO GO TO SCHOOL



ME, WAKING UP TO PLAY VIDEO GAMES

I was playing with Evie and totally beating her at Minebuilder. Of course, if you ask her, she'll say *she* was beating *me*, but **DON'T BELIEVE HER!** OK, technically, she *was* beating me, but I would have been winning if my internet connection wasn't so slow.



I keep telling my dad that we need better internet at home, but he says that helping me get a higher score on video games is pretty low on the family priority list. I told him we need to rethink our family priorities, and he actually agreed. Then he said maybe my pocket money should be lower on the list, so I backed off. Sometimes you have to quit while you're not behind.



Anyway, it was super early in the morning and I was playing with Evie when all of a sudden, I heard a knock at the door.



Everyone in the house was asleep, so I wasn't sure what to do. Evie thought I should go ask who it was, which was easy enough for her to say.



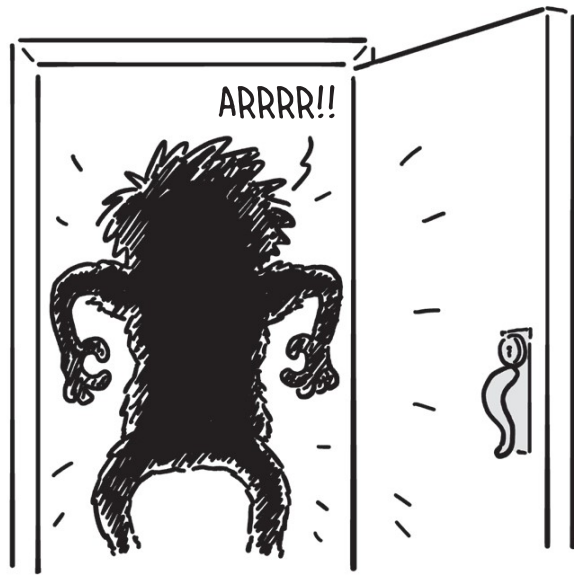
I worked up the courage to ask, but all I heard back were some grunts.



At first, I thought it was my dad, because he always grunts when he wakes up early. But I could tell he was still in bed upstairs since I could hear his snoring. You can hear my dad's snoring from India, it's so loud.



Then I heard whoever was outside poking around in the bushes. It sounded like they were trying to find the emergency key my parents keep hidden under a fake rock. But how did they know about that?? The next thing I knew, I heard the key jiggle in the lock, and the door swung wide open. That's when the cavewoman came into the house!



Then the cavewoman spoke!



It turned out to be Aunt Dee, my dad's younger sister. I call her a cavewoman because she's been living in a cave for the last 501 days. I'll tell you all about why she did that, but the coolest thing to know about her is that she's a volcanologist. That means she's a scientist who studies . . .

VOLCANOES!

Volcanoes are super awesome. You know, they're the big mountains that explode and shoot out hot lava everywhere.