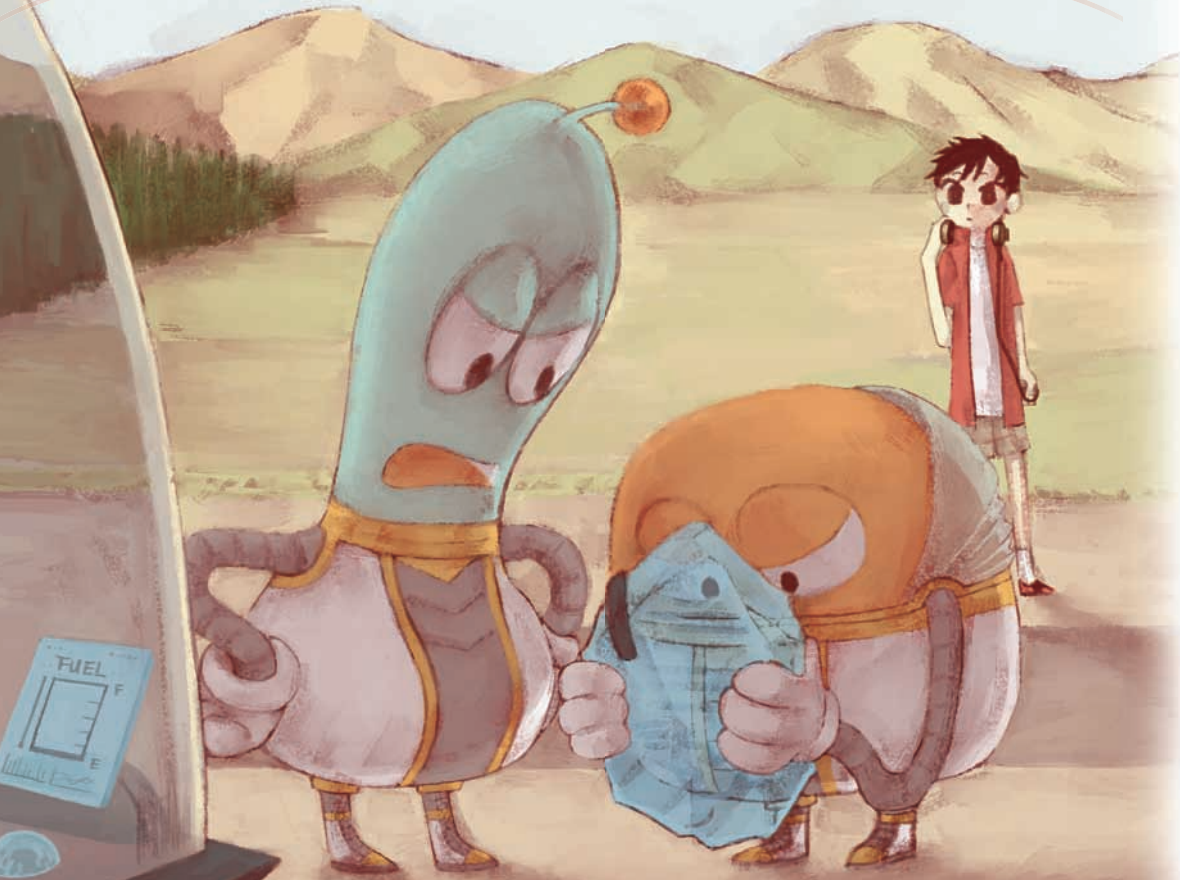


GOOD AS GOLD

by James O'Sullivan



CHARACTERS



SALA



ZERG



JOSH



ANITA
HERD



SAMMY
SHARK



OWEN
LEND

SCENE ONE: *An open field on Earth. SALA and ZERG enter.*

SALA (*sarcastically*). Well, this is just great, Zerg. Now we're stuck here on this strange planet. Why didn't you stop at that last fuelling station?

ZERG. I thought we could make it to the next one.

SALA. "E" means "empty". It doesn't mean "enough".

ZERG. Point taken, Sala. Luckily I've brought my *Lonely Galaxy Travel Guide*. It will tell us all we need to know about this place. (**ZERG reads from the guide.**) "Planet Xylan, local name Earth. The locals are mostly friendly but have a strange liking for personal media devices."

SALA. Here comes one of them now!

JOSH enters, listening to an MP3 player.

JOSH. Oh, hello. I'm Josh. You're aliens, aren't you?

SALA. We're holidaymakers. Well, we were until our spaceship ran out of fuel.

JOSH. What does it run on?

ZERG. Gold.

JOSH. Gold is very expensive around here. It will cost you lots of money.

SALA. What's money?

JOSH. If you want something from someone, usually you have to give them money to buy it.

ZERG. And how do we get money?

JOSH. You work for it.

SALA. I don't like the sound of that.

ANITA HERD enters.

JOSH. Ah, here's my friend Anita Herd. She's a farmer. She might be able to help you. Hello, Anita. These two aliens need some money. Do you have any jobs for them on your farm?

ANITA HERD (to aliens). How good are you at rounding up sheep?



ZERG. What's a sheep?

SALA. What do you mean by "rounding up"?

ZERG. And what's a farm?

ANITA HERD. You'll do just fine. Come with me.

ANITA HERD, SALA, and ZERG exit.

JOSH. I can't wait to tell my friends about these aliens.

JOSH exits.



SCENE TWO: The same field, late afternoon. **SALA and ZERG** enter, looking weary.

SALA. I'm exhausted. Why couldn't you have stopped at that fuelling station?

ZERG. You've already asked me that. It's the past, Sala. I can't do anything about the past.

ANITA HERD (enters). That was a good day's work, guys. It saved me doing all those jobs myself. (She hands over some money.) Here's your pay.

JOSH (enters). How did it go?

ANITA HERD. I had a very relaxing day.

SALA. I had a lousy day. I'm tired, I smell of sheep, and I'm all greasy.

ANITA HERD. And I'm happy because I'm none of those things. You aliens should visit more often. I think I'll go and have a spa.

ANITA HERD exits.

ZERG. Anita gave us this papery stuff.

JOSH. That's money. But it's not enough to buy gold. You'll have to work some more.

SALA. I'm not working for an Earth minute longer.

ZERG. How can we make money without working for it?



SAMMY SHARK enters.

SAMMY SHARK. I heard that. Well, it's your lucky day! I can lend you all the money you need. Just fill in this form and sign it here.

SALA. That's very kind of you.

JOSH. Hold on. Let me see that. (*He grabs the form and reads it.*) What's this written in small print? "The borrower must pay back double the money they borrow – by the end of the month."

SAMMY SHARK. Well, that's fair. You don't get something for nothing in this world.

ZERG. What if we can't pay it back?

JOSH. It says here that Sammy Shark will own your spaceship.

ZERG and SALA (*together*). Thanks, but no thanks!

SAMMY SHARK. All right, I guess I'll have to take my business elsewhere.

SAMMY SHARK exits.

JOSH. You could put your money in a bank. Here comes my friend Owen Lend. He owns a bank.

OWEN LEND enters.

OWEN LEND. Hello, Josh.

JOSH. Hello, Owen. My alien friends have some spare money. Can you tell them what will happen if they put it in your bank?



OWEN LEND. It's very easy. You put your money in my bank, and some time later, when you ask, I'll give you back your money plus a bit more, which is called interest.

ZERG. And what's in it for you?

OWEN LEND. Well, I take the money you give me, and I lend it to somebody else. That way, I can make a bit of money for myself.

SALA. How much will you give us?

OWEN LEND. The rate of interest is about 5 percent, which means that for every one hundred dollars you give me, I'll give you back your hundred plus another five dollars.

ZERG. How long will it take for this interest to build up so we can buy some gold?

OWEN LEND. About ten years.

SALA. We haven't got time to wait ten years. We have a wedding to go to next week!

ZERG. Can you give us more interest?

OWEN LEND. Sorry, times are tough. I've had to make cutbacks.

JOSH. You could try bartering.

SALA. What's that?

JOSH. That's when you exchange goods.

OWEN LEND. If you want gold, I have a gold watch. I could exchange that.



JOSH. I thought you said times were tough.

OWEN LEND. They are. I can only afford to have a gold watch on one wrist. It's very inconvenient.

ZERG. I haven't got much to exchange, just this *Lonely Galaxy Travel Guide*. It's only made out of diamond.

OWEN LEND. Did you say diamond?

SALA. Yes. I guess it's not worth much.
There's lots of diamond on our planet.
But it's hard wearing. It won't break easily.

OWEN LEND. Well, I'd like to help you out.
Here, take my watch. *(He exchanges his watch for the guide.)* I'm rich ... I mean, I'm richer ... I mean, thank you for this very hard-wearing but not very valuable guide.

OWEN LEND *exits, chuckling happily.*

ZERG. There should be enough gold here to get us to the next fuelling station.

SALA. Good, let's go. Thank you for your help, Josh. Here, have this money for your troubles. We can't use it. Sorry it's got sheep grease on it.

JOSH. Thanks.

SALA and ZERG *exit.*

JOSH. Well, I'm going to put this money in a bank. I've got plenty of time to wait.

JOSH *exits.*



illustrations by
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