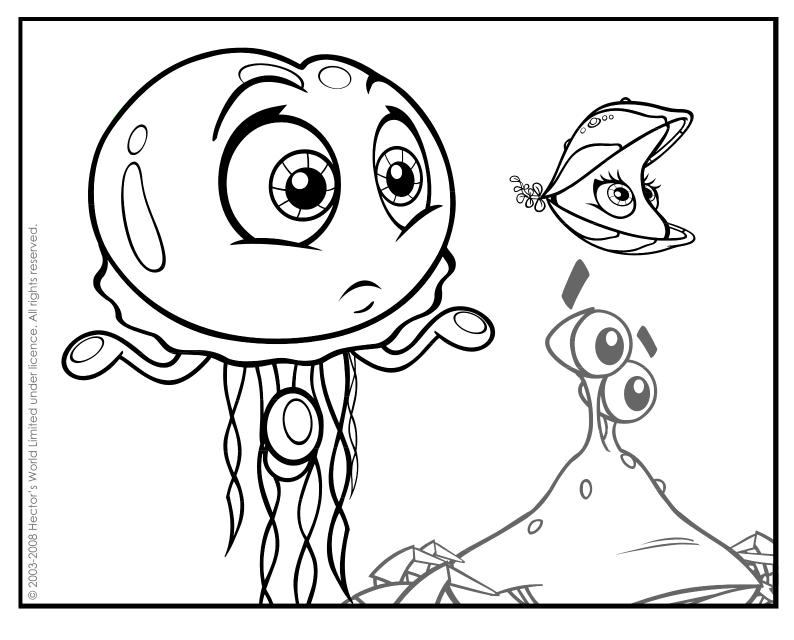


Hector had expected to feel differently about being invited to the official closing of the Silicon Deep carnival as a special guest. He certainly felt good when he and his friends first got the invitations, but the more Hector thought about it, the more he believed he didn't deserve any special honour.

While Hector accepted that he did play a small part in capturing the notorious Info Gang, he also felt that he may have put his little friend, Tama, in danger. Knowing that Tama had really wanted to play 'Pound the Plankton', Hector had given out some of Tama's personal information. As it turned out, the Info Gang was using the games arcade and other parts of the carnival to trick visitors into giving out their personal details. They were then selling that information to other nasty creatures who were probably going to misuse it.



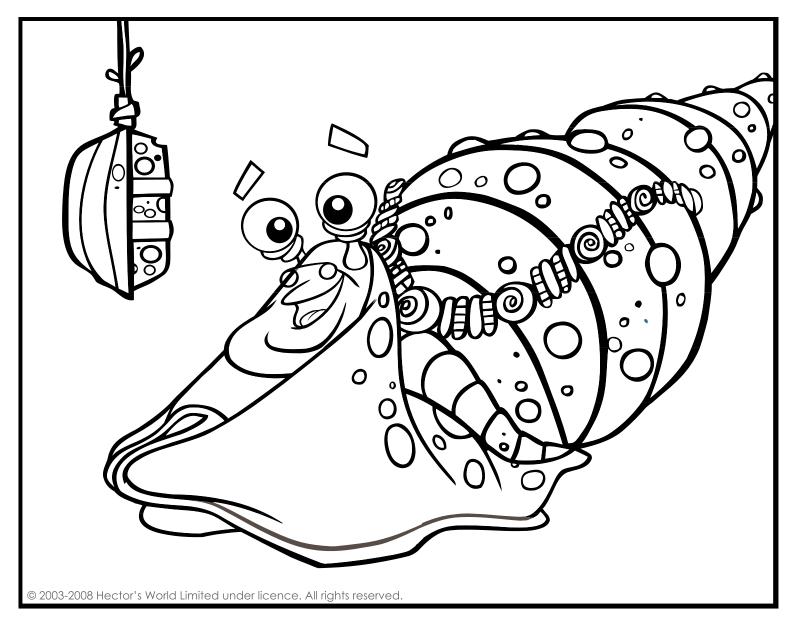
Hector felt that he should have known better. He walked straight into their trap and, what was worse, he could have put Tama in danger.

Tama looked at Hector from across the row of special guests (Ming, Ranjeet, Sprat, Hector and himself) and saw that Hector was lost in his own thoughts.

"I think he still feels guilty about signing you up at the games arcade," said Ming who had also been watching Hector.

"Oh...", sighed Tama. There didn't seem to be anything he could do to make Hector feel better.

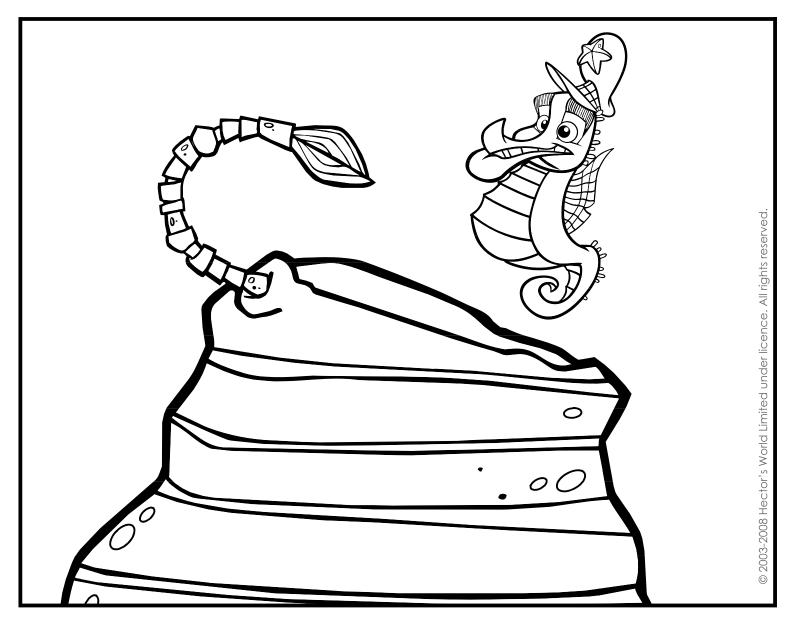
Suddenly a booming voice and swirling spotlights announced the arrival of Silicon Deep's "very own Mayor Shelton Shellsby!"



The crowd roared, clapped and cheered for their Mayor, who seemed to take forever to quiet them down. Tama thought that the Mayor probably liked cheering and clapping – especially if it was for him.

The Mayor explained to everyone that the notorious Info Gang had infiltrated the carnival and had been collecting visitors' personal and private information to sell on to other "scallywags."

Many of those in the audience had been unaware that any such thing had been happening, and were suddenly concerned about all the things they had signed up for. Knowing that they would feel this way, Mayor Shellsby had asked Constable Solosolave to reassure the audience that the Info Gang had been captured and most of their personal information had been retrieved.



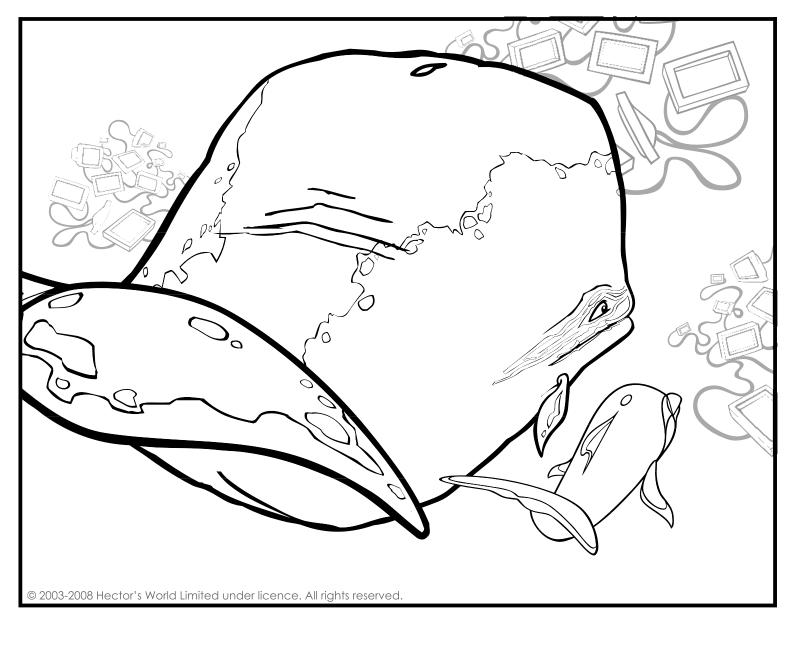
When Mayor Shellsby introduced Constable Solosolave, the crowd went wild. Everyone had great respect for the Silicon Deep police officer.

Constable Solosolave motioned to the crowd to stop cheering and they stopped instantly. Mayor Shellsby thought that was great and made a mental note to take lessons from the Constable.

After explaining what happened with the Info Gang, Constable Solosolave reminded everyone to keep safe online. He then proceeded to call Tama up on the stage to receive a special award for his bravery and the role he played in capturing the gang.

Hector watched Tama as he nervously swam up onto the stage to accept his award. He was extremely proud of his little friend, but couldn't help feeling very dissapointed in himself.

Hector wished he could speak to Kui, the wise and mystical old whale.



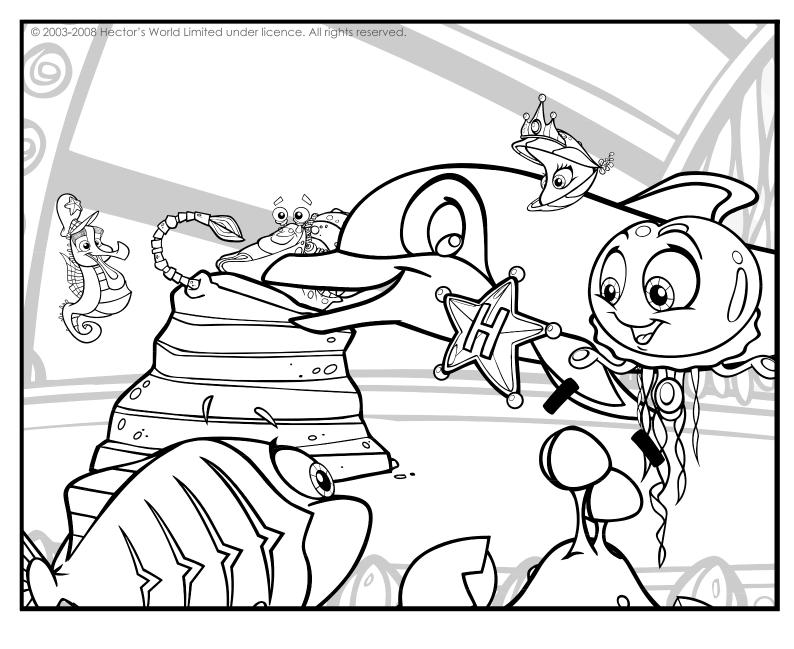
All of a sudden there was no stage and no crowd, just the peaceful, gently swirling waters of Kui's special realm.

"Something is bothering you, young Hector".

Hector was always amazed at how Kui's voice resonated through the water. At first he felt uncomfortable talking about it, but Hector soon found himself telling Kui all his feelings - he couldn't get them out fast enough once he started. Kui listened carefully, and then asked Hector some simple questions, such as whether he would ever harm Tama on purpose.

Of course, Hector's answer was a resounding "NO!"

Kui pointed out that Hector was, in fact, a very good friend; and Tama was very lucky to have him. Kui also explained that everyone made mistakes, but that it was important to learn from them and avoid making the same mistake again.



Hector found himself teeling much better, and thanked Kui for her help.

In a blink of an eye, Hector was back at the closing ceremony. It took him a second to realise that his name was being called out over the loud speakers. His other friends were already up on stage, and had received their own special awards. Constable Solosolave proceeded to present Hector with the title of Honorary Cybersafety Officer. Hector didn't know whether to laugh or cry, he was just so happy.

Suddenly Tama gave Hector a big smile and whispered, "Hector, you're my hero." Hector put his fin around Tama and said, "And you're mine, Tama."

The Mayor made his final announcement to officially close the ceremony, and so ended the adventure of Hector Protector and his friends at the Silicon Deep carnival.

(Until next year, that is....)

THE END



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