

**Junk-Pile
JENNIFER**

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Illustrations copyright © 1991, 2019 by Maryann Kovalski

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Junk-Pile JENNIFER



Written by John F. Green
Illustrated by Maryann Kovalski



This book is for Geoffrey, Hudson, Madeleine, and Elise.—J.F.G

For Artie and Miles.—M.K.

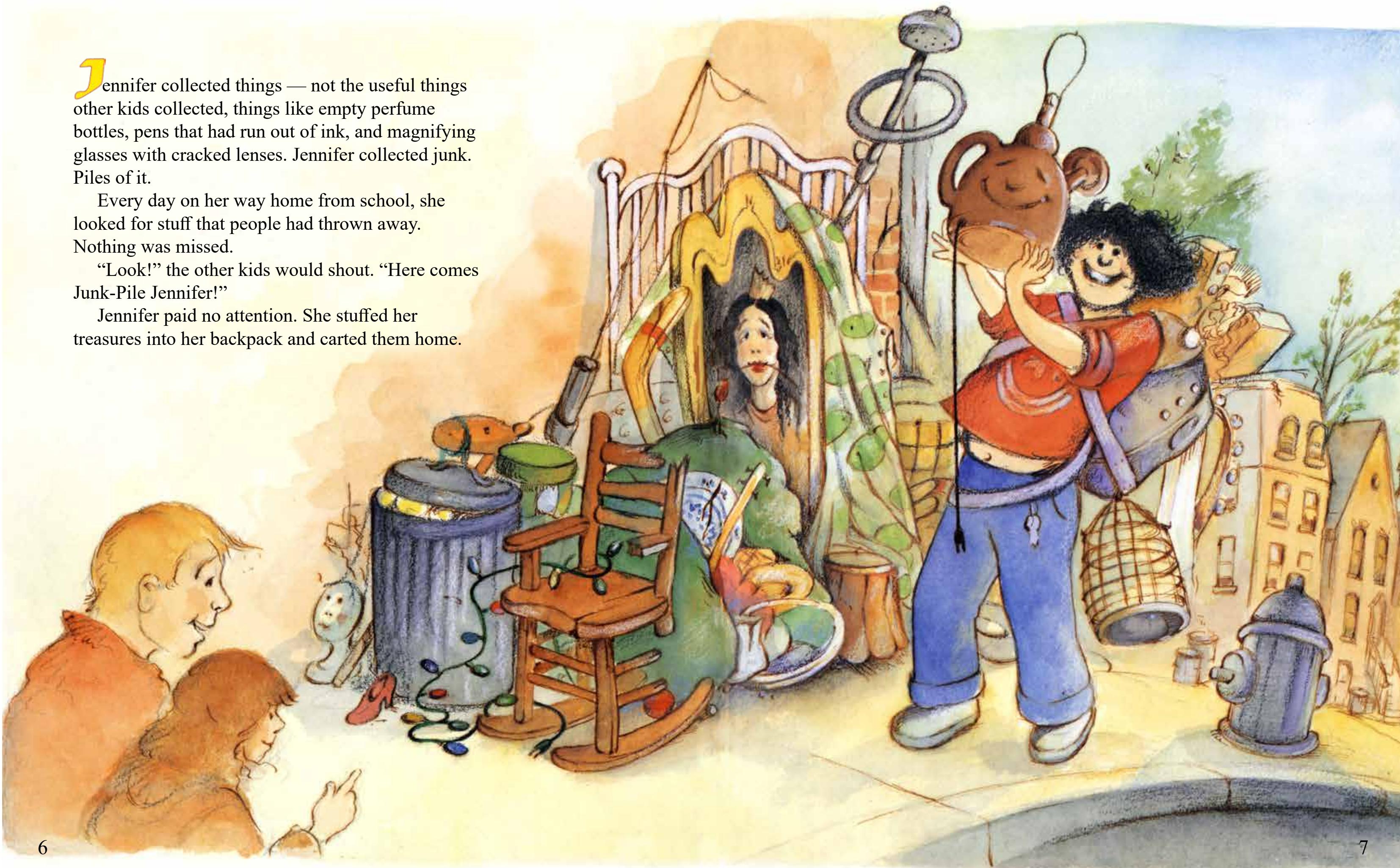


Jennifer collected things — not the useful things other kids collected, things like empty perfume bottles, pens that had run out of ink, and magnifying glasses with cracked lenses. Jennifer collected junk. Piles of it.

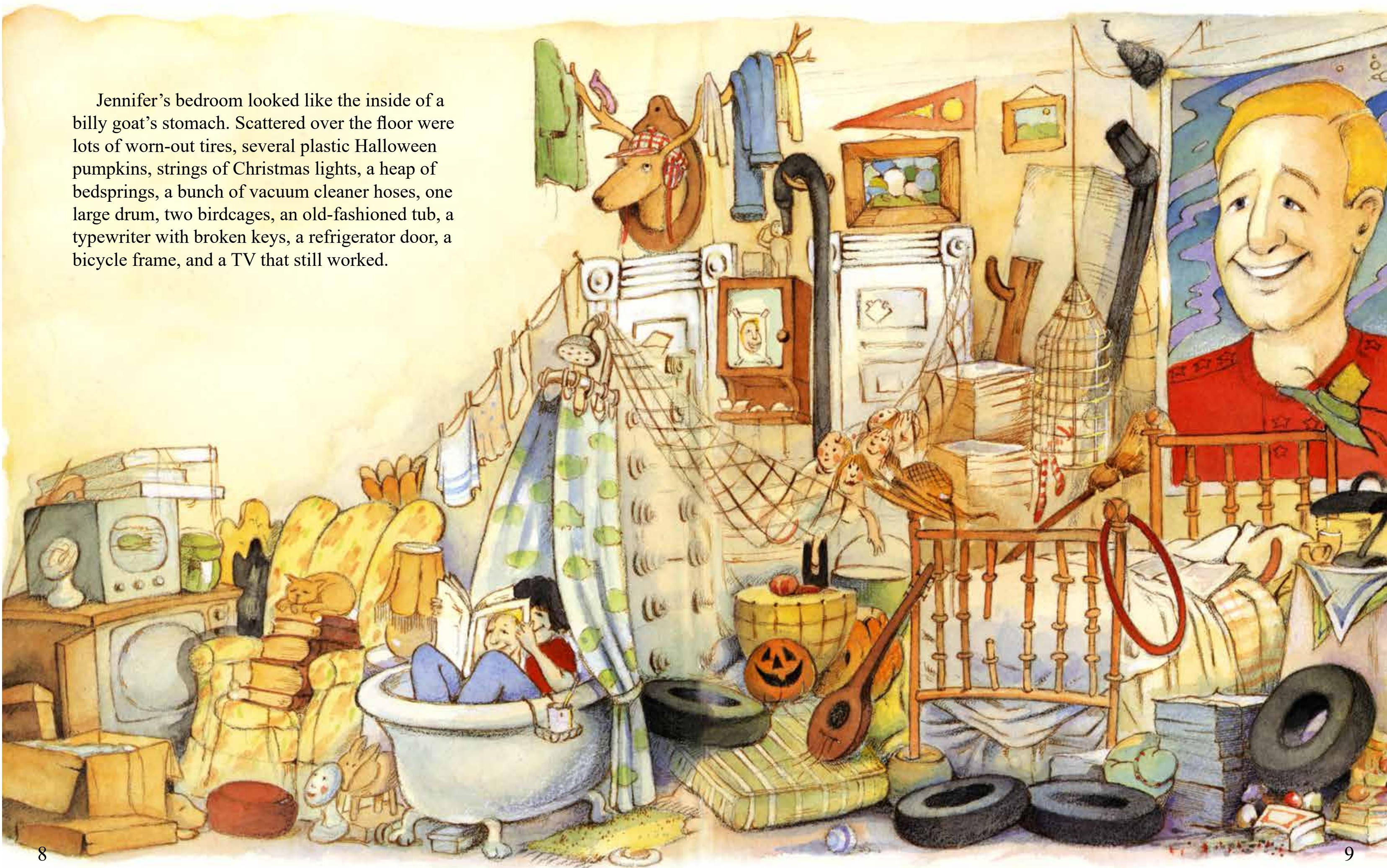
Every day on her way home from school, she looked for stuff that people had thrown away. Nothing was missed.

“Look!” the other kids would shout. “Here comes Junk-Pile Jennifer!”

Jennifer paid no attention. She stuffed her treasures into her backpack and carted them home.



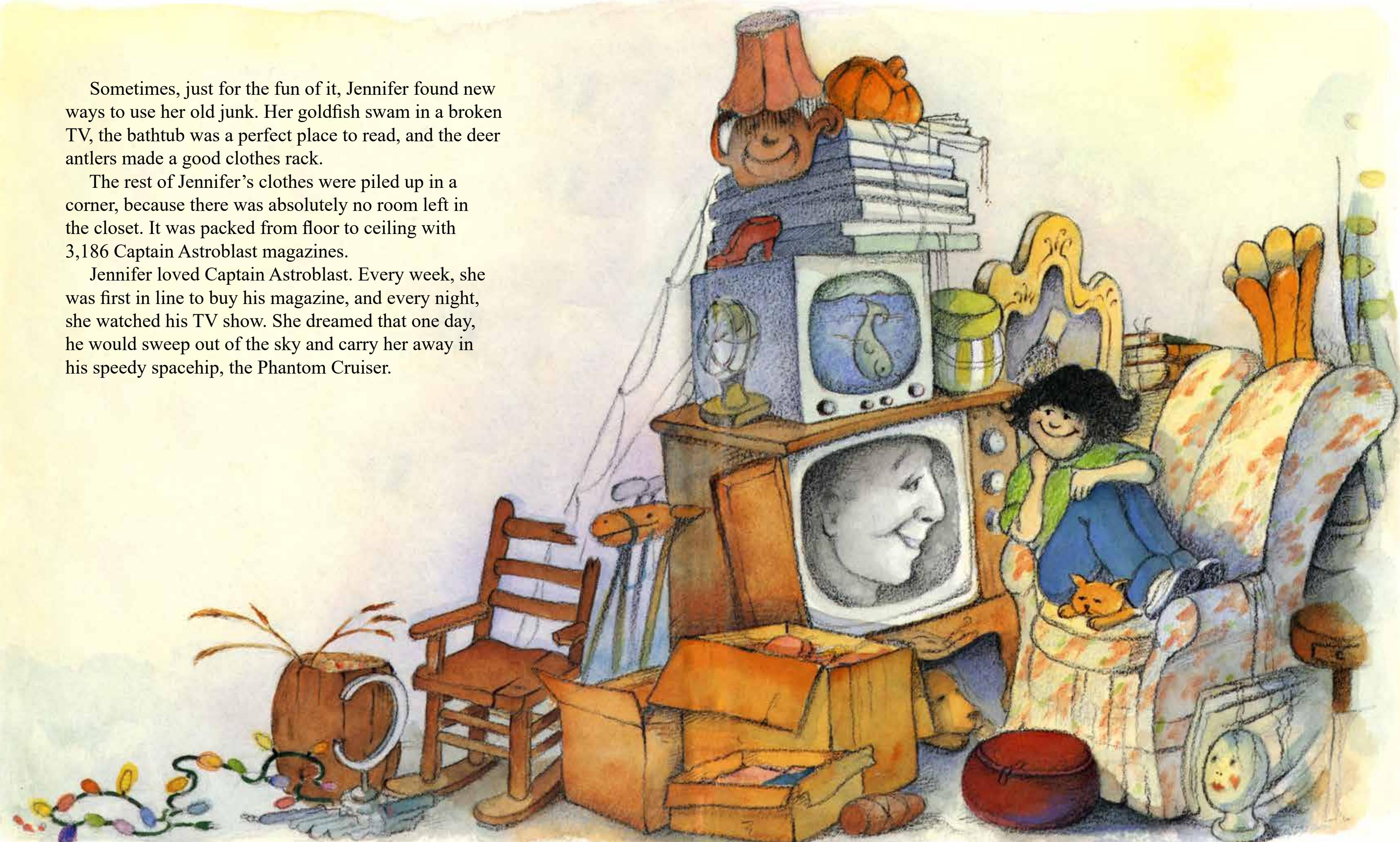
Jennifer's bedroom looked like the inside of a billy goat's stomach. Scattered over the floor were lots of worn-out tires, several plastic Halloween pumpkins, strings of Christmas lights, a heap of bedsprings, a bunch of vacuum cleaner hoses, one large drum, two birdcages, an old-fashioned tub, a typewriter with broken keys, a refrigerator door, a bicycle frame, and a TV that still worked.

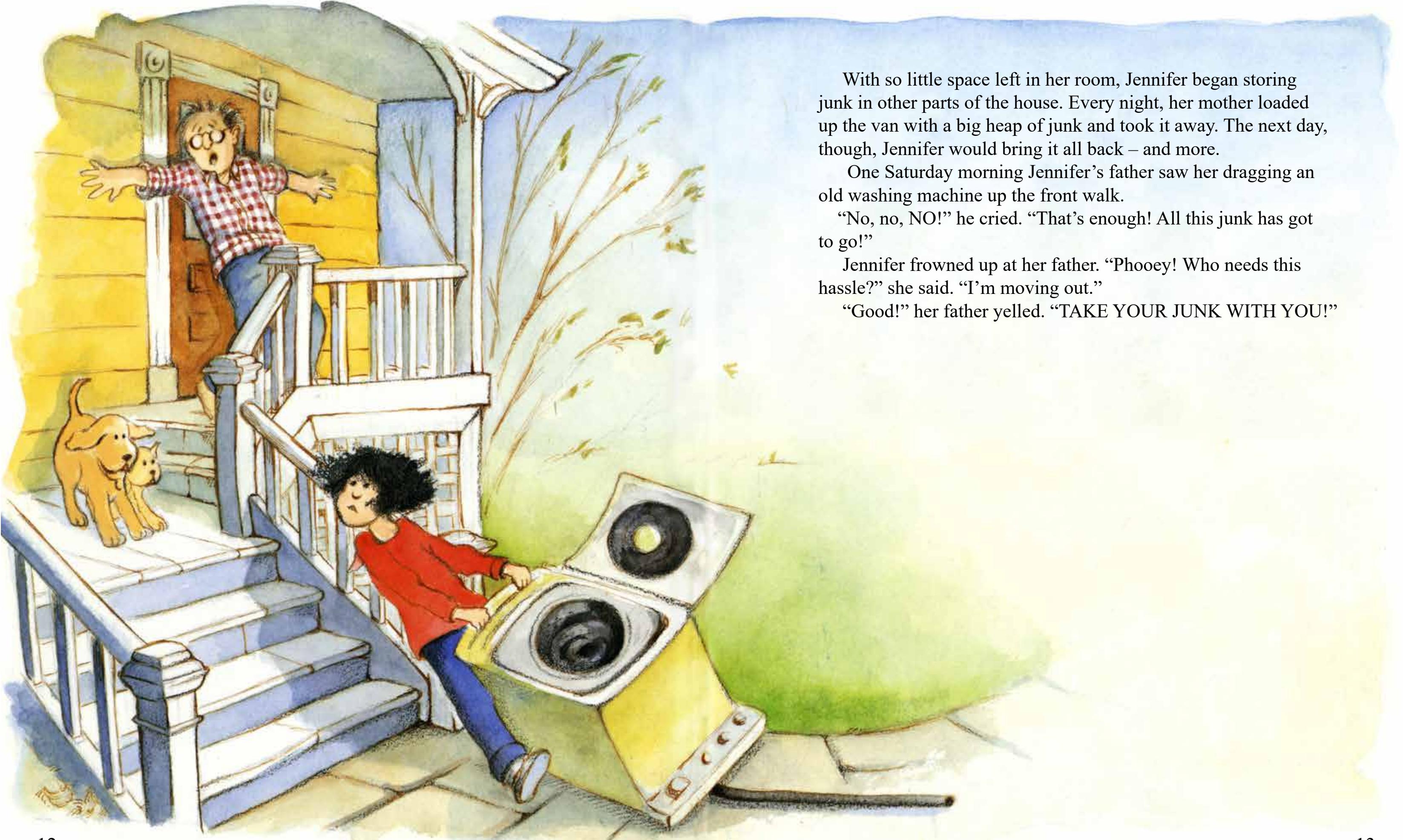


Sometimes, just for the fun of it, Jennifer found new ways to use her old junk. Her goldfish swam in a broken TV, the bathtub was a perfect place to read, and the deer antlers made a good clothes rack.

The rest of Jennifer's clothes were piled up in a corner, because there was absolutely no room left in the closet. It was packed from floor to ceiling with 3,186 Captain Astroblast magazines.

Jennifer loved Captain Astroblast. Every week, she was first in line to buy his magazine, and every night, she watched his TV show. She dreamed that one day, he would sweep out of the sky and carry her away in his speedy spaceship, the Phantom Cruiser.





With so little space left in her room, Jennifer began storing junk in other parts of the house. Every night, her mother loaded up the van with a big heap of junk and took it away. The next day, though, Jennifer would bring it all back – and more.

One Saturday morning Jennifer's father saw her dragging an old washing machine up the front walk.

"No, no, NO!" he cried. "That's enough! All this junk has got to go!"

Jennifer frowned up at her father. "Phooey! Who needs this hassle?" she said. "I'm moving out."

"Good!" her father yelled. "TAKE YOUR JUNK WITH YOU!"

So she did.

She tossed all the junk out the window into the backyard, where she built a house out of cardboard boxes, a stove pipe, and an old blanket.

Her mother begged her to come back inside.
“Whatever will become of you?” she moaned.

Her father apologized for yelling and told her she could keep the washing machine. He even called Jennifer’s grandma, who tried to convince her granddaughter to change her mind. But Jennifer wouldn’t budge.

“Someday,” she declared firmly,
“someone will need my junk!”





Late one night, Jennifer was watching a rerun of Captain Astroblast Meets the Dreaded Drogs. Right at her favourite part, when the Drogs fire at the Phantom Cruiser, a deafening crash rocked Jennifer's house. It sounded like two garbage trucks colliding head-on.