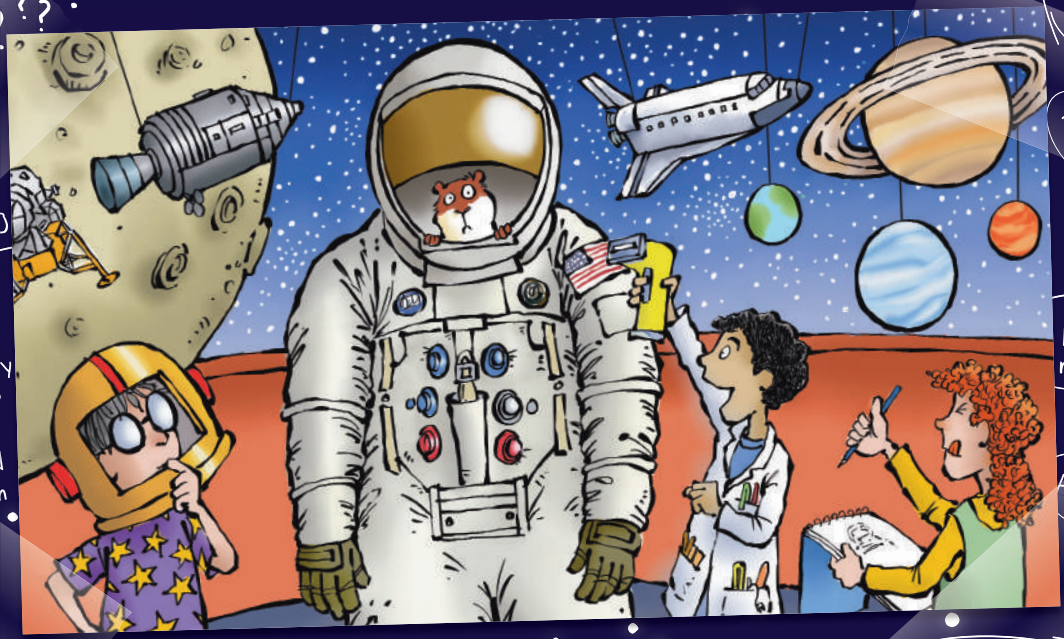
MUSEUM MYSTERY SQUAD

and the Case from Outer Space



WRITTEN BY Mike Nicholson

Suspects?

ILLUSTRATED BY Mike Phillips

To Anthony, who boldly goes... – M.N.

My star, Liz – M.P.

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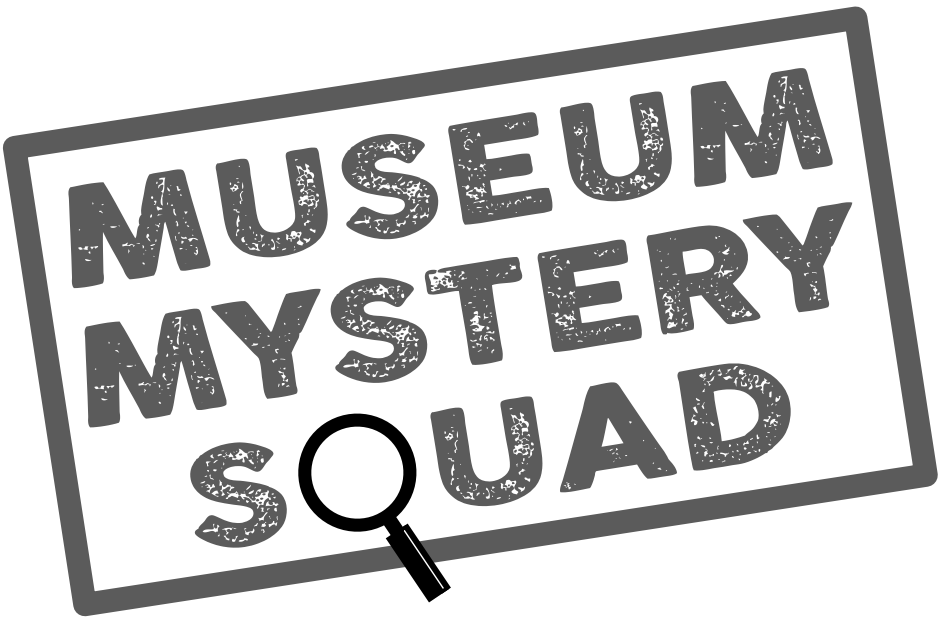


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and the Case from

Outer Space

Written by Mike Nicholson
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Young Kelpies

THE SQUAD



Kennedy



Nabster



Laurie



Colin the hamster

AND FEATURING...



Anika Bhatt



Simon Kilday



Nancy the barista



Kelly Fornia

Some people think that museums are boring places.

Glass cases. Old stuff. Dust.

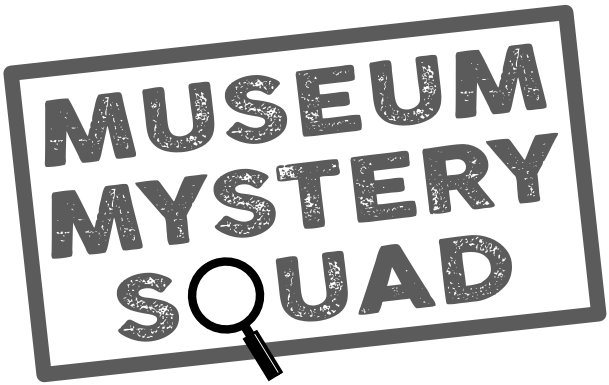
Wrong.

Think more of



and amazing objects found nowhere else in the world.

Then imagine that each thing in the museum has its own strange story. With secrets from the past to be uncovered. Codes to be cracked. Odd characters and their fiendish plans. Each one creating a job for a team of expert investigators:



In this book you will find the Squad in the depths of the museum, somewhere in a maze of corridors and stairs.

Today, like every day, they have a puzzle to solve...







Chapter 1
In which there are flying boulders to dodge

"I can see the Great Bear!" Nabster stood in open space on the table, and his excited voice filled the Museum Mystery Squad's HQ. His head moved slowly, eyes hidden by the brick-shaped headset he was wearing. He held his arms out like an awkward robot as if to steady himself.

There was no *actual* bear – grizzly, black or brown. Nabster was looking through a virtual reality headset at a constellation of stars called 'the Great Bear'.



“You do realise you look ridiculous,” said Kennedy Kerr, doodling in her diary.

A head with a blue-and-red stripy bobble hat on it popped out of the sleeping bag on the sofa. Laurie Lennox peered at Nabster. “I’ll swap you my glasses for yours,” he offered, taking off his black-framed spectacles.

Nabster’s head stopped turning as he quickly dismissed this idea. “No, thanks. Your glasses only make things look *slightly* bigger,” he said. “That really doesn’t compete with a tour of the solar system. I’m swerving through Saturn’s rings!”

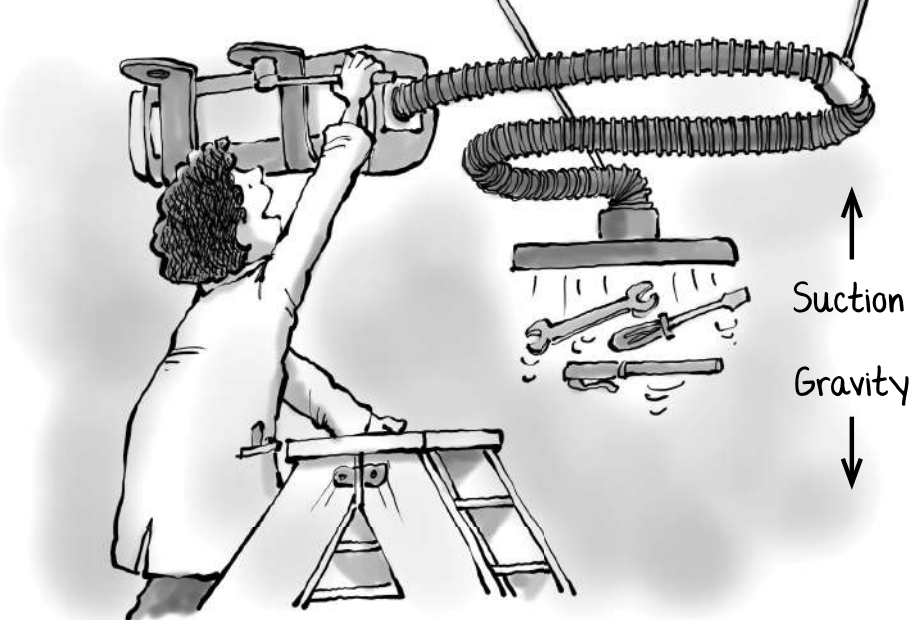
“Watch out!” shouted Laurie. The HQ smartboard displayed everything Nabster was seeing, and right now it was filling fast with flying boulders.



“I thought those rings were clouds, but they’re made of ice rocks!” exclaimed Nabster. He swayed from side to side, skirting through the debris.

Mohammed McNab, or Nabster as he was better known, had spent all day playing with his new toy – which was no surprise. He was obsessed with gadgets, and usually made his own weird and wonderful devices. His most recent invention was the **HOVER-HOOVER** – a re-engineered vacuum-cleaner nozzle hanging from the HQ ceiling. It had exactly the right amount of upward suction to counteract the pull of gravity on a pen or a screwdriver. Nabster could keep objects he needed floating close by, suspended in mid-air, ready to grab.





But the others complained about the constant **WHOOSHING** vacuum noise and Colin the hamster hid under his straw in protest, so Nabster had reluctantly switched the **HOVER-HOOVER** off. Luckily for him a replacement distraction had arrived in the morning's post: the museum shop had sent him a VR headset with the 'Journey Through Space' programme and asked him to trial it. They were ordering items for a display of games and books connected to the museum's new Space Zone.

Kennedy glanced up at the screen and then back to her diary as she sketched some of the planets on view. She liked doodling, but she liked investigating mysteries much more. Relaxed for now, she was ready to launch like a rocket through the museum's corridors in an explosion of quick thoughts and speeding feet if either were needed.

Meanwhile, Laurie was more content to snuggle *into* a warm space than watch a journey *through* space. Compared with Kennedy there was little chance of him reaching rocket speed. Laurie was more like a meteorite: one that had crash-landed inside a sleeping bag and made a giant dent in the sofa.

"Haven't you toured the whole solar system a few times already?" asked Laurie.



"I'm on my sixth go," said Nabster. "It's brilliant! I reckon I could pass a spaceship driving test. This is way more fun than life on Earth!"

"I always thought you were on a different planet," quipped Laurie.

"Whereas you never even manage lift-off!" Kennedy laughed.

"Excuse me," replied Laurie. "Inside this sleeping bag is a highly intelligent life form."

Laurie did have a reputation for asking clever questions. This, along with Kennedy's quick thinking, and Nabster's problem-solving gadgets, gave the Squad the skills and equipment to crack almost any case that came their way. Adding in Colin the hamster made them an even more impressive team. Their little friend might



look like just a cute ball of fluff, yet he had a knack for helping solve their most perplexing puzzles.

The friends' chatter was interrupted by the sound they were always waiting for:



Nabster nearly fell off the table and out of the VR galaxy. A pinging laptop meant an email had arrived in the Museum Mystery Squad inbox – hopefully about a new case.

Laurie stuck his head properly out of his sleeping bag. Nabster lifted his headset, blinking hard.

Kennedy leaned forward and read the message:

To: **MMS@museums.co.uk**
Subject: Mystery letter writer – urgent action required!

Dear Kennedy, Laurence and Mohammed,
Someone has sent the museum a blackmail letter, demanding money. They are threatening to steal an exhibit from our newly created Space Zone if we don't pay up.

Many items in the zone are loaned to us from the world-famous American Space Museum. The Space Museum's Director, Kelly Fornia, is flying over to be guest of honour at our Super Saturday Space Day this week. It would be a disaster if ANYTHING went missing.

I need you to work out who sent this mysterious letter, and stop them before they can sabotage Kelly Fornia's visit.

I'll meet you in the Space Zone at 11 a.m.

Kind regards,

Magda Gaskar

Museum Director



Kennedy rushed to the HQ door. “We need to check out the new Space Zone before our meeting with Magda. Come on!”

Laurie sat up and stretched. “Space...” he said thoughtfully, turning to his wardrobe rail. A new case always meant a big decision: what to wear. Seeing him clamber out of his sleeping bag and choose an outfit was like watching a caterpillar becoming a butterfly. He reached for silver trousers, a shirt covered in sparkly stars and chunky moon boots. Setting off after Kennedy, he looked like an astronaut going to a disco... wearing a bobble hat. Only Laurie could carry off that combination.



Nabster filled his equipment bag with cameras and clips, pads and pens, tapes and tools. He tossed in a pocket guide to the planets as well.

"Bye for now, Colin," he shouted to the cage in the corner of the room. "Let's hope our new case is out of this world!"









CASE FILE

CASE FROM OUTER SPACE

REPORT:
Someone has threatened to steal a vital item from the Space Zone unless the museum pays a ransom!

PROBLEM:
If we can't find the culprit, the new exhibit is going to 3, 2, 1... blast off!

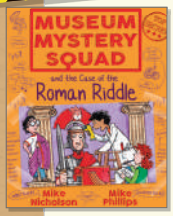
SUSPECTS:
Simon the space specialist ← He's definitely a bit 'out there'.
Anika the astronaut ← But she's such a STAR!
An alien ← Pretty sure these don't exist...

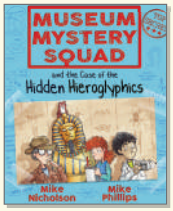
ANSWER:
???
This case is out of this world!

MUSEUM MYSTERY SQUAD

PLUS FUN ACTIVITIES, FASCINATING FACTS AND COOL QUIZZES

ON THE CASE:
Nabster, Kennedy and Laurie
+ Colin (the hamster!)





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