

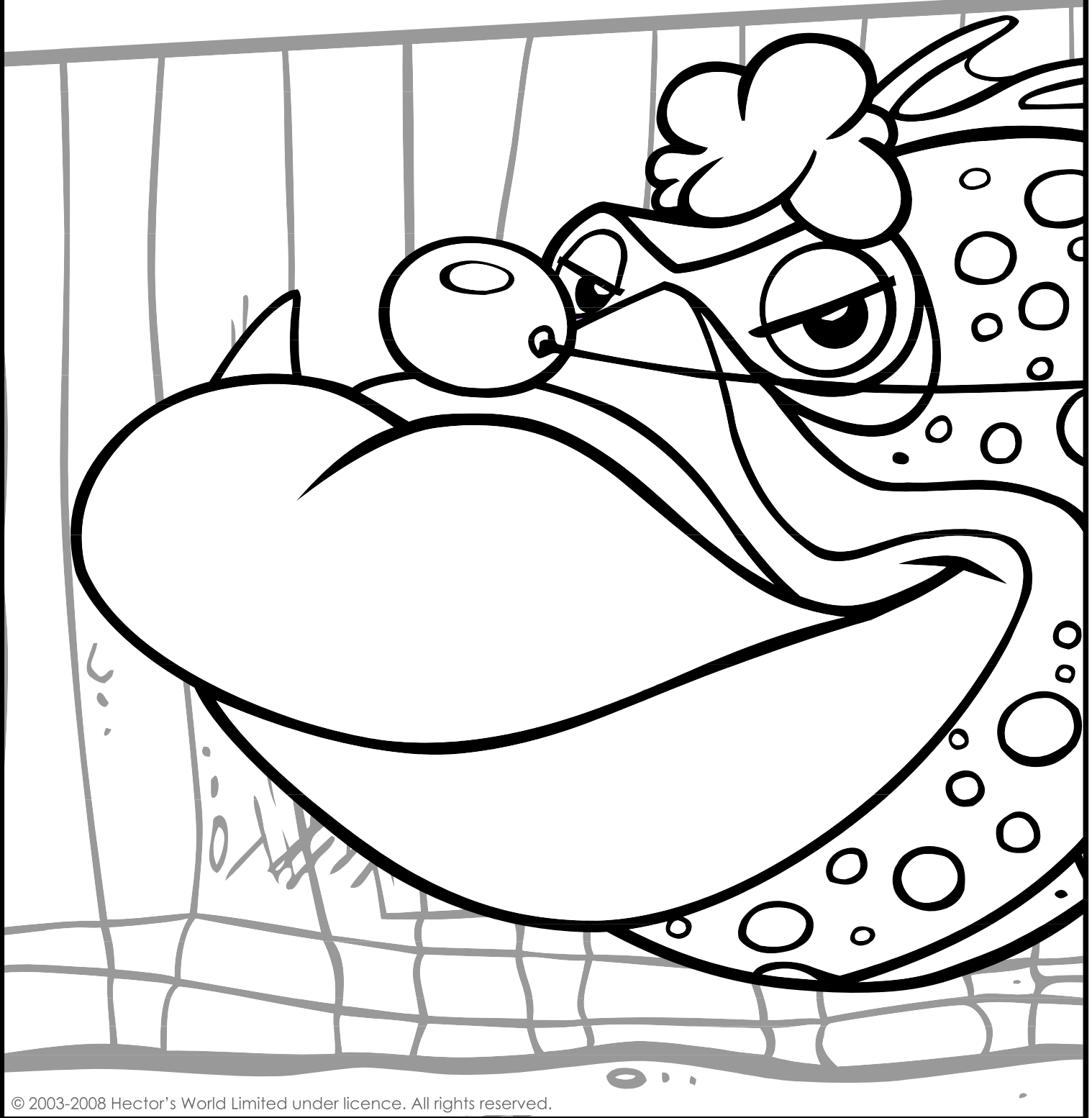
Your Personal Information Online

Episode 4

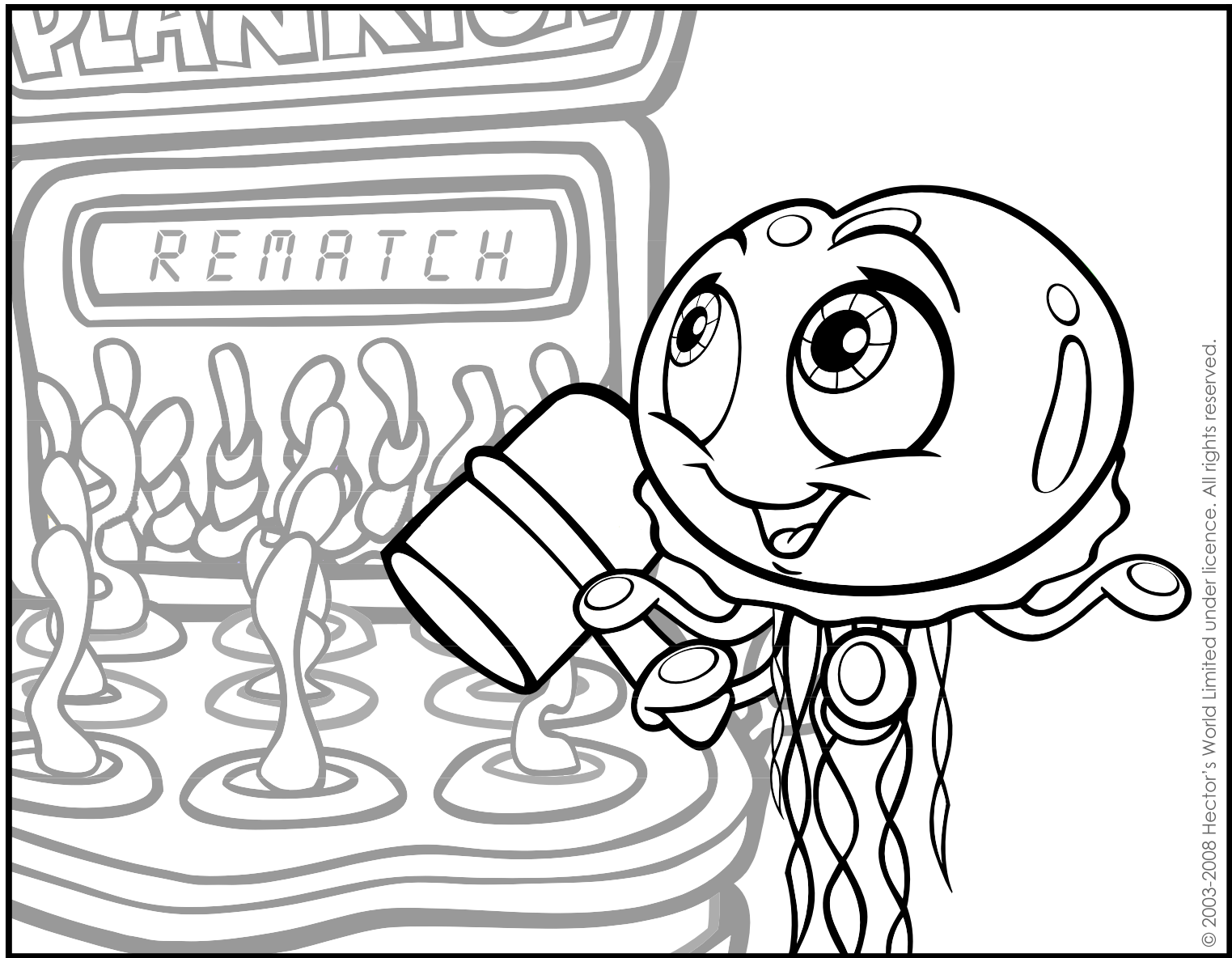
# The Info Gang

featuring

**Hector Protector® and his friends**



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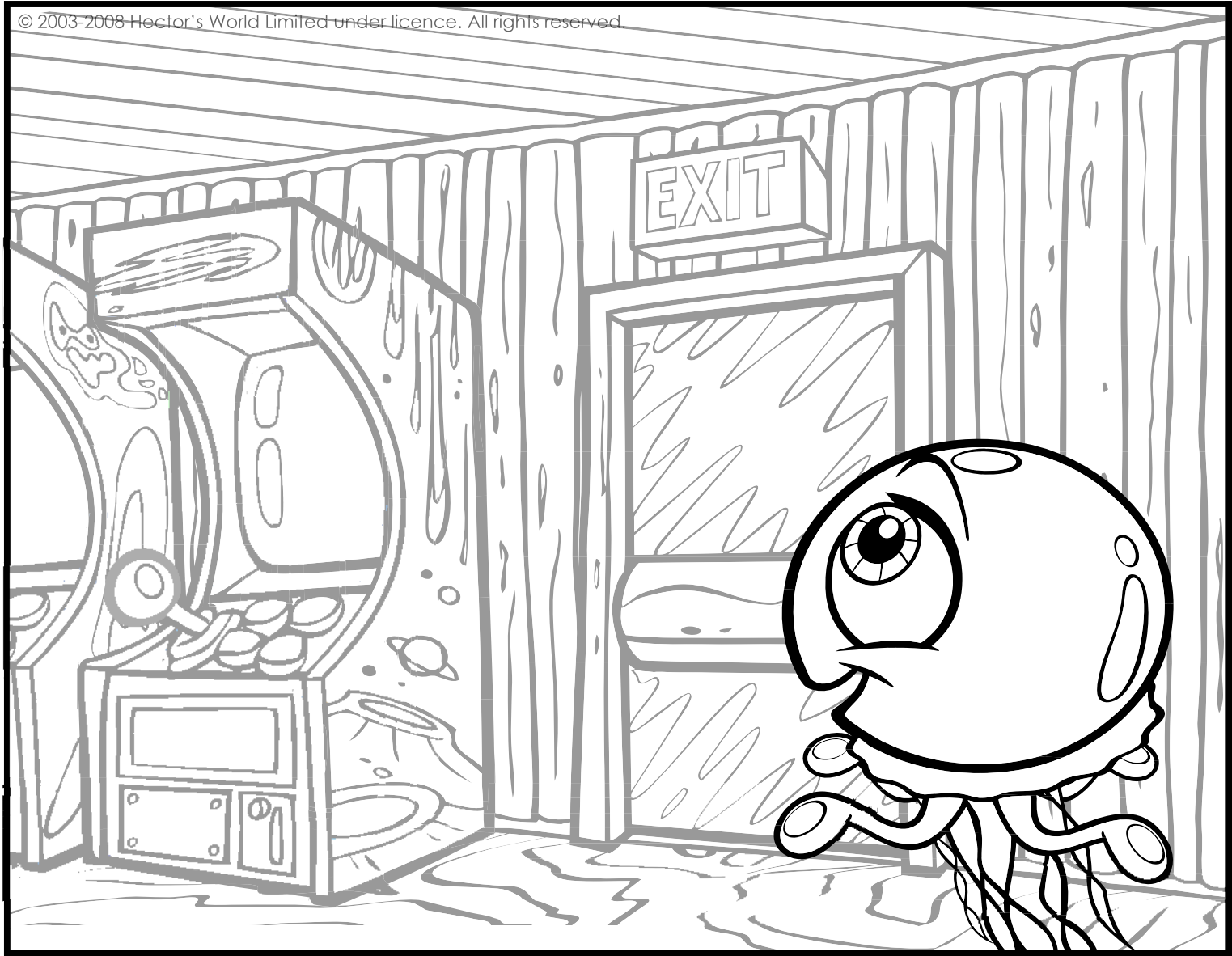
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BANG! POUND! THUMP! "Rematch...Rematch."

"Yay!" squealed Tama. "I won a rematch! Hector! Ming! I won a... rematch..."

Tama the jellyfish peered through the hundreds of excited gamers who were crowded into the games arcade at the Silicon Deep carnival. Tama had almost forgotten his excitement just a few seconds earlier when he won a rematch on the Pound the Plankton game. All he was concerned about now was finding his friends.

Although he couldn't see Hector and Ming, Tama knew that they would never leave him behind. Deciding that they must be somewhere close by, Tama wandered off hoping to find them. It wasn't long before all the corridors, games and gamers began to look the same.

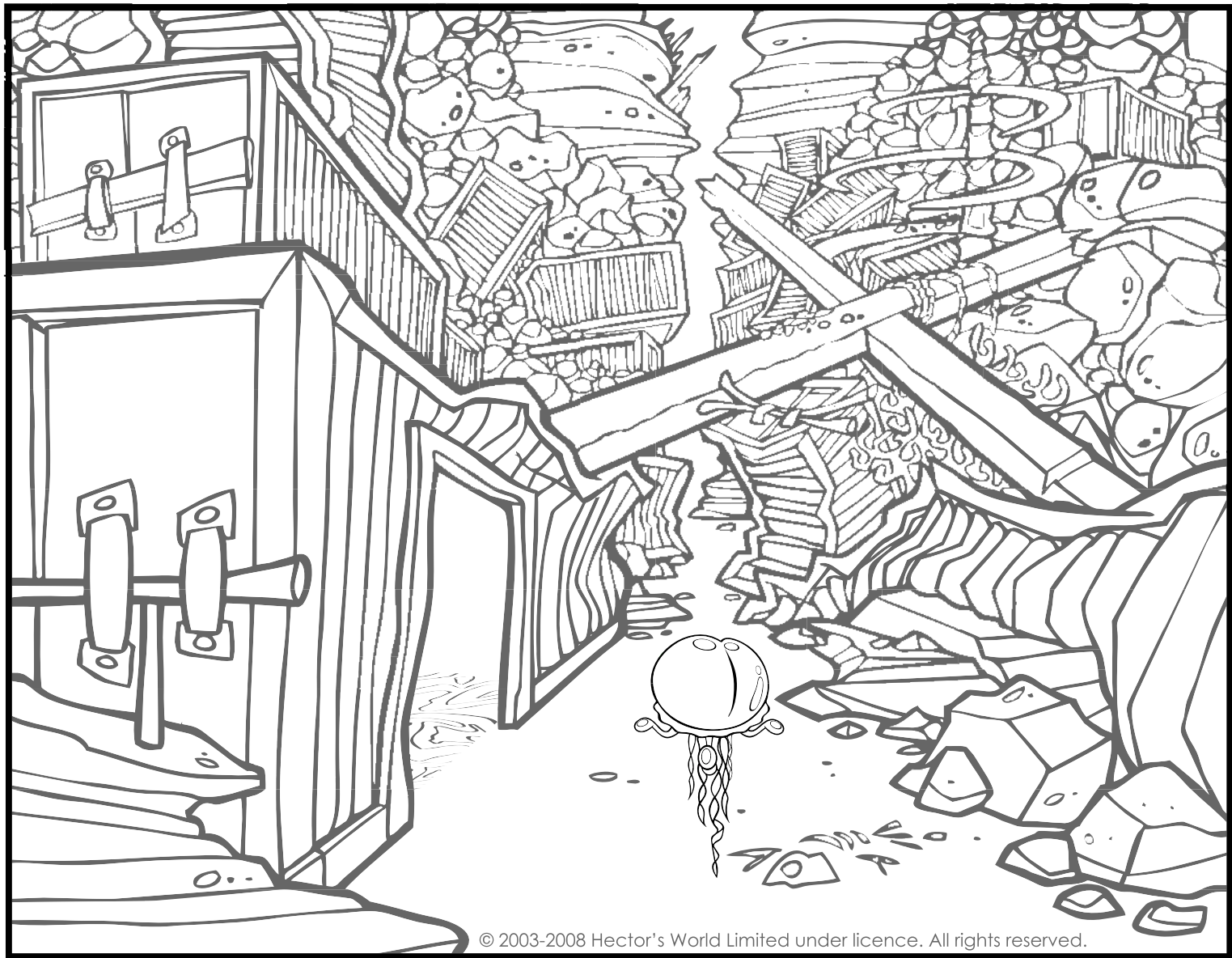


Tama was feeling a little scared and lonely, when something caught his eye.

Sitting above a door, hidden between two gaming machines, was a faintly-lit exit sign. If it hadn't been for the flickering of its faulty light, Tama would never have realised the door was there.

"Maybe Hector is waiting outside for me," Tama thought to himself, suddenly excited at the thought of being back together with his friends.

Tama tried the door, but it wouldn't budge. He had to charge at it a few times before it finally gave way. (Luckily Tama had a bouncy head!)

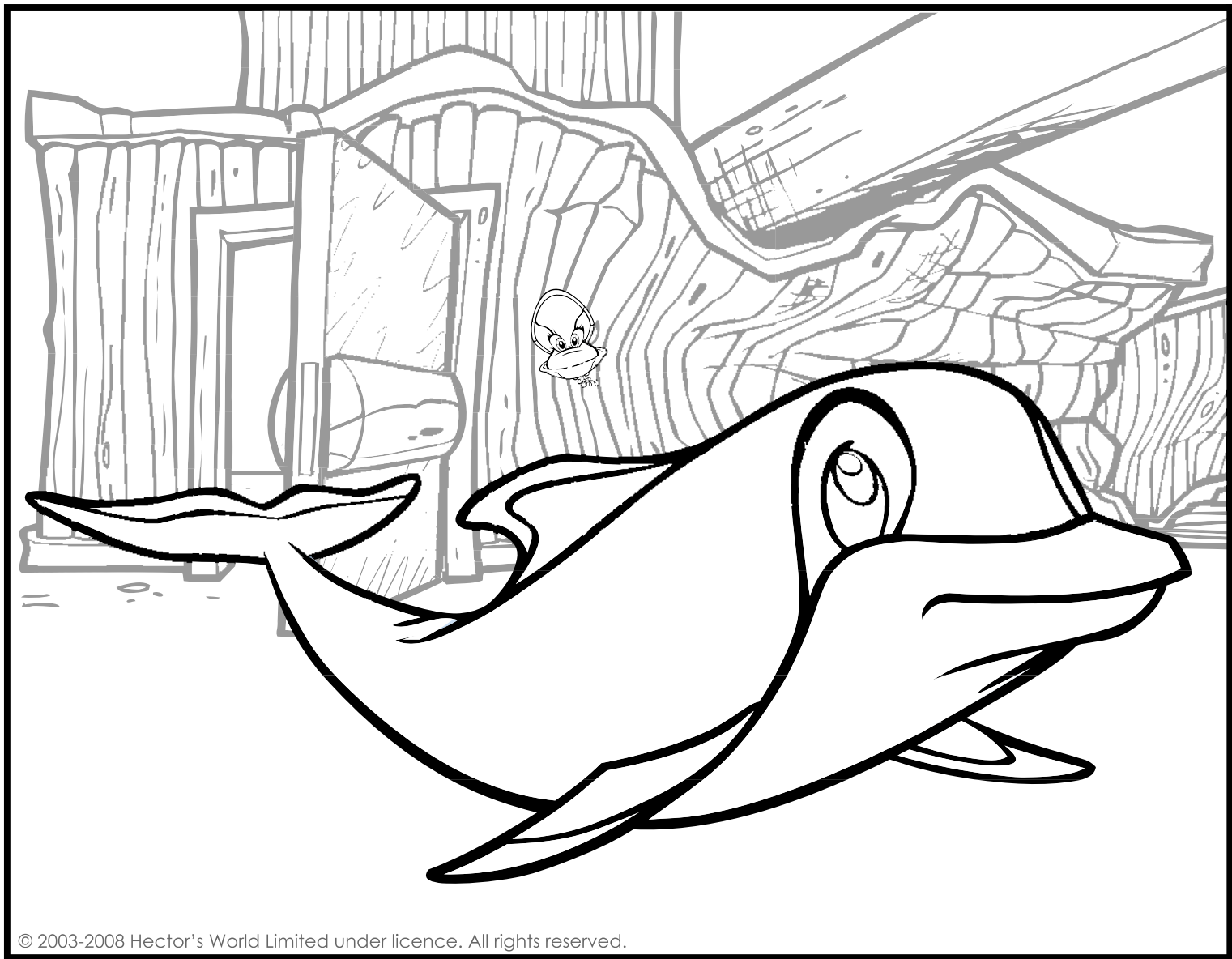


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When Tama looked around outside, it was not at all what he expected. Not only was there no Hector – there was nobody at all! Old junk, shipping containers and all kinds of strange things were piled high against the cliffs, creating narrow alleys that were cloaked in shadow. Maybe Hector was out here or maybe he was looking for Tama. Maybe Hector was lost himself.

Taking a deep breath, Tama swam into the dark shadows, calling for his friends. Tama's tiny voice echoed in the towers of twisted rock and metal, as the door to the arcade slammed shut and locked behind him.

Tama had been right about one thing – his friends were looking for him. Hector and Ming were making their way back to the Pound the Plankton game, just as Tama left to look for them. Both Hector and Ming were worried, and just wanted to find Tama as quickly as possible.



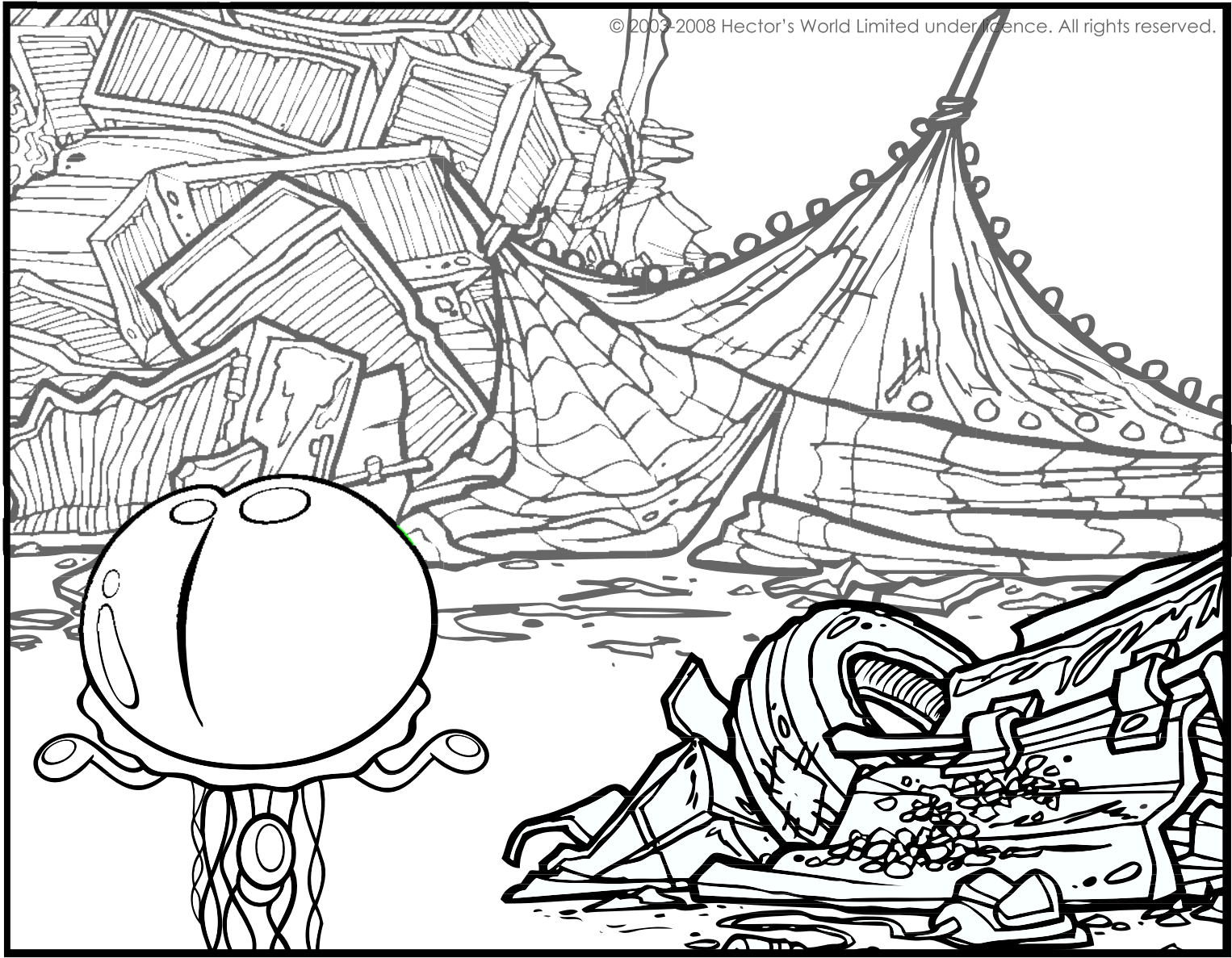
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“Tama! Tama!” they both called, but the noise of the arcade was so loud that they could barely be heard. Even Ming wasn’t loud enough! Hector and Ming went off in different directions and eventually met up near the middle of the arcade. No sign of Tama. They were both very worried now, and not sure what to do.

Just then something flickered, and Hector caught sight of a sign out of the corner of his eye. As luck would have it, it was the same exit sign that Tama had seen earlier. Without hesitating, Hector burst through the door with Ming close on his tail. The door slammed shut with a loud BANG behind them, before Ming could catch it. They both stared into the dark backlots of the carnival, realising that it was the only place around the arcade they hadn’t yet searched.

“C’mon, let’s go,” said Hector, charging ahead. Ming took one last look at the arcade door and ventured into the shadows after her friend.





Tama was starting to get very cold and frightened. He didn't like the dark, and almost everywhere was deep in shadow. Just as Tama thought he might cry, he heard muffled voices in the distance.

"Hector! Ming!" he called out with renewed hope. As Tama got closer to the voices, he realised it wasn't Hector or Ming at all. Tama crept up to an opening in the side of a very large and neglected circus tent. When he peeked inside, he saw some odd looking fish, who were dressed like clowns. They were playing with balls and whistles, and riding funny little bikes. They sounded like they were having fun, so Tama almost decided to swim in and ask for help. Just then he heard a gruff voice that he knew only too well.

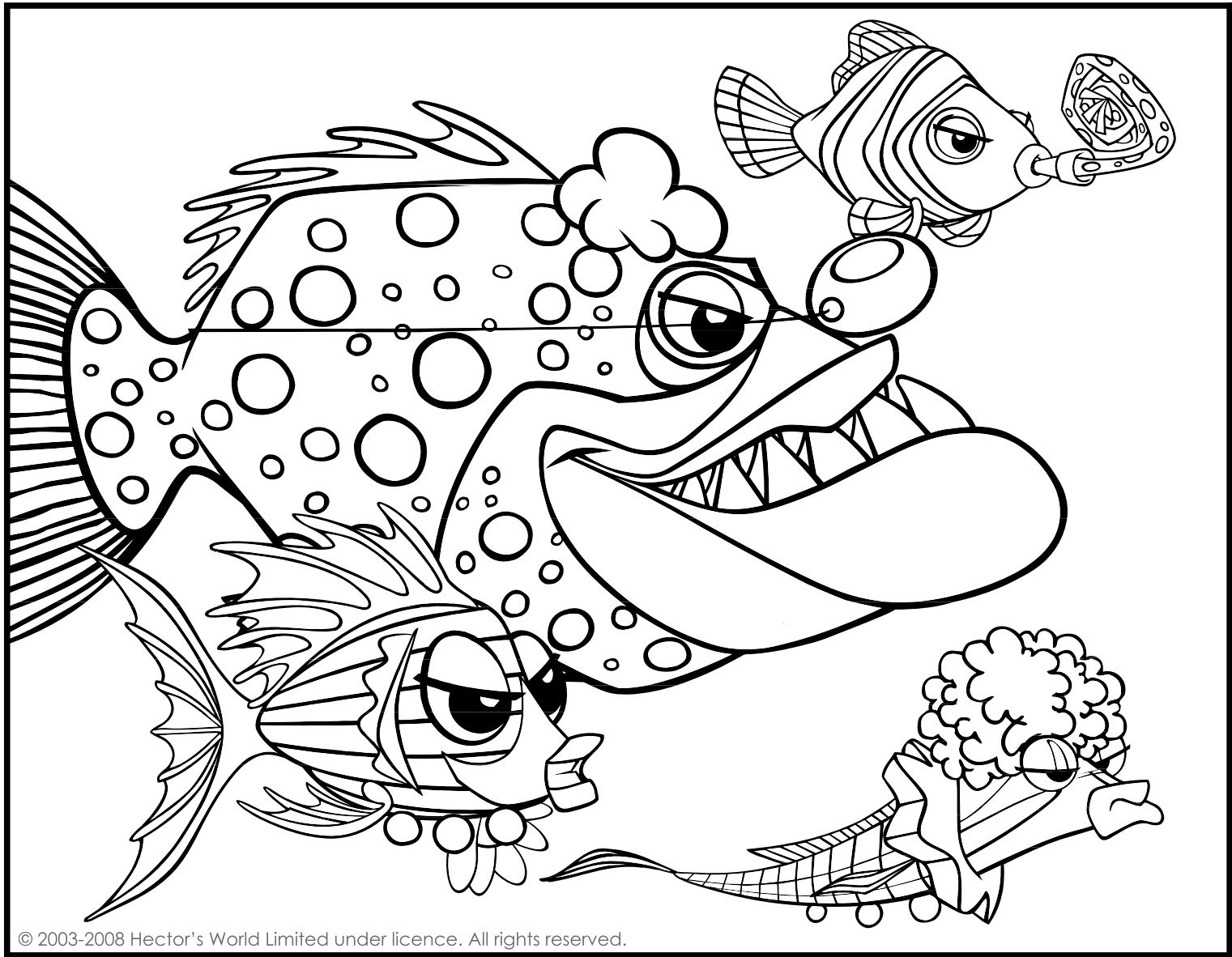


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Squid snuck out of the shadows barking orders at the clowns, and they immediately leapt to attention. Tama was very glad he hadn't gone in and asked for help. He didn't like Squid. He got a bad feeling about him, and he knew it was important to trust his feelings about people. That's what Constable Solosolave always said.

Tama decided that he would hide behind the tent and listen for a while. Once again, Tama made the right decision. Tama was distressed to learn that Squid was the clown's leader and they called themselves 'The Info Gang'. They were using the carnival to trick people into giving over their personal and private information, and their clown costumes were their disguises. What was worse was that they were then selling that personal information to other nasties, who could use it for their own bad reasons.

Tama knew he had to get out of there and tell someone what was happening.



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No sooner had he made that decision, when Squid pulled back the tent flap and ordered his gang to capture Tama. Tama screamed and swam away as fast as he could. The Info Gang were fast too, and were gaining on him.

Quickly Tama slipped around a corner, and got the fright of his life. There were Hector and Ming right in front of him. But instead of Tama telling his friends how happy he was to see them, Tama just screamed at them to run.

When Hector and Ming saw who was chasing Tama, they did exactly as he said. The trio soon found themselves running into Ranjeet and Sprat, who quickly became a part of the chase as well.

The Info Gang chased the five friends towards a dead end. The gang were very pleased with themselves indeed, until they rounded the last corner and came face to face with Constable Solosolave, floating between them and their five young targets.





Not being the bravest fish in the ocean, the Info Gang screamed and swam quickly away, followed closely by Constable Solosolave. Hector gave Tama a big hug, and told him how happy he was to find him safe.

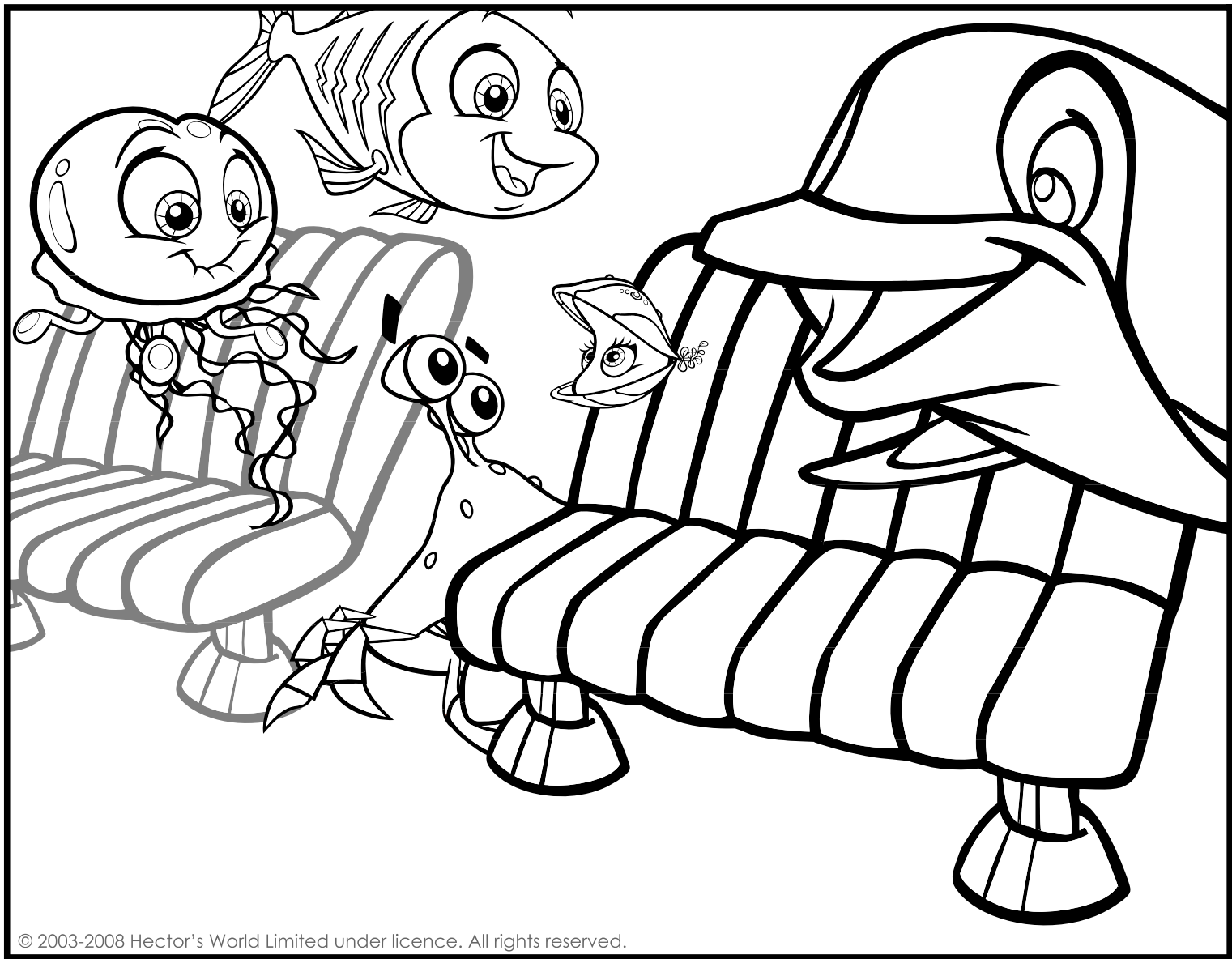
The young friends all made their way back to the carnival entrance where Miss Finney was waiting for them. Tama told them all what he had overheard about how the Info Gang was using the carnival as a way to trick people into giving out their special information. Hector felt especially bad, because he had signed up Tama for the 'Pound the Plankton' game without realising the danger he might have been putting him in. Ranjeet and Sprat had also signed up for many things during the day. Sprat was worried that once he'd given out his special information, that it would be floating around the ocean forever.



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After making sure that the Info Gang members were safely locked in the paddy wagon and on their way to jail, Constable Solosolave joined the five friends and assured them that most of the gang's activity had been stopped and much of the information had been recovered. Everyone was very relieved.

Constable Solosolave reminded them that information you put online is there forever. Sometimes you can change that information but sometimes you can't. Also, there are those who will use all kinds of tricks to get you to give them your special information.



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The youth group bus soon arrived to take everyone home. As they boarded the bus, Hector made sure he sat next to Ming to make up for not getting along with her earlier.

"Hey, Ming?"

"Yes?" she replied, a little shyly.

"How about a game of chess when we get home?"

Ming brightened up immediately. "That would be great. I haven't played for a while."

Hector was a little confused, "But you were at that chess game in the arcade for hours."

"Yes, I know but I wouldn't sign up, so the king wouldn't let me play."

Hector was suddenly very proud of his friend, and decided he would listen to her more in the future.

"You mean you were yelling at that machine for that long and you weren't even playing?" he asked.

Ming just shrugged.

"I'd believe it," came Ranjeet's voice from the seat behind them.

The whole bus broke into laughter, and no one laughed harder than Ming.

To be continued.....



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