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Opening extract from

# Ninja Meerkats 4: Hollywood Showdown

Written by

## Gareth P. Jones

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**For Oliver and Daniel Downing**
***~ G P J***

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# NINJA MEERKATS



# HOLLYWOOD SHOWDOWN

GARETH P. JONES

Stripes




# CHAPTER ONE

## OLD DOGS, NEW TRICKS

Hundreds of planes arrive at Los Angeles International Airport every day, bringing tourists from around the world to the city. They come to soak up sunshine, glamour and excitement, and to visit the city's most famous district: Hollywood. It was on one such plane that Chuck, Donnie, Jet and Bruce (otherwise known as the Clan of the Scorpion) had arrived, hidden in an overhead luggage compartment. They were now making their way across the airport arrivals hall, heading for the exit.

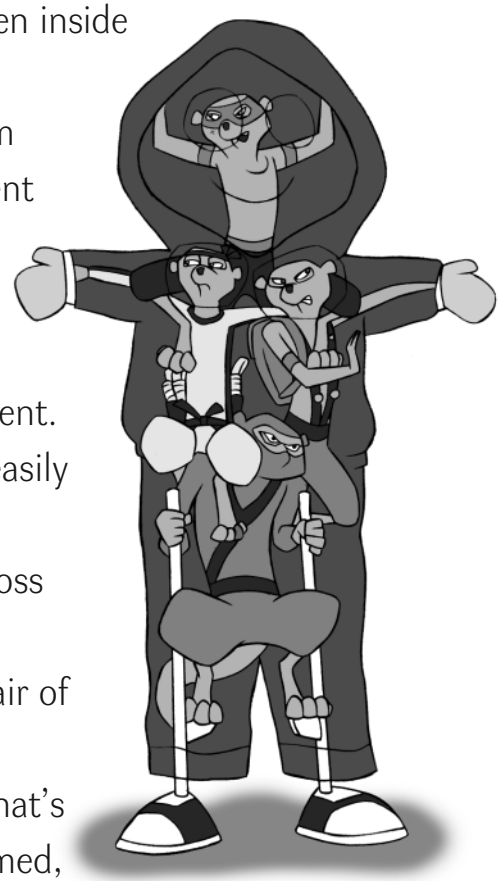
You might think that four ninja meerkats walking through a bustling airport would cause something of a stir. But the Clan moved around undetected, thanks to one of Donnie's cunning disguises. As far as the humans were concerned, all they could see was a child in a pair of baggy jeans and a hooded top. Inside the outfit, however, were four meerkats, balanced on each other's shoulders.

Bruce Willowhammer, the strongest of the team, was at the bottom of the pile, and had his furry feet strapped to a pair of stilts. On his shoulders were Jet Flashfeet and Donnie Dragonjab, whose trademark bag of gadgets was strapped to his back. Jet and Donnie were each operating one of the child disguise's arms, opening doors, pressing lift buttons and, at one point, batting away an over-friendly dog. At the top of the stack





was Chuck Cobracrusher, the leader of the group, his face hidden inside the hooded top.



The only problem with this arrangement was that it meant Bruce was in control of where the Clan went.

And Bruce was easily distracted.

As he strode across the arrivals hall, he peered through a pair of eyeholes at the top of the jeans. "Hey, that's Vin Pain!" he exclaimed, spotting a TV screen showing an entertainment news programme. He quickly changed direction and headed for the TV.

"Bruce, remember our mission," warned Chuck. "We need to find out where the Ringmaster is, and what he is up to!"

"Who's Vin Pain?" asked Jet, folding down a specially-designed pocket flap in the hoodie so he could see the TV too.

"Sounds like something you'd tell the doctor about," said Donnie. "Ooh, I've got a nasty Vin Pain all down my back."

"Who's Vin Pain?" exclaimed Bruce. "Only the best action hero in the world, that's who! Haven't you seen *Blown to Pieces*? What about *The Smash-up Man* or *Big Guns and Loud Bangs*? Brilliant films. Some of them are really clever too."

The TV showed a clip from a film in which Vin Pain was jumping across the tops of cars hurtling down a busy highway, while dodging a storm of bullets that rained down on him from a helicopter.





"Yeah, looks *really* clever," said Donnie sarcastically.

"Bruce, we do not have time to watch TV right now. We need to keep moving," Chuck called down.

"Vin does all his own stunts and everything," said Bruce, ignoring Chuck.

"Ha," snorted Jet. "I bet he can't do a Super Looping Somersault Leap. That's my new move. I read about it in *How to Flatten Your Enemies and Beat People*."

"Shhh!" said Bruce. "Vin's about to say his trademark line."