

Chapter 4

Snake Rattle & Roll Out a Song

Global radios blast the news worldwide that **Earth Day** is coming very soon! Held yearly in April to coincide with the 'vernal equinox*', many nations encourage their communities to stage events to raise awareness about this important date. It's vital* to alert all the population to put practical ecological measures into practice, to preserve our planet, and save it from future disaster and deterioration.

The city of Vienna in Austria is staging one such **Earth Day** Event. The committee in charge has decided to host a singing contest selling tickets, which will raise money for the **Everyone for Ecology Charity**. These funds will help to encourage even more summer exploration camps and classroom activities, based on 'learning the ropes'* about positive rules to follow, keeping the planet green for now and the future.

They remember the theme song from the famous film story 'The Sound of Music' : '**The hills are alive with the sound of music...**', and have decided that this is just the ticket to put **Earth Day** on the map in their Austrian community.

Advertisements and posters have gone up inviting any and all contestants young and old to have a go entering the competition. They must write an original song and sing it for the appointed judges during the **Earth Day** Music festival being staged. The subject of each song however, must cover the topic of ecology and preserving the planet, and of course, '**endangered species***' Jake and the Rakes have heard about this planned event, thanks to the global data screens which feature any and all

ecological news across the earth in the Control Room in the Equatree on Reptisland.

Earth Day is a very important celebration for our Slithery Samaritan, as he has been committed* to the '**GO-GREEN**' cause as far back as he can remember. His commitment* to fight against the evil misdeeds of Mama Tallulah and the Mongoose Militia, usually finds Jake squashing* unacceptable crimes against Mother Nature, which they perpetrate* in their quest* to destroy the planet and take over the world.

With this in mind Jake makes a call to the organizers of the '**Everyone for Ecology**' song contest event taking place in Austria to tell them that he'd like to lend a helping hand.

Jake calls all the Rakes on the inter-connecting loudspeakers, only to find them gathered in the Rec Room where they have been having a 'Karaoke* Klub' session. Sir Skat Cat has been giving them some music lessons in his favourite form 'RAPPING', as he's a connoisseur* of this music style. No wonder he was named the 'Rapping Don' long before he joined Jake and the Rakes to man the Control Tower on Reptisland!

Jake slithers down the hallways to join the group and can hear their melodic tones booming out of the doorway before his arrival.

Upon entering the Rec Room Jake shouts out: "Hey gang what's happening? Are you having a song fest*? Let me catch some tunes then!"

The Rakes and Sir Skat Cat all greet Jake with big 'Hellos'; as the Viperlines have been quite quiet today, it has allowed time for rest and relaxation for everyone.

Jake announces the news he has about the upcoming **Earth Day**, and suggests that it's of utmost importance to spread the word across the world about the significance of this day on the calendar. Everyone agrees, and shouts of **Go-Green** fill the room in anticipation of how they can pitch in and make Earth Day one to remember.

"We're going to make a trip to Austria, as I've spoken to the organizers of the **Everyone for Ecology Charity** and they suggest our appearance at their song fest* event would definitely help to spread the word about the importance of the ecological message connected with **Earth Day**," explained Jake. "They insist it would increase the ticket sales for the show!"

"**Viperama** ! This sounds like a great idea, Jake. Let's do it, right Rakes?" said Marco.

Everyone agreed that lending their support to this good cause was a wonderful way to show their support for **Earth Day**.

Down in the murky* confines of the Mongoose Lair there's an atmosphere of hysteria and annoyance as Mama Tallulah hears about all the support across the land being conjured* up for the imminent* Earth Day. To alleviate* her tremendous headache caused by such affirmation* worldwide for ecology and the preservation of the planet,

she commands her overworked centipede* troops to carry her immediately to her Sweets Vault, so she can bask* in an overflow of sugary sweets to calm her down.

"Toulouse, Touloooooouse! Get over here at once! I need to plot and plan a way to destroy the momentum* this Earth Day is stirring up all over the place! I want to find a way to close down those events planned to highlight that silly message from Mother Nature to take care of her precious planet before it's too late!" screamed MamaT. through the Mongoosespeaker.

Toulouse, hearing his Mother ranting* and raving commanding his instant appearance, quickly slips his paints and easels back in their hiding place under the floorboards in his room, and races to meet her before that famous treacherous* temper reaches boiling point.

Mama Tallulah has received news through her eavesdropping* network via I-Ball the flying spy camera, that there's been an arrangement made between Jake the Snake and the **Everyone for Ecology Charity** to host a song competition to raise funds for ecological projects to educate children, the future citizens of the world.

"Future, indeed! There'll be no future for ecology or world peace and harmony! You kids will be MY slaves when I take over the planet and turn it into a desolate* dry desert, where the only water on hand will be acid rain! Ha-ha ha!" sputters the **Queen of Evil** as she nearly chokes on a huge handful of caramels, which mercifully cement her false teeth together, and force her into silence.

"Here I am Mother, what's up?" offered a breathless Toulouse.

Mama Tallulah, finally clearing her throat of the sticky sweetness, takes out her false teeth, and banging them on the arm of her throne chair as if a boisterous* drum, screams:

"That **Go-Green Ghoul*** Jake the Snake is at it again trying to spread his boring message about ecology across the world. And to top it off this time he wants to play his message to music!"

"Calm down dear! Let's just hatch a plan to bury Earth Day ten feet under so any and all messages about ecology cannot ever be excavated* and put into action!" commented Toulouse knowing that was just what his Mother would like to hear.

Jake alerts Sir Skat Cat that he and the Rakes will be heading off to Austria in the Viperwagen to participate in the exciting song competition on Earth Day for the **Everyone for Ecology Charity**. The organizers tell me that even you Rakes can enter as contestants if you 'have a song in you'!" mentions Jake as they outfit themselves in the Equipment Room for the impending* journey, before zooming down the Snake slide.

" '**C'est magnifique**'... It's great! I've been a singing spider ever since I was a 'leettle' boy!" remarked Jacques Webb as he packed up his collection of Webnets into his backpack.

"Sure is an offer I can't refuse," added Merc Magpie, "My soul is brimming over with a tune or two!"

" '**Aie-yie-yie-yie**' ! Us Rakes could become the new 'Von Trapp*' singing family!" giggled Tina Termite.

"On Fan-tastic there's even software for a whole orchestra, able to transform what you hum into a full masterpiece," remarked Loti Locust.

"Let's Snake, Rattle 'n Roll....out a song!" shouted the Rakes with a high five handshake before they sped off to Austria.

During the journey Sir Skat Cat sends up some facts about Vienna, and even throws in some wise information about Earth Day and ecology.

FACTS ABOUT VIENNA AUSTRIA, EARTH DAY AND ECOLOGY

Vienna is the capital and largest city of Austria, and is the world's music capital. More famous composers have lived here than in any other city. It's called the 'City of Music' because of its musical legacy.

Notable musicians born there include Johann Strauss I & II, Schubert, Schoenberg. Famous classical musicians who came to work in Vienna from other parts of Austria and Germany were Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Mahler and Haydn.

The City's roots lie in early Celtic and Roman settlements that transformed it into a Medieval and Baroque city. The English name 'Vienna' is thought to be derived from the Celtic word 'windo' meaning bright or fair.

Vienna is also Austria's main centre of education and home to many universities, professional colleges and gymnasiums (high schools).

The world's oldest zoo founded in 1752 is located in Vienna.

The city has a long tradition of producing the finest cakes and desserts, such as apple strudel and sweet pancakes.

Earth Day is a worldwide event observed in over 175 countries meant to celebrate the Earth and raise awareness for environmental causes.

Ecology is the study of how living (biotic) and nonliving (abiotic) parts of the environment interact with and depend on each other, called an ecosystem. It's the study of life on earth!

The biotic, or living things in an environment would include plants, animals (this includes people), bacteria, fungi and all other living things.

The abiotic or nonliving parts of the environment would include things like sunlight, the soil, atmosphere, climate, nutrients and water.

In the word ecology 'eco' means house and 'logos' means to study. The house is Planet Earth. Ecologists study the interactions within ecosystems.

One of the major parts of life in an ecosystem is finding energy. All living things in an ecosystem need energy to survive. The main source of energy for life on Earth comes from the sun. Plants use light energy from the sun to make food.

An ecosystem, with a part of it missing may continue for a while, but in time would start falling apart. All of the parts of the ecosystem work together.

Thanks to the supersonic facilities I-Ball, the flying spy camera offers Mama Tallulah through its constant surveillance* and tracking devices, an urgent message is transmitted back to the Mongoose Lair alerting the Militia to Jake and the Rakes' whereabouts.

"What have we here?! Am I hearing this message correctly or is this just one of 'Sigmund Freud's'* dreams! Jake heading for Austria and that cuckoo doctor's hometown Vienna for a song contest? Do I need my head examined or is this music to my ears?" babbles Mama Tallulah.

"What's that you say, Mother?" answers Toulouse who's scanning carefully the Mongoosescreen in the Throne Room.

"The Repulsive Reptile is up to his goody-goody **Slithering Samaritan** ways yet again!" screams Mama T., until she can quell* her frustration by cramming an overflow of assorted soft centre chocolates into her open gob*.

"What have you learned Mommie Dearest? Fill in the blanks!" encourages Toulouse.

"Fill in the blanks, eh Dodo*? I've a plan to fill you up with more than just information about that '**Go-Green**' **Snake**. Call in your Henchmen now, now, noooow... so I can tell you my plot!" commanded Mama T. before taking another ample helping of the chocolates oozing out of her pockets.

Toulouse rushes off, abiding* by his hysterical Mother's wishes.

The Viperwagen comes in for a safe landing at the Headquarters of the **Everyone for Ecology Charity**.

Jake and the Rakes meet up with the Organizers, and learn that the song competition has proved very popular! Tickets are selling like hotcakes, and a good number of contestants have signed up to try their luck at singing their own 'Go-Green' songs. Applications have been received from near and far, and now with Jake's participation, the committee are convinced that they'll have a very successful event.

"I've a small suggestion which may help to enhance* the program," offered Jake, "and hopefully encourage even more ticket sales for your good cause."

"Tell us your idea!" enthused* the Committee Organizer.

"I thought if I call our old friend Anna Conda and ask her to sit on the judge's panel, she might also be willing to offer a medley* of her own international hit songs for the charity audience. What do you say?" inquired* Jake.

"Viperama!" exclaimed Marco. "The hills will REALLY be alive with the sound of music then, right Boss?"

The Organizers agree that this is a splendid idea, so Jake places a call on his Brass Spat to the Brazilian pop star, whose breathy voice upon answering can hardly disguise her pure joy at hearing from her Hero, Jake the Snake!

"Of course Jakey-wakey! You can count on me! I'll do whatever I can to support your 'Go-Green' cause! I'll tell my press agents to announce my participation immediately to help boost publicity for this worthwhile event. ...Sssee you ...sssoon!" said Anna Conda, certain that all Jake's female fans will be 'green with envy*', knowing that he has such a special snake eye just for her!

Mama Tallulah has Toulouse and his horrible Henchmen Skunko Punko, Rock the Croc, and Laughing Boy lined up to attention, as she outlines her despicable* plan to sabotage* the upcoming **Earth Day** song competition.

"Listen to me, and listen carefully you yobs*," commanded Mama T. "The only thing that will **Go- Green** during this plot will be the faces of the Rakes when you string their necks up in some tight nooses, leaving Jake unprotected when you catch him off guard, capture him, and get his wretched body back to me ready to be 'slayed* and flayed*'.....finally!"

"What exactly have you worked out for us?" asked Toulouse.

"You'll be infiltrating* this song competition because you, Toulouse, will be one of the contestants entering, and your Henchmen will be your backing singers, disguised of course, so none will be the wiser."

"But Mama, you know I can't carry a tune, and you've said countless times that my singing would cause listeners to head for the hills!"

"Well smart Son, you got it in one! I've created a special device which you'll wear hidden under you disguise, that will release such a piercing sound, that every citizen in Vienna, including even the dogs, will run as fast as their feet will carry them to any and all hills they can find to escape the killing sound waves!"

"Sounds like a smart move on your part; how do we use this situation to our advantage?" questioned Skunko.

"With Jake and the Rakes in the vicinity*, you should be able to wrap them up in no time, along with stealing the box office profits raised from ticket sales," added Mama T.

"Ha-ha-ha, can't wait to put some nooses round the necks of those irritating Rakes, but how are we going to survive those sound waves you've perfected for pain, pain, pain?" bemoaned* Laughing Boy.

"You'll have special earplugs to protect you from the shocking tones. I've already sent in an application form enrolling 'Samantha Sweetooth' into the competition. Take it away boys, and if you follow my plan precisely, this'll be the perfect way to give the 'Earth' in **Earth Day** a great big ugly push!" gloated* Mama Tallulah.

"But Mama....I can't dress up as some girl called Samantha Sweetooth; it's not in my character to impersonate* females," wailed* Toulouse.

"You'll do exactly what I say or else I'll really test out your 'Sweetooth', Toulouse, with 24 crème éclairs stuffed into your gob*! That will definitely stop you from carrying a tune!" threatened Mama T.

The Mongoosescreen lights up and flashes the news that Anna Conda will be attending this Earth Day song competition along with Jake and the Rakes. Such headlines will really spread the word across the globe, about the importance of making ecology a needed habit for everyone!

Hearing this unexpected information, Toulouse lights up like a sun ray beaming with a real 'Sweetooth' smile across his obnoxious* face. The mere mention of Anna Conda's name, knowing that she'll be within arm's reach at the

competition, puts a bounce in his step and a new found enthusiasm for the dirty plot ahead.

He still has illusions* of winning her heart, and making Anna his queen to rule the Mongoose Militia when he can 'bury' his Mother....that's a dream even the famous Austrian psychiatrist* 'Sigmund Freud'* could not have made sense of.

A breathless shout fills the air as Anna Conda comes running towards Jake, having alighted* from her private Pop plane.

"Jakey-wakey...,there you are...and HERE am I!" enthused* Anna. Jake greets her pleasantly and the Rakes giggle when Jake turns his blushing face to receive a smacker of a kiss on his cheek which turns bright red!

"It's just terrific that you'll lend your support to this **Earth Day** event. That's surely brought out all the press and TV, which will help to publicize the important ecology message this day signifies," said a grateful Jake.

Fluttering her lashes in a huge flirt Anna quips*: "Well YOU make the earth move for me, so the least I can do is help the citizens of the world to 'move' for the earth, and wave the banner for saving the planet."

"Bravo, Mademoiselle Conda, the Organizers are delighted that you'll join the judges' panel '**n'est-ce pas**'...right?" offered Jacques.

"**Viperama** ! And the crowds will be pouring money into the collection boxes buying tickets to support the **Everyone for Ecology Charity** now that you're on the bill to sing at the finale*!" added Marco.

"**Aie-yie-yie-yie!** Come with me Anna and I'll introduce you around to the people in charge and show you your dressing room," said Tina, happy to find a way to drag Anna out of Jake's face!

Jake reminds the Rakes that the Organizers have invited them to be contestants in the song competition also, and encourages them to get busy writing up some ditties*. They're all excited to think that 'the hills might be alive with the sound of their music', so they've been busy with their efforts every spare minute they have.

"Shucks Jake, I've really got a singer in my soul who's bursting at the seams to let it all hang out," decided Merc, as he continued to write his musical thoughts down in his notebook.

"Jake-san, I know that tonight will be a great tribute to the good that ecology will do for our earth, but I'm getting a signal on Fan-tastic that there may be some very unwelcome footsteps walking on the earth right now; destination-Vienna and our song fest*!" claimed Loti.

"Don't need to play a guessing game with you Loti. Would those sneaky shoes trooping in this direction belong to the

Mongoose Militia? But what can be their plan? One thing is for sure," resolved Jake, "it won't be to plant a tree in honour of **Earth Day!**"

The countdown to kick-off has begun. All the chosen competitors have been lined up and given their numbered positions. Vocal exercises, twanging guitar riffs*, drumbeats and keyboard practice fill the air backstage, and the atmosphere is electric.

Speaking of 'electric' however, Toulouse is all `wired up' and has the electric switch hidden inside the long gloves he's wearing as part of his costume. Due to their expert conniving* schemes, and the forged application form, Toulouse a.k.a.* 'Samantha Sweetooth', well hidden under the long blond curly wig, bright pink satin gown, and sparkly gold high heels, steals a contestant's number and lines up with the others. The Henchmen, Skunko, Rock and 'Ha-Ha' have reluctantly draped themselves in a trio of rainbow caftans*, sporting face masks disguised as the three Muses*: Faith, Hope and Charity!

As soon as Toulouse is handed the microphone, and hits the first of several out of tune notes, he'll press the button releasing the piercing sound waves, even magnified through the mike, which will disrupt the show, bring down the curtain, and cause the audience and contestants to flee for safety!

Jake is stumped for the first time in a long time. He searches for clues, but with such a tumultuous* crowd in the outdoor arena, if the Militia have infiltrated*, it's not an easy task to spot them quickly. With that in mind, Jake calls all the Rakes on his Brass Spat for an emergency meeting before the show starts.

"We've got a serious problem on our hands, Rakes and if the Mongoose Militia are planning to upset this Earth Day concert, then we better find a way to 'orchestrate'* their failure before it's too late!" declares Jake. Everyone is instructed to follow a certain manoeuvre* to 'out' the criminal culprits* as quick as possible, to avert* any disaster or destruction they've planned.

The curtain soon goes up, the cameras are rolling and aspiring singer/songwriters give their all, presenting their musical

talents. The Rakes have skirted up and down the aisles of the audience; been in and out of every 'nook and cranny'* backstage, and still no success in finding the Mongoose Militia.

Marco tries to send a message to Loti on his **Viperalarm** wristwatch. But there's some significant static beaming through, and Loti sees static lines rolling up and down on Fan-tastic, which spells trouble. She programmes on her detection device to gain a clear pathway, and watches as the location beeper focuses in on a quartet of singers, getting ready for their turn on the stage.

The disguises are excellent, as there's not a trace of Mongoose or Henchmen to be seen. But then the ultra-sensitive sensory device on Fan-tastic displays the wire mechanism which is hidden in one of the singer's gloves. She alerts Jake and the other Rakes immediately!

" I may have found a vital* clue on how Toulouse and his Henchmen may be plotting to sabotage* this Earth Day concert! I can't get beyond the masks they're wearing nor the wig; but there's something suspicious* if this contestant is carrying a hidden instrument, which might prove a danger to everyone here at the Earth Day concert," repeats Loti over the interconnecting Viperphones.

"I'm on my way! Say no more!" shouts Jake as he whips out his **Snake-Eye** Monocle, upon entering the backstage area with the waiting contestants. As quick as a wink, he penetrates the disguise Toulouse is wearing, and seeing that the name 'Samantha Sweetooth' is on his badge, he immediately sees a connection with Mama Tallulah....the 'Maniacal* Matriarch'* with the greatest sweet tooth of them all!

It's their turn to appear, and as they are whisked out onto the stage, Jake and the Rakes take immediate action with the help of the backstage sound engineer. As the spotlight shimmers on Toulouse and the 'Three Muses', he begins to shock all the eardrums in the audience with his first out-of-tune song phrase;

"Let's burn the planet to the ground...so there's nothing left in the lost and found! ..."

As Toulouse lifts the microphone to his lips, and with his free hand begins to find the detonation* button on his sound wave device, he hasn't a moment to realize that a huge bolt of electricity is being sent through the lead chords on the mike. When meeting up with his device, 'Samantha Sweetooth' lights up like a high powered light bulb! His screams are almost as piercing as the sound wave device would have produced, but his struggle is short lived. But then the ultra-sensitive sensory device on Fan-tastic displays the wire mechanism which is hidden in one of the sensory device on Fan-tastic displays the wire mechanism which is hidden in one of the singer's gloves. She alerts Jake and the other Rakes immediately!

The Rakes rush onto the stage and Jacques Webb encircles the whole motley* crew into a Webnet, the Henchmen's masks flying across the floor, exposing their true identity! These 'Three Muses' are only there to 'amuse' the audience now in their comical entanglement, caftans* flying, with grunts galore! They're hauled off quickly, and Jake makes an announcement saying that this was a planned cameo*, to warn all those out to destroy the planet, that they'll receive a real 'jolt'* to their plots!



Samantha 'Sweettooth' lights up like a high powered light bulb!

To get the show back up and running, the Rakes run on stage and ask the orchestra to 'strike up' their original tune, to accompany the ecology rap they wrote in honour of **Earth Day**. The audience applaud loudly and then Anna Conda joins them on stage to add her background rhythm. The crowd goes wild and jumps at the chance to fill the charity containers traveling down the rows with their donations for the **Everyone for Ecology Charity**. They begin clapping to the exciting rap being performed by the Rakes.

Listen carefully to my poem,

The time has come to think ozone...

Or else we'll have no future home.

Hear the message from this snake,

The planet's welfare is at stake!

**We gotta clean up those rivers, ponds, 'n lakes,
C'mon everybody, you've got what it takes-
Be a fighter not a flake!**

Give the world a break, say Jake,

GIVE THE WORLD A BREAK!

**Imagine something if you can,
Our earth is now a troubled land...
All the damage done my man**

Has really gotten out of hand.

So give the world a break, says Jake **GIVE THE WORLD A BREAK!**

You 'n me... sisters 'n brothers Let's save the trees one way or another... The human race better find a solution,

And rid our planet of pollution. Unite our cause in a big handshake

To save all the species *...even snakes! And give the world a break, says Jake

GIVE THE WORLD A BREAK!

Jake joins the gang on stage delighted at the affirmative* response **Earth Day** has received.

"Truly the hills are alive with the ...**Ssssounds** of Music!" said Jake. "May the whole world keep humming this tune and give the Earth the ecological break it deserves. Let's ...**Sssnake Rattle 'n Roll** out thisSssong!"

The end