

PAGE FIFTY-FOUR: six panels**Panel 1**

Pickles is leading Matt on a tour of the Lair. Matt's still got his stoic Commander face on.

PICKLES: We've got lots of super-neat stuff down here, Commander!

PICKLES: Coming up on your right is our toad teleporter!

MATT: Toad...teleporter? Do you have a lot of toads down here?

Panel 2

Pickles has led Matt to a stop in front of a sci-fi-looking machine about the size of a microwave oven, resting on a metal pedestal. At every stop on this "tour," Pickles is super-excited as usual, and Matt stays stoic.

PICKLES: Not anymore!

MATT: Can it teleport anything besides toads?

PICKLES: Probably! But why would we try to teleport anything but toads in the toad teleporter?

MATT: ...Why indeed?

Panel 3

Now they're stopped in front of what appears to be a tank of water, inside which are MULTIPLE PAIRS OF CHATTERING TEETH swimming around. Like, gag teeth – the kind you wind up and turn loose on a flat surface and they dance around chattering. We're behind Matt and Pickles, so we only see Matt from the rear; he's got his hands clasped behind his back, like he's at parade rest.

PICKLES: And here's our remote-control teeth tank!

MATT: What good are...remote-control teeth?

PICKLES: No idea! The Research Division sends us a lot of prototypes.

MATT: Uh-huh...so do they ever send anything useful?

Panel 4

Now Pickles has brought Matt to a sci-fi-looking DUMMY wearing a ridiculously oversized BOW TIE. Matt frowns at it, regarding it carefully.

PICKLES: Absolutely, sir!

PICKLES: There's this awesome fly-tie, for example!

MATT: "Fly-tie?"

Panel 5

Close on Pickles as he touches the bow tie's knot with one paw...

PICKLES: Yup! Watch this!

Panel 6

Matt then watches stoically as the bow tie SPINS LIKE A PROPELLER, lifting the dummy off the floor.

PICKLES: The battery life is incredible, too! Last time he took off, we didn't get him down from the ceiling for a solid week!

PAGE FIFTY-FIVE: five panels**Panel 1**

Matt and Pickles have arrived at a NEW MACHINE – about the size of a microwave oven, with two alcoves in the front about the right size for paws.

PICKLES: Oh — all our machinery is touch-activated now, Commander.
That's pretty new!

PICKLES: I'm sure you'll get the hang of it no time, though.

PICKLES: Here, try this one! It's our automatic claw trimmer!

Panel 2

Matt's touching the claw trimmer, trying to get it to activate as Pickles looks on in avid and enthusiastic anticipation, but HAVING NO LUCK. The Fish and Lady, however, are coming up behind them, both of them looking at Matt with their by-now-default skepticism.

MATT: So—just like this?

PICKLES: Yup! I'm sure it'll turn on any second now!

PICKLES: Aaannny second now!

PICKLES: You are touching it, right?

Panel 3

Angle favoring Lady as Matt turns to face her.

LADY: It's not activating because you're using human hands.

LADY: Why don't you take off your human disguise and use your real paws?

MATT: Why? ...Why don't I do that?

MATT: I'll, uh...I'll tell you why.

Panel 4

Close on Matt, THINKING FAST.

MATT: Because, when I was chosen to go undercover here on Earth, I volunteered for a secret procedure...

MATT: A procedure that transformed me into a human!

Panel 5

REACTION from all three PETS. The Fish and Lady are surprised to hear this, but Pickles is astonished.

PICKLES: Whoa!

MATT: That's right.

MATT: And I can only change back when I return to P.E.T.S. Command.

PAGE FIFTY-SIX: five panels**Panel 1**

Two-shot of The Fish and Lady, getting close and speaking softly to each other, while each of them keeps their GAZE FIXED ON MATT.

LADY (small): Well...that would be some serious dedication, I suppose.
 THE FISH (small): I could remove his skeleton and verify his story.
 LADY (small): Not yet.

Panel 2

The Fish has gone to a sci-fi-looking control console built into a nearby wall, her robotic legs tap-tap-tapping on a keyboard.

THE FISH: All right...Commander...
 THE FISH: We keep these around in case anything unfortunate happens.

Panel 3

The Fish has come back to Matt now, and is holding a pair of PAW GAUNTLETS – a set of glove-like items designed to fit over Matt’s hands, so that when he puts them on, it makes his hands into paws. (He’ll have to curl up his fingers to get them into the gloves’ “finger sleeves.” It might be obvious that I don’t know the technical name for the part of the glove that the fingers go into.)

THE FISH: Try them on. Sir.

Panel 4

Matt takes the Paw Gauntlets, looking at them sort of like, *What do you expect me to do with THESE?*

MATT: Uh...
 MATT: Of course.
 MATT: And what’s the current term for this item?

Panel 5

Stay on Matt. He’s put one of the Paw Gauntlets on, and is struggling to get his remaining hand into the other one.

PICKLES: Those are Paw Gauntlets, Commander!
 PICKLES: Boy, you have been undercover for a long time! That’s basic P.E.T.S. stuff!

PAGE FIFTY-SEVEN: five panels**Panel 1**

Matt stands there with the Paw Gauntlets on his hands, staring at them uncertainly while the PETS watch him expectantly.

LADY: Now that you have those, you'll be able to pass your Commander Certification Test.

LADY: You are aware that you have to pass the test before you can officially take command of the team, yes?

THE FISH: Yeah, but...does he, though? All our communication with P.E.T.S. Command is blocked. The results can't go anywhere.

PICKLES: He could still practice!

Panel 2

Matt approaches the claw trimmer, gauntleted "paws" at the ready...

LADY: Just try to activate the machine now.

MATT (small): Okay...here's hoping it doesn't turn me into a fly or something...

Panel 3

The claw trimmer hums, and a few lights come on on its surface that weren't there before.

PICKLES: See, it's already powering up!

PICKLES: You got this, Commander!

Panel 4

Matt reaches out with his "paws"...

MATT: Here goes nothing!

Panel 5

Matt has put both "paws" into the machine – and his HAIR IS STANDING STRAIGHT UP as ELECTRICITY ARCS around the machine's surface—

SFX: ZZAP ZZAP ZZAP

PAGE FIFTY-EIGHT: five panels

Panel 1

And in a huge flash of blinding light—

SFX: FWOOMP!

Panel 2

Matt has VANISHED.

NO TEXT

Panel 3

REACTION shot from the PETS – they’re all jaws-hanging-open STUNNED at this.

THE FISH: Did we just vaporize our Commander?

Panel 4

Matt APPEARS in a shimmer of light RIGHT BEHIND the PETS – none of them have noticed him yet...

PICKLES: Commanders aren’t, like, made of claws, are they?

Panel 5

Same angle as Panel 5 on PAGE FIFTY-EIGHT, but now Matt’s speaking, and all the PETS are whipping their heads around to look at him, still kind of in shock...

MATT: What’re you guys looking at?

PAGE FIFTY-NINE: four panels

Panel 1

The PETS all FREAK OUT, practically jumping out of their skins in startlement...

PETS (in unison): YIPE!

Panel 2

Until they manage to get re-composed. Pickles has regained his grin and is wagging his tail, but The Fish and Lady are both chastising Matt.

PICKLES: Commander! Thank goodness!

THE FISH: You scared us half to death! I've never seen anyone misuse a claw trimmer that badly before!

MATT: C'mon, guys, it's been eleven years! Cut me some slack here!

Panel 3

Angle favoring Lady, who looks quite exasperated.

LADY: Look, if you're going to be our Commander, you've got to prove you're a Commander! It's as simple as that!

MATT: Okay, okay, I get it!

MATT: How can I do that?

Panel 4

Lady gazes at Matt speculatively. Matt's eyebrows are climbing up into his hair at her words—

LADY: We might as well cut to the chase here.

LADY: Only Commanders are trained for the starship simulator.

MATT: The what, now?