

LEVELED BOOK • N

# Grounded to Earth



Written by Torran Anderson  
Illustrated by Reginald Butler

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Zorb desperately wanted to **take over** Earth.

“We have **blasters!**” Zorb screamed, jumping up and down.

“Take a deep breath and count to ten,” his mother said, calmly. “You need to leave Earth alone.”

“We have spaceships and robots, though,” Zorb whined.





“How many times do we have to discuss this?” his father asked. “Just because we are more powerful, it doesn’t mean we should take over a planet.”

Zorb leaped past his parents and grabbed the spaceship’s controls. He turned the ship and raced at full speed toward Earth.

“Earth is mine!” Zorb yelled.





“Son,” his father said, “you need to learn a **lesson** about the humans.”

Before Zorb could speak, his father pushed a large red button.

Zorb was instantly **teleported** to a park on Earth.

He blinked his eyes open and saw a group of children playing kickball.

“I am Zorb, the ruler of Earth!” Zorb said. He waited for the children to kneel and **salute** him.





The kids stopped their game, took one look at Zorb, and exploded with laughter.

“You’re just a little kid,” a boy said.

Zorb looked down and inspected himself. He was inside a **suit** that made him look like an ordinary kid.





“I have blasters!” Zorb shouted.

The kids returned to their game.

“I’m more powerful than all of you!”  
Zorb yelled.

The kids ignored what he was  
saying.





Zorb was furious. He wanted to scream, but he took a deep breath and counted to ten instead.

“Excuse me,” Zorb said to the boy, “can I play your game?”

“Sure,” the boy said. “My name is Hector. You can be on my team.”

Zorb had never played kickball before. It was a strange **alien** game that seemed very complicated and difficult.





When the other team kicked the ball, Zorb saw the runner going around the bases. He chased the boy and tackled him to the ground.

“What are you doing?” Hector asked.

“He was escaping,” Zorb said, confused.





“He was running around the bases,” Hector said. “That’s what you’re supposed to do when you kick the ball. We try to catch the ball and throw it to the base before he gets there.”

“Oh,” Zorb said, “that’s right. I try to catch the ball, not catch the people running.”





The next kicker **whacked** the ball, and it came straight toward Zorb. He ran toward the ball, spread his arms open, and tried to catch the ball in his mouth!

The ball smacked Zorb in the face and knocked him to the ground.

“What are you doing?” Hector yelled. “What planet are you from?”





“I’m from—” Zorb started, but then he stopped himself and said, “I’m not from around here.”

“I can see that,” Hector said. “This is kickball. We don’t chase people, and we don’t catch balls with our mouths.”

“I’m sorry,” Zorb said. “I don’t know how to play your game.”





Hector called a time-out, and the team **huddled** up. The other kids explained the rules and how to kick the ball.

Even though everyone else knew more about kickball, no one made fun of Zorb.

*Maybe humans aren't so bad after all, Zorb thought to himself.*





When it was Zorb's turn to kick, the pitcher rolled the ball. Zorb tried to remember everything his teammates had taught him about the game. He kicked as hard as he could, and the ball soared over the back fence.

His team chanted, "Zorb! Zorb! Zorb!" as he rounded the bases.

As he stepped on home plate, Hector gave him a high five.





Zorb saw two grown-ups watching the game.

“Did you learn your lesson?” the woman asked.

“Dad, Mom, is that you?” Zorb asked.

“Yes,” his dad said, lifting up his human mask.

“Do you still want to take over Earth?” his mom asked.

“No,” Zorb said. “I just want to take over this game.”



## Glossary

<b>alien</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	unfamiliar or strange (p. 8)
<b>blasters</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	fictional weapons that shoot beams of energy (p. 3)
<b>huddled</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	crowded together (p. 13)
<b>lesson</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	an experience that teaches something useful or valuable (p. 5)
<b>salute</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to make a sign of respect or recognition to a superior officer or other person, often using a hand motion (p. 5)
<b>suit</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a set of clothes or coverings used or worn for a specific purpose (p. 6)
<b>take over</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to take control of something (p. 3)
<b>teleported</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	instantly moved from one place to another (p. 5)
<b>whacked</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	hit someone or something with a lot of force (p. 11)



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